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"EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH":
THE ROLE OF THE NIAGARA BIBLE CONFERENCE IN THE EMERGENCE OF AMERICAN
FUNDAMENTALISM, 1875 - 1900

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in the Department
of
History

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ABSTRACT

"EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH":

THE ROLE OF THE NIAGARA BIBLE CONFERENCE IN THE EMERGENCE OF AMERICAN
FUNDAMENTALISM, 1875 - 1900

This work is primarily a study of the theological dimensions of Fundamentalist origins, although it does not ignore the social and cultural factors. It argues that the Niagara Bible Conference and the Niagara-inspired prophecy conferences of 1875 - 1900 played a major role in the emergence of American Fundamentalism.

A number of significant conclusions are set forth in this thesis. Niagara provided the theological substance of twentieth century Fundamentalism. The Niagara Creed of 1878 and later Fundamentalist creeds like it were fashioned as apologetic weapons to "earnestly contend for the faith." They reflected the stress being put upon Christian belief at certain critical points and reaffirmed in no uncertain terms the doctrines being challenged by liberal theologians.

The chief feature emerging out of Niagara theology was dispensational premillennialism. Inherent in this approach was not only a belief that Christ would return before the millennium, but that His coming was imminent, would be secret, and would occur in two stages. The key to understanding these and other Biblical truths was to "rightly divide the word of truth," which meant to observe the different ages or dispensations of redemptive history.

Niagara gave to American Fundamentalism a new love for Bible study, but also militancy for defending the Bible's inerrancy. The great zeal for evangelism and missions emanating out of Niagara was inherited by twentieth century Fundamentalism. Certain strong leaders of Niagara set the stage for the Fundamentalist enclave mentality which saw personal regeneration and separation from the world as infinitely more important than efforts directed toward social reform. The Niagara eschatology deferred the dealing with the vexing social, political, and economic problems of life to the Second Advent.

Finally, a definition of Fundamentalism emerges from this study which sees it as a distinct conservative theological movement existing before, during and after the controversies of the 1920s. The thesis concludes that the Fundamentalist-evangelical tradition, as mediated through Niagara and the prophetic conference movement still shapes the American temper in many significant ways, and that this tradition will likely survive as a strong, independent conservative force in America well into the future.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The Niagara Bible Conference", recalled a longtime member in 1897, was an "unattractive mystery" to the casual observer, but was "as precious as rubies" to those who had felt the power of its teachings. The testimony continued:

The name "Christian" today is lost in an accretion of worldly maxims and practices. The Niagara company are simply aiming to manifest the primitive, New Testament idea of an ecclesia. . . . Looking, all of them, for the speedy personal return of the Lord Jesus, makes its members unworldly. Recognizing the blood as the only ground of redemption, makes them distinctly evangelical. And, realizing their call out of the world, to walk in Christ in separation, hinders them from following in any of the carnal ways of modern conventicles, or resorting to any worldly devices for capturing the masses.¹

Sober pietism, New Testament primitivism, looking for the Second Advent, "distinctly evangelical . . . the blood as the only ground of redemption", transcending denominationalism, stressing separation from the world and its carnal ways, defending the faith - these traits have a familiar ring normally associated with both the doctrines and characteristics of what shortly after 1897 was called "Fundamentalism". The reality behind this ring of familiarity is this: American Fundamentalism was born in the doctrines and strategies of the Niagara Bible Conference of 1875-1900, as this study will endeavor to show. When the term "Fundamentalist" was coined in 1920, it was really just a new name for an old movement of which the men of Niagara were the fathers.

It was in the Niagara Bible Conference and the two large prophetic conferences (New York, 1878 and Chicago, 1886) spawned by the Niagara group

that various strands of American Protestantism came together to defend and preserve Christian orthodoxy. The leaders of this movement distrusted mainstream Protestant denominationalism which they considered too caught up with attaining worldly status and recognition to oppose what was hailed as liberating new thought. At Niagara the Biblical injunction of Jude 3 to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" became an all-consuming enterprise. Here the Puritan-Calvinistic doctrinal heritage, the pietist holiness impulse, the fervor and missionary zeal of revivalism, and earnest belief in the premillennial return of Christ formed that unique amalgam, Fundamentalism.

If Niagara, 1875-1900, is the period of beginnings in which the theological foundations of Fundamentalism were laid, 1900-1930 became the period of controversy and schism. After the First World War, although the doctrines remained virtually the same, Fundamentalism became part of a wider conservative party within American Protestantism. This conservative wing was very vocal in several of the large denominations and struggled to gain control of ecclesiastical institutions and leadership positions which they believed were infected with liberalism. This impulse toward schism and separation was held in check by the first generation of Fundamentalist leaders.

After the War, the dam burst. The period of controversy peaked in the 1920s with the tragicomic climax reached in Dayton, Tennessee where John T. Scopes was put on trial for violating the state statute forbidding the teaching of evolution. Shortly after this debacle the Baptists and Presbyterians suffered schism and other denominations were severely shaken in the heat of the Fundamentalist Modernist controversy.

The standard definition, image, and understanding of Fundamentalism has been drawn almost exclusively from the period of controversy and schism. A fuller portrayal of the movement describing the formative period of roots is long overdue. To help fill in this historical gap this study concentrates on the earlier period in which the die of Fundamentalism was cast by the men of Niagara. By searching out the roots we will better understand the post-war period in which Fundamentalism became such a pronounced protest movement within the mainline American denominations and why it was so maligned by American liberals.

We may also learn much about late nineteenth century American culture in church and society by examining the early days of the Fundamentalist movement. We may trace the stages by which a movement developed a mentality which even its friends were to call "cultic". Study of the roots of Fundamentalism will help us to better understand the fruits of Fundamentalism, even as they continue to appear in this last quarter of the twentieth century. Fundamentalism is the bridge over which many groups and individuals in America have either passed, are still traversing, or approaching. Fundamentalist doctrine and thinking are found not only in the sects and large independent Fundamentalist church groups, but also in many major American denominations, giving a great deal of credence to the adage, "Scratch a Protestant and you will find a Fundamentalist".

The Place of Niagara in Modern Historiography

The importance of the Niagara Bible Conference in the emergence of American Fundamentalism has been alluded to in twentieth century studies of the movement but never fully elaborated upon. Stewart C. Cole, in his 1931

standard work on Fundamentalism merely commented that no annual retreat did more to reinforce old-fashioned Protestantism than did the Niagara Bible Conference.² Norman Furniss, writing in 1954 hardly enlarged on Cole.

Furniss simply stated:

Periodic Bible conferences, those being held at Niagara after 1875 being the most important, strengthened the religious conservatism of the people. This polemic and organizational activity directly prepared the way for the fundamentalist movement in later years.³

In his 1958 study of dispensationalism, C. Norman Kraus began to probe a little more deeply into the theology, mood, and historical connection between Niagara and Fundamentalism. He perused James Brookes' periodical The Truth or Testimony for Christ, the main literary organ of the Niagara Bible Conference, and drew some significant conclusions.

Kraus observed that much more was involved in this conference than fellowship and nurture. A doctrinal statement drawn up in 1878 was the basis upon which the brethren would extend their fellowship. These men lamented that "so many in these latter times have departed from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; so many have turned away their ears from the truth, and turned unto fables; so many are busily engaged in scattering broadcast the seeds of fatal error, directly affecting the honor of our Lord and the destiny of the soul".⁴ This statement is followed by the famous Niagara Creed, many of the fourteen articles of doctrinal belief of which explicitly contradicted concepts which were gaining acceptance in liberal theological circles at that time. Kraus concludes: "While it would be incorrect to read all of the later reactionary mood back into this beginning, it is quite clear that we have here a principal root of the fundamentalist movement which was to reach its flaming climax some fifty years later".⁵

Ernest R. Sandeen, in his Roots of Fundamentalism has done the most complete research to date in actually showing the links between the theology, mood and men of Niagara and Fundamentalism, as it was officially called in 1920. Sandeen not only shows Niagara to be the focal point of disseminating premillennialism, but practically equates Fundamentalism with millenarianism. He states in his Introduction that "it is millenarianism which gave life and shape to the Fundamentalist movement,"⁶ and concludes that "Fundamentalism ought to be understood partly if not largely as one aspect of the history of millenarianism."⁷ This definition is much too narrow, as will be shown in the latter part of this chapter.

Fundamentalist George W. Dollar produced his lengthy A History of Fundamentalism in America in 1973, labelling the 1875-1900 period "Reaction and Restoration."⁸ Dollar makes only three references to Niagara and devotes most space to describing the content of the 1878 and 1886 prophecy conferences. The overall impact of Niagara is not analyzed. In 1979 Timothy P. Weber surveyed American premillennialism, 1875-1925 in his Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming.⁹ Ample justice is done by Weber to the prophecy conferences of this period but not to the annual Niagara retreats which formed the backbone of the early Bible conference movement.

The most recent and comprehensive study of Fundamentalism is the 1980 work by George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925.¹⁰ It is very disappointing when a book which is being heralded as the definitive work on Fundamentalism gives such very little attention to the Bible and prophecy conference move-

ment in its description of the Fundamentalist mosaic. Marsden frequently describes the theological views of individuals associated with Niagara and the prophecy conference meetings, yet fails to trace the significance of the 1878 Niagara Creed and the impact of the 1878 and 1886 American Bible and Prophetic Conferences on the theology of Fundamentalism. The role Niagara played as an organization and as the prototype of the vastly influential Bible and prophecy conference movement is not portrayed.

In his emphasis on revivalism as the main component in Fundamentalism Marsden does not analyze adequately the formative influence which the premillennialism promulgated at the early conference meetings had in shaping early Fundamentalism. He fails to explain how and why differences of opinion over the finer points of Christ's return (before the seven year Tribulation or after) played such an important role in fragmenting the Fundamentalist movement at the turn of the century.

This thesis demonstrates that the early Bible conference men were at the vanguard of the Fundamentalist movement and that the Bible and prophecy conference meetings and the vast body of literature emanating from them became the vehicle where Fundamentalist strategies and doctrinal emphases were formulated and carried out. It is simply not adequate for Marsden, who has written an otherwise most comprehensive and significant work on Fundamentalism to merely describe the Niagara Bible Conference as "important" without stating why it was important and what its specific contributions to Fundamentalism were. This thesis addresses these omissions.

Finally, a dissertation on Niagara by Larry Pettegrew is largely of narrative and descriptive nature and does not reflect an in-depth analysis of the primary sources.¹¹ It also fails to adequately place the teachings of Niagara in their cultural setting in the midst of the problems of the Gilded Age and does not in any detail delineate the social views and involvements of these founding fathers of Fundamentalism.

Defining Fundamentalism

Sociologists of religion as well as many church historians often make social, cultural, and political issues the major explanatory factors in defining Fundamentalism. The supporting data for this interpretation is drawn largely from the 1920s. The influential H. Richard Niebuhr stated his understanding of Fundamentalism thus:

In the social sources from which it drew its strength fundamentalism was closely related to the conflict between rural and urban cultures in America. Its popular leader was the agrarian W.J. Bryan; its rise coincided with the depression of agricultural values after the World War; it achieved little strength in the urban and industrial sections of the country but was active in many rural states. The opposing religious movement, modernism, was identified on the other hand with bourgeois culture, having its strength in the cities and in the churches supported by the urban middle classes. Furthermore, fundamentalism in its aggressive forms was most prevalent in those isolated communities in which the traditions of pioneer society had been most effectively preserved and which were least subject to the influence of modern science and industrial civilization.¹²

There are some glaring inadequacies in this social-cultural explanation of the emergence of Fundamentalism. Indeed, assessing the movement starting from the 1870s, it becomes evident that its principal centers were initially urban and Northern.¹³ Furthermore, if Fundamentalism were to be adequately explained by social tensions, rural-urban themes, and such factors as psychological maladjustment, then it should have generally disappeared, as many in

the 1920s predicted it would, once the crises and traumas of rural-urban social transitions were past. Fundamentalism survived the twenties and continued to flourish. Its roots must have been considerably deeper.¹⁴

It must be added that none of the factors usually offered as an explanation for the controversy of the twenties originated during that decade. Urban growth, biblical criticism, and evolution as a theory had all been present for at least two generations before the explosion of the twenties.

The problem of the twenties, in fact, can be reduced to seeking the explanation for the unexpected and disproportionate reaction of the twenties to forces that had been present in American life since the 1870s. Concentration upon the religious history of the 1920s may have obscured the fact that the Fundamentalist controversy represented only a part of a general intellectual crisis which probably stemmed in large part from the exaggerated and artificially sustained optimism of the First World War and the frustration, depression, and paranoia produced by the collapse of those dreams and the widespread social turmoil of the post-war era. In that context, the Billy Mitchell trial might prove as apt an illustration of the age as the Scopes trial.¹⁵

Lest revisionists go to the extreme of eliminating the factors of which Niebuhr and others make so much, let me stress that social and cultural factors were significant in the emergence of Fundamentalism (even if not as all-important as traditional interpreters posit). Such factors cannot be overlooked if one wishes to gain a clear understanding of Fundamentalism. Certainly there were rural-urban tensions. Fundamentalism did sometimes flourish in isolated rural areas. It was natural that in a recently settled, rapidly changing country, cultural pockets developed which were insulated from the central intellectual life.

There were also great lags of communication in America. Although these were caused mainly by ethnic and geographical factors, they were

Also reinforced by denominational differences. Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists became familiar with new thought at differing times. Within these groups, Northerners and Southerners, or Easterners and Westerners might come to grips with the new ideas many years apart. Theological discussion could proceed in one section of the country, in one denomination, or among the educated elite, while many people in other areas were virtually oblivious of the issues at hand. The post-Civil War period until the turn of the century was a period of such rapid intellectual change that the potential for theological warfare once these diverse groups discovered each other was immense.¹⁶

In the Fundamentalist experience, the evangelicals were uprooted by the rapid cultural revolution in America in the last part of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century. George Marsden suggests an analogy between the experience of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants and the immigrant experience.¹⁷ People who had grown up in a nineteenth century cultural ethos in which their religious views and mores had been dominant found themselves by the turn of the century living in a culture where traditional beliefs were increasingly questioned, and where finally some of their most cherished convictions were completely dismissed as outmoded and even bizarre. As happened in the immigrant experience, communities found themselves divided sharply on how to respond to the new cultural setting. The modernist's accommodation of Christian tradition to the new culture was in many ways analogous to those immigrant groups who welcomed and embraced the new way of life.

The Fundamentalists may be considered the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant

equivalent to those immigrant elements who resisted assimilation and built their own subculture with institutions, mores, and social connections to defend and preserve it. Many immigrants rigidly preserved old world values from the era which they left; "fundamentalist-evangelical social and political views were frozen at about the point where tensions of the cultural transition began to become severe - somewhere around 1900."¹⁸

Although helpful, there are a number of limitations in the immigrant analogy. For one, immigrants usually come to a new land voluntarily, whereas Fundamentalists were involuntarily catapulted from the old world of the nineteenth century to the new world of the twentieth century. Furthermore it appears that much of the time the Fundamentalists identified with the old Victorian Protestant establishment. Thus their struggle was not so much that of trying to adjust to a new culture, as was the case with immigrants. Rather the Fundamentalists, along with the rest of the old cultural establishment with which they identified, were being forced out. Most of them experienced an acute sense of alienation and felt called to a militant defense of the old order. Indeed, Fundamentalists often used military imagery and did not hesitate to describe their cause as a holy war.¹⁹ This militant impulse was often at odds with their pietistic emphasis on personal purity and peace. Both tendencies were frequently found in the same individual. For example, Niagara's A.C. Dixon speaking at an ecumenical ~~missions~~ conference in 1900 stated: "Above all things I love peace, but next to peace I love a fight and I believe the next best thing to peace is a theological fight."²⁰

Admitting social factors do exert a considerable influence on religious life I must insist that it is a mistake to give exclusive ~~attention~~ to social-cultural aspects in analyzing the emergence of Fundamentalism. Factors creating a sense of need within individuals and larger groups of people are diverse and needs for order, morality, and purpose can be traced to a variety of social, economic, psychological, intellectual, and spiritual forces. One cannot usually explain the rise of any movement on the basis of any one of these factors.

Prior to Sandeen's work in the late 1960s, various forms of intellectual reductionism were almost standard in treatments of Fundamentalism, having the distorting effect of reducing to social motivations the vigorous and in many ways, genuinely new theological and religious impulse which was at the heart of the movement. For example, this reductionistic tendency is particularly evident in the two early major works on Fundamentalism, that of Cole and that of Furniss. Cole asserts that 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, particularly such change as threatened the standards of his faith and his status in ecclesiastical circles.²¹

Furniss repeats Cole's reductionistic fallacy, i.e. Fundamentalism is resistance to change from the good old orthodoxy of bygone days.²²

As a result of such shoddy historiography the impression that has been left with students of this movement is the Fundamentalism was only the name of a party in the liberal-conservative controversy. But we must ask, with Ernest Sandeen:

If Fundamentalism was only the name of a party in a controversy, why did that party exist after the controversy had ended? If Fundamentalism was only the name of a role played by otherwise indistinguishable conservative Christians, then, when the need for that role had disappeared, Fundamentalism ought to have disappeared as well. That it did not demonstrates the weakness of traditional explanations.²³

Fundamentalism, contrary to the standard view as found in Cole and Furniss existed as a distinct religious movement before, during, and after the conflict of the twenties. Even though late nineteenth century observers or the participants themselves had not yet used the term "Fundamentalism", this 1920 appellation was merely a new name for an old movement which began in the 1870s. Besides insisting on the primacy of the intellectual and doctrinal elements over the social ones in the rise of Fundamentalism, this work sees the Fundamentalist movement as a self-conscious, well structured, long-lived, dynamic entity with recognized leadership, institutions, and distinctive doctrines and emphases. In identity and structure, its closest parallel would probably be the Puritans, although it abdicated the Puritan vision of a godly state church coextensive with a godly nation.

Recent scholarship is taking note of the revisionist definition of Fundamentalism as movement and doctrine and the stereotypes of the movement (usually drawn from the events of the twenties in general and the Scopes' trial in particular) are being modified. Sydney Ahlstrom in his comprehensive A Religious History of the American People observes:

Several historians, in fact, would virtually define Fundamentalism as the creation of an interdenominational group of evangelical ministers, predominantly Presbyterian and Baptist, who after 1876 convened a series of annual meetings for Bible Study, and who later organized two widely publicized Prophetic Conferences: in 1878 at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church

in New York, and in 1886 at Farwell Hall in Chicago. The leaders of this group also met for fellowship and study at the annual Niagara Bible Conferences.²⁴

To this revised framework for considering Fundamentalism must be added some observations about the distinctive attitude or mood of the movement. Fundamentalism shares traits with many other movements to which it has been related. The attitude which most clearly distinguished Fundamentalism right from its inception was that of militancy and opposition to liberal theology. This militancy was expressed in an emphasis on the supernatural as the explanation of life and religion, as opposed to the liberal emphasis on the natural. The most distinctive doctrines of the Fundamentalists were the verbal inerrancy of Scripture, divine creation as opposed to evolution, and a dispensational-premillennial scheme which explained history in terms of epochs of supernatural intervention rather than human development. Not all of these tenets were held by everyone in the movement. However there is one emphasis which was common to all: it was always the supernatural as opposed to the natural which was predominant in the Fundamentalist mind-set. That mind-set was also usually dogma oriented, although the concern for restating the essence of orthodoxy in creeds (such as the first post-Civil War one of Niagara) only really became strong when certain cherished doctrines were being assailed by the rationalistic theology coming out of Germany.

The Challenge of the New Thought

The rise of industrial America was accompanied by the emergence of a modern theology within Protestantism. Organized religion in the United States faced a twofold challenge - the one to its system of thought and the

other to its social program. The new scientific thought emanating in particular from Britain and Europe shifted the intellectual climate of the country. Geologist Charles Lyell (1797-1875) in effect rewrote the Genesis account of the origins and early history of the earth. This development, together with the new biology as set forth by Charles Darwin (1809-82) in his Origin of the Species became the chief symbol and example of the intellectual revolution. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) drew out the full social and political implications of evolutionary thinking, adopting it as a unifying philosophical principle and applying it not only to biology, but to all phenomenon, creating new forms of psychology, sociology, religion, and ethics. These new principles bolstered the scientific study of the Bible known as higher criticism, an approach begun in Germany in the eighteenth century, spreading to Britain and America in the nineteenth century.

The first continental scholar to restate Christianity in light of the teachings of the Enlightenment was the German theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). The essence of religion, taught Schleiermacher, was not dogma, creed, nor confession, but feeling. In the tradition of German idealistic philosophy, Schleiermacher defined feeling (Gefühl) as rapport or empathy with the universe. As a romantic, he believed that there was a unity and a communion among God, man, and nature and that this unity was mediated by feeling. This unity was part of the natural order. No miracles were necessary for religion was intuitive; it was simply a sense and a taste for the infinite. Schleiermacher became the father of liberal

theology and exerted a profound influence on German religious thinking.

Other influential German liberals were F.C. Baur (1792-1860), David Strauss (1808-1874), and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). Baur was the leader of the Tubingen School of radical Biblical criticism which pioneered an anti-theistic, non-supernatural approach to history and Christian origins. Strauss, who studied under Baur made extensive use of the concept of myth in his examination of the gospels. Like his mentor, Strauss ruled out the supernatural elements in the Bible. Wellhausen popularized the critical approach to the Old Testament setting aside such cherished beliefs as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and the occurrence of miracles. He applied the concept of evolution to the development of religion from primitive to more refined forms.

These new interpretations of theology and history were transported to America largely by young American scholars such as Walter Rauschenbush, Charles Briggs, A.C. McGiffert, Henry Preserved Smith, and William Adams Brown - all of whom had taken post-graduate studies in Germany and had imbibed much of the new thought. Germany had become a mecca for American students. Of the seven hundred scholars listed in the American Who's Who in 1900, more than three hundred had studied in Germany.²⁵ Many of these men wrote widely on the new theology and were professors in some of the most influential American seminaries.

The uniqueness of Christianity was challenged not only by the higher criticism and the new thought flowing out of Europe, but also by the new study of comparative religions. It soon became apparent that non-

Christian religions were of great interest to the American reading public. James Freeman Clarke's sympathetic treatment of Ten Great Religions went through twenty-one editions after it was published in 1871. When a World's Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago in 1892-93 more than 150,000 people attended its sessions.²⁶

Americans also faced enormous political, social and economic changes in the three decades after the Civil War. Thus in addition to facing new theological ideas, the church was called upon to address the problems associated with the increasing urban character of America, rapid industrialization, and the rising tide of immigration which was coloring the Anglo-Saxon fabric of the nation. The varied responses from within the religious community to these social problems is discussed in chapter five of this work. However, I must stress here that some Protestant theologians looked for new religious categories to cope with the changing conditions in society. To many, the old theology seemed too narrow and too otherworldly with nothing to offer society at large. Theodore T. Munger, one of the early exponents of the New Theology which was fashioned in response to the new ideas from abroad and the new stirrings at home stated his reasons for finding the evangelical faith he had been taught as a New England child inadequate. Writing in 1883 Munger stated:

The Old Theology stands on a structure of logic outside of humanity; it selects a fact like the divine sovereignty or sin, and inflates it till it fills the whole space about man, seeing in him only the subject of a government against which he is a sinner; it has nothing to say of him as he plays with his babe, or freely marches in battle to sure death for his country, or transacts, in honest ways, the honest business of the world. It lifts him out of his man-

ifold and real relations, out of the wide and rich complexity of actual life, and carries him over into a mechanically constructed and ideal world, - a world made up of five propositions, like Calvinism or some other such system, - and views him only in the light of that world; teaches him that there is no other world for him to consider, and that his life and destiny are bounded by it, that there is no truth, no reality, no duty, no proper field for the play of his powers, no operation of the Spirit of God, no revelation of God, outside of this sharply-defined theological world.²⁷

* An American precursor to the New Theology who in many ways was the key figure in easing a goodly number of evangelical Christians from the old thinking to the new was Horace Bushnell (1802-76). Bushnell provided a basis for adjusting to evolutionary views by asserting that gradualism and growth were God's ways of dealing with the soul. Furthermore, the New England divine developed a Christocentric theology, which much like Schleiermacher, was based on experience rather than upon any external dogmatic authority. The believer could now be released from the compulsion of finding his security in Biblical proof texts. The heart had its reasons which reason need not know.²⁸

The most important contributions toward fashioning what came to be called the New Theology were made by a group of pastors in prominent New England pulpits. All of these men had been influenced by Bushnell and were well read in the new scholarship produced by the European higher critics. Henry Ward Beecher (1813-87) was one of the most conspicuous of those clergymen who adopted a modified supernaturalism combined with warm personal piety. Beecher was usually called an Evangelical Liberal since he sought to restate the essential doctrines of evangelical

Christianity in harmony with the new scholarship. This most popular preacher of mid-nineteenth-century America insisted that divine providence had rolled forward the new spirit of investigation and that ministers should be the first to meet it and join it. He concluded (addressing ministers): "There is no class of people upon earth who can less afford to let the development of truth run ahead of them than they."²⁹

Beecher was influential, but he was no theologian. The real task of developing the New Theology was accomplished by men like Newman Smyth (1843-1925), Theodore T. Munger (1830-1910), George A. Gordon (1853-1929), Phillips Brooks (1835-93), and Washington Gladden (1836-1918). The views advocated by these men became a deepening stream which was later to blend into the more radical scientific modernism of the twentieth century as represented by theologians like Shailer Matthews and his colleagues at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.³⁰

Newman Smyth argued for a redefinition of the old theology in three pioneering volumes: The Religious Feeling (1877), Old Faith in New Light (1878), and The Orthodox Theology of Today (1881). Munger's Freedom of Faith (1883) from which I have already quoted was called by the New York Times "the most forceful and positive expression of the new theology to appear in America."³¹ Washington Gladden was less philosophically inclined than were the other scholars in this circle but was most creative and "the most effective propagandist for the new point of view."³² Of his many books, the three most widely read were Who Wrote the Bible? (1891), How Much is Left of the Old Doctrines? (1899), and Present Day Theology (1918). In all of these works

Gladden reflected the thought of the leading liberal theologians but unlike most of them, he wedded deep social concern with his theological views, thus becoming one of the pioneers of the Social Gospel Movement.

The New Theology rested squarely on a scientific study of the Scriptures as advocated by the higher criticism. This new approach to the Bible was summarized by professor William Arnold Stevens in an 1891 lecture given at the Rochester Theological Seminary. He said:

If we admit that Christianity is a historical religion, that it bases its claims ultimately upon the actual occurrence in human history of certain visible and audible events, it is idle to deny the right and the duty of ascertaining just what those events were, not only from the Bible, but from all other sources. . . . I will not demand from any critical scholar, who sets about testing the genuineness of a certain document of Scripture, first to believe that the document is the word of God; or if he seeks to ascertain the real nature of any fact related in Biblical history, first to believe in such and such a statement of it.³³

The strict conservatives of the Bible conference movement at first only partially understood the New Theology. They vaguely defined the new thought in general terms such as "atheism, pantheism, scepticism, and rationalism."³⁴ There was such a deep sense of alarm among these early Fundamentalists and prejudice against the new thought (although such prejudice was not just on their side), that very little constructive conversation between the traditionalists and the progressives could take place. Fundamentalist rhetoric was of such a nature that it blocked dialogue. For example, Niagara president James Brookes entitled his review of the Parliament of Religions "Lowering the Flag." He observed:

There has never been a more shameful surrender of the claims and crown rights of our Lord Jesus Christ than that witnessed during the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Baptists and Buddhists, Congregationalists and Confucianists, Episcopalians and Enclyopaedists, Methodists and Mohammedans, Presbyterians and Pagans, Christians and Jews, children of God and devil-worshipers, atheists, believers, deists, free thinkers, materialists, pantheists, rationalists, skeptics, socialists, theosophists, Unitarians, Universalists, all met on terms of perfect equality, extended to each other the hand of fraternal greeting, walked in fellowship, and shouted in tones more or less harmonious for the universal brotherhood of man.³⁵

The Parliament declares in effect that all religions are equally good, or if the Americans assert that Christianity is superior to the others, it is only a question of degree in excellence. But if Jesus Christ is not infinitely above and apart from every founder of a religion, He is no Saviour at all. If the Bible is not the only revelation from God, it is no revelation. Both the Saviour and the Scriptures have been unspeakably lowered and degraded by this wretched assemblage.³⁶

Conference leader A.J. Gordon provides another example of early Fundamentalist reaction to the new trends in religious thought. Few of the first generation Fundamentalists stood as close to the shifts in Biblical theology as did Gordon who was pastor of the Clarendon Street Baptist Church in Boston from 1869 until his death in 1895. He was in the same city where his namesake, George A. Gordon ministered at the Old South (Congregational) Church, and not far from Phillips Brooks' pulpit at Boston's Holy Trinity (Episcopalian) Church. Gordon was also only a short distance from New Haven where Smyth and Munger were preaching and writing. Not far away was Andover Seminary where during Gordon's years in Boston five professors were charged with heresy. These scholars had applied the New Theology to missions and argued that heathen who die without knowledge of the Gospel would have an opportunity in the future life to either accept or reject the message.

Gordon had the New Theology of Andover clearly in view when he wrote in his periodical The Watchword:

We imagine that the serious theological strifes now agitating New England are the result of an ambition to be wise above what is written. If, instead of speculating about future probation, our scholars would occupy themselves with present evangelization, how much trouble they would spare the churches.³⁷

When George Harris, new professor of theology at Andover and advocate of higher criticism wrote an article for the Andover Review entitled "The Structure of Sacred Scriptures " Gordon responded in the following manner:

Biblical criticism, so called, affords little comfort to the devout and serious minded. It seems to be a kind of laborious diversion of learned and advanced theologians. But true soldiers of the Cross have little serious respect for these carpetknights of divinity.³⁸

In further observations on the New Theology Gordon wrote that in reading "some of the lucubrations of the higher criticism it seems as though it had deliberately selected the grit and ignored the grains." The practically minded pastor concluded: "Let such as like this way, grind their teeth on this biblical criticism; but such as prefer food to fault-finding will eat the grain of the Word."³⁹

When the higher critics were rejecting the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch Gordon suggested that this was a slander on the character of Christ. The Lord must have been mistaken when He attributed the first five books of the Old Testament to Moses. Who knows wherein else He spake error?⁴⁰

In Gordon's opinion, the key issue in one's approach to the Scriptures was that of presuppositions. He observed that studying the Bible by use of the scientific method alone would only multiply contradictions, for the Bible

... is a sensitive plant, which shuts itself up at the touch of mere critical investigation. In the same paragraph in which it claims that its very words are the words of the Holy Spirit, it repudiates the scientific method as futile for the understanding of those words: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," - and insists on the spiritual method as alone adequate, - "but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (I Cor. 2:9.10).⁴¹

To the Fundamentalist, use of the inductive method for studying the Bible could only be trusted when one first of all accepted the view that the Scriptures were a compilation of completely accurate data, the authenticity of which was assured by supernatural inspiration.

Gordon believed that one of the greatest proofs of the infallibility of the Bible was the practical one and that "the prophecies and the promises of Holy Scripture have yielded their face value to those who have taken pains to prove them."⁴² "When we come believing and obeying, all doubts as to the veracity of the Bible will melt away.

Faith holds not only the keys of all the creeds, but of all the contradictions. He who starts out under the conviction that the Bible is the infallible word of God, will find discrepancies constantly turning into unisons under his study.⁴³

A.J. Gordon, like most Bible conference leaders, was an intensely practical man. Thus the Boston pastor saw the higher criticism as a diversion from fostering personal piety, a threat to evangelism and missions, and a malicious attack on the view of the plenary-verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, to which the Fundamentalists so tenaciously clung. To Gordon, no compromise with the higher criticism could be struck. The higher critic was the deadly foe of supernatural Christianity. "The choice was as simple as that: biblical criticism or the new life in Christ."⁴⁴

The busy Boston pastor never attempted to refute the higher criticism point by point. However another early Fundamentalist from among the Bible conference men offered one of the first serious attempts to meet the higher criticism head on. Evangelist Leander Munhall wrote The Highest Critics vs. The Higher Critics (1892) at a popular level to assure the Fundamentalist churchgoer that the new critics of the Bible could be refuted and were merely "throwing dust in the air."⁴⁵ That his was not a thorough analysis was admitted by a fellow Fundamentalist who said that Munhall's book was written "from the earnest rather than the expert standpoint."⁴⁶

Munhall clearly lays out the contrasting presuppositions inherent in the two approaches to the Bible. The Fundamentalist a priori assumption was that the testimony of the Highest Critics (Christ and the Holy Spirit) was absolutely true and before this testimony "all reverent souls bow acquiescently and receive the same with unquestioning faith."⁴⁷ The higher critics started their work by "eliminating the supernatural from their rules."⁴⁸

Like Gordon, Munhall stressed the subjective. The critic, we are told, cannot approach the Bible as he would any other book and unless he depends on the Holy Spirit to help him he will "most surely become entangled in the intricacies of his own thoughts, be he the most learned of men."⁴⁹ Regarding the claim of the higher critic that two authors wrote the book of Isaiah, a conclusion derived at by applying the "Literary Tests" to the text, Munhall replies:

Put on your literary spectacles. It will do you no harm to wear them if the Holy Spirit has enlightened the eyes of your understanding. Reading carefully you must be struck by the very great similarity of styles between the two portions of the book.

The Methodist evangelist admitted to the imperfect character of his book. This is accounted for, at least in part, he says, by the nature of his work. The Highest Critics was written while Munhall was absent from home and while conducting from two to four meetings a day plus carrying on a large correspondence. Fundamentalist activism detracted from Fundamentalist scholarship.

In spite of his heavy schedule Munhall does show that he has read the works of the major Biblical critics and quotes quite liberally from their writings. However in his book he singles out the most radical of the critics and makes only the briefest mention of the moderate ones and of the possible positive results the new scholarship might have. F.C. Baur is called the leader of the "Destructionists" who in "a most audacious and insolent manner attacked the integrity of the New Testament."⁵¹ Wellhausen is a favorite target for Munhall, as is S.R. Driver, the then Regius professor of Hebrew at Oxford.

Munhall focuses on the major issues of the traditional versus the new views of the Bible. These include the multiple authorship of the Pentateuch as opposed to the Mosaic; the Deutero-Isaiah Theory as opposed to a single Isaiah; the late authorship of Daniel as opposed to a 600 B.C. historical Daniel. Other revisionist views regarding Job, the Psalms, and Esther are surveyed by Munhall. In each instance the evangelist comes out against

the findings of the higher critics and maintains the traditional understanding, but not in a very detailed or convincing manner. In many cases he skirts the issue by appealing to the approach of faith and the damage a rationalistic approach brings to supernatural Christianity.⁵² He frequently fails to follow through in a sustained argument, laying out all of the evidence which is to refute the liberal views. Yet Munhall is adamant in asserting that absolutely no ground can be given to the higher critic. No hint is left that there might be a partial truth in the higher criticism.⁵³

A gross generalization at the beginning of The Highest Critics becomes a harsh condemnation by the time the reader reaches the conclusion of the book. In introducing the contemporary higher critics Munhall affirms that there was not a man in the pulpits of orthodox Christendom, or in a theological or editorial chair, who was "unscriptural in the doctrines of inspiration, original sinfulness, atonement, repentance, faith, justification, regeneration and the new birth, sanctification, resurrection, judgment, and final retribution for unbelievers" who was not at the same time a "Higher Critic" or in hearty sympathy with the Critics' work of questioning the integrity of the Bible. There were hundreds of such misguided religious leaders in America. Munhall personally knew scores of them. They did not preach the Gospel "because they do not believe it."⁵⁴

In the concluding chapter of The Highest Critics Munhall delivers a rather low blow to his theological opponents stating that many of them "are not men of affairs." We are told further that:

They shut themselves into their libraries away from the people, and as a result could not utilize the knowledge they acquired from books, and were therefore failures in the pastorate; but, because of their scholarship, they were placed in a theological or, possibly an editorial chair, to teach others what they themselves could not successfully do. . . . They have lost in large measure, whatever of spiritual life and power they may once have had, and have become fossilized within the dry dusty tomes . . . of their environment.⁵⁵

The views of Brookes, Gordon, and Munhall are representative of the earliest responses of the Fundamentalists to the emerging liberalism of the 1880s and 90s. There was a uniform response - the new theological trends were to be resisted adamantly. No tampering with the fundamentals of the faith could be tolerated. These defenders of the faith "once for all delivered to the saints" demanded that the church declare only the pristine apostolic message. In that message there was a cluster of fundamental doctrines which was nonnegotiable. Their opponents felt that the Fundamentalists' emphasis on certain doctrines was more directed toward refuting liberalism than toward establishing what was absolutely indispensable to Christian faith. The inclusion of dispensationalism and premillennialism in most Fundamentalist "clusters" was a case in point. At any rate, argued some, any extra-Biblical listing of fundamental doctrines was a human venture and liable to human error. Certainly the various lists of fundamentals (for several have been made) were open to evaluation and criticism.⁵⁶

Two lists which have received a great deal of attention by historians of the Fundamentalist movement are that arising out of the Niagara Bible Conference and the five-point declaration of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (Northern). The former, one of the most significant documents in the history of the Fundamentalist movement was unofficially adopted by the Niagara group in 1878 and then ratified in 1890, when the association was incorporated.⁵⁷ The Presbyterian declaration, which had earlier roots in the 1890s, was adopted in 1910 and reaffirmed in 1916 and 1923. The following five doctrines were said to be essential: the inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, the atonement of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the miracle-working power of Christ.⁵⁸ Millenarianism was not included in the Presbyterian statement as it was in the Niagara Creed.

For many years students were taught to identify Fundamentalism by five points. Undoubtedly the "five point" concept was magnified when Stewart Cole erroneously stated that the five points of Fundamentalism were first published by the men of the Niagara Bible Conference in 1895.⁵⁹ This was not the proper date of the Niagara Creed and that document contained fourteen articles, not five. It is true that Fundamentalists had a strong proclivity to creed building, systematization, and a dogma-oriented definition of Christianity, but they showed no

particular preference for five rather than nine or fourteen articles.⁶⁰

The Main Elements in Fundamentalism

The threat posed by the new theological and scientific thought spreading throughout America in the post-Civil War period became the occasion for a defense formation of various theological elements in many ways not all that compatible with one another. Representatives of these various doctrinal positions joined forces to combat a common foe (liberalism), and to defend and preserve a common heritage (supernatural Christianity).

Elements from at least five strains formed a united Fundamentalist front against rising liberalism. They were drawn together by a common tactical sense of the best way to meet the new threat. The five elements are Puritanism; the Arminian impulse, which filtered through to America via Wesleyan theology; revivalism; millenarianism taught mainly in its dispensational form inherited from John Nelson Darby; and Biblical literalism, with the Princeton theologians leading the way in its exposition and defence.

The oldest strain and by 1875 the one most modified, was Puritanism. Nevertheless there was a temper and an insistence on Biblical authority and regeneration in early Fundamentalism which can be traced directly back to the seventeenth century. Indeed the commonly accepted ideology during the first two centuries of America's existence was the evangelical doctrine of the Puritans. The liberal ethos remained in the background until the Civil War,

allowing Calvinist theology to shape the character of the nation.

The chief mark of Puritanism was the absolute conviction that the Bible was inspired, and by the Holy Spirit's power, the Word of God. To the Puritan it was only through this infallible revelation that men could come to a knowledge of God and the experience of saving grace. The Bible did not reveal God's essence. This remained forever hidden. But incomprehensibility was not unknowability and a faith nourished by the Bible could know that God was in control of all things and that He had chosen some from the mass of condemned humanity for salvation.

The Puritans did not reject the help of historical confirmations, but they usually did not stop to argue that the Bible was inspired. The proof which the Christian has, according to Cotton Mather, "is of that sort, that assures him, The Fire is indeed the Fire: even a Self-evidencing, and scarce utterable Demonstration".⁶¹ John Calvin stressed the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to the believer that the Bible was true. Furthermore, the Puritan believed that all truth that needs to be known pertaining to faith and conduct has already been set down in black and white in God's Book. There was nothing essential to be learned outside this revelation. "Consequently Puritan thought was "incurably authoritarian and legalistic", and Puritans developed "a habit of mind which must be called literalism".⁶²

The God of Scripture, Puritans affirmed, was the Sovereign Lord of nature and history, the God who knew His own and called them by name. Predestination was grounded in the loving free will of God, who chose to be gracious to the undeserving sinner and grant him the gift of faith. Only the believer could say that God's ordination of his salvation was the cause of

his faith. "Predestination was not a proposition about all men; it was an explanation of the believer's faith", observes Bruce Shelley.⁶³

With the Puritan pure church ideal came an immense concern to distinguish between the regenerate and the unregenerate. The problem of assurance became existentially central. In the tradition of pastoral care which shaped the convictions about election and taught what the earmarks of the inner experience of grace were, and in the devotional literature that arose to sustain such teaching there was a strong emphasis on subjective criteria of salvation. Sydney Ahlstrom calls this "proleptically evangelical".⁶⁴ This emphasis on subjective experience was certainly central to Fundamentalism as it emerged in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Finally, Puritan theology was characterized by a heavy reliance on the Old Testament, from which the concept of the covenant was derived. Puritan churches gained their most fundamental characteristic from their confident belief that they were in a covenant with the Lord God of Israel. They were an elect nation, a city set upon a hill. Both the church of visible saints and the civil order were to reflect this special relationship with God. Most Puritan leaders firmly believed that the Kingdom of God would be manifest first in America.

The Puritan ideal of creating a Christian society peaked in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, with the rise of pessimistic premillennialism (as opposed to the optimistic postmillennialism almost universally held in America since the seventeenth century), there was a moving away from the covenant concept. Although at the heart of the millenarian's theology there was a devotion to Calvinism, the emphasis shifted from the chosen and

covenanted people of the Old Testament (more distinctively Puritan than Calvinistic) to individual sinners of the New Testament. These sinners had been rescued from a fallen world now considered to be a wrecked vessel beyond hope of redemption. The end-time conditions had totally corrupted both the church and the nation. Jeremy Rifkin states that there was no place for covenant among the premillennialists "since collective action to advance social betterment only acted as a roadblock to the approach of Armageddon and Christ's return to earth".⁶⁵ Carroll Edwin Harrington emphasizes this loss of the covenant concept in even more poignant terms:

From 1907 to 1912, the fundamentalists harbored a deepening fear that the progressive reformers would ruin the country. Finally, in 1912, they abandoned all hope of reviving the Republic and exalting the nation to righteousness. Embittered and vengeful, they withdrew to pray for a speedy Second Coming of Christ.⁶⁶

The early Fundamentalists gave up all hopes of Christianizing society, but they did not totally lack social concern nor were many of them uninvolved in social reform. It would be more accurate to say that the premillennialists did not share a monolithic view about their involvement in the world. They held certain things in common, like an intense pessimism about the possibility of lasting reform without the physical presence of Christ, but some of them were substantially more involved in contemporary economic, social, and political problems than were others.⁶⁷

Although the early Fundamentalists broke with the Puritan concept of the covenant and "bringing in the Kingdom", they did not break with the main body of Calvinist teaching. The Princeton theology, the cornerstone of which was the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture⁶⁸, became the fortress of orthodoxy. Although relatively small in number, Calvinist theologians were

great in influence, buttressing the doctrinal foundations of Christianity against the forces of rationalism, evolution, and Higher Criticism.

The strongly pietistic, antiworldly strain in Fundamentalism was fed largely by the Arminian tradition. It also came from the Presbyterian doctrine of the spirituality of the church which arose in an attempt to justify lack of support for the anti-slavery movement by asserting that the church had only spiritual responsibilities. Wesley's doctrine of perfectionism was mediated to Americans through the noted revivalist Charles Grandison Finney and his associate at Oberlin, Asa Mahan who wrote The Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection (1839). Phoebe Palmer and her physician husband Walter, joined with Phoebe's sister Sarah Lankford to lead in a holiness revival.

The key doctrine of these perfectionist teachers was that of entire sanctification as a second work of grace. However, through the influence of men like Horace Bushnell, and "progressive orthodoxy", many began to view Christian experience in "gradual" categories rather than the "instant" categories so dear to those in the revivalistic and Holiness movements. Schism within the mainstream branches of Methodism and modification of the Holiness doctrine followed.

The beginning of the Niagara Bible Conference goes back to a series of small Bible studies conducted in New York in the late 1860s. One of the reasons these conferences were called was to oppose the doctrine of perfectionism.⁶⁹ But this does not mean there was no interest in deeper piety among the men who led Fundamentalism in the beginning stages. James Brookes stated very clearly in the first issue of The Truth that the periodical's purpose, among other things, was to urge believers on to "a higher practical holiness

by walking in the light of unclouded fellowship with the Father and with His Son and by 'looking for that blessed hope'".⁷⁰ The Niagara Creed of 1878 stressed in Article 11 that the Holy Spirit was a Divine Person, "the source and power of all acceptable worship and service", and in Article 12 that every Christian was called with a holy calling to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit and should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.⁷¹

The Wesleyan holiness impulse had to be purged of the eradication of sin aspect before it could be accepted by the leaders of the Bible and prophetic conference movement. This change was reflected in the history of the influential British deeper-life movement begun in 1875 at Keswick, in the Lake District in Cumberland. Gradually the emphasis on eradication was replaced by an emphasis on the power of the Spirit to lead the believer away from evil and toward righteousness.⁷²

In 1880 D.L. Moody set up a series of summer meetings for the inspiration of the laity of the churches. These Northfield, Massachusetts conferences were designed to urge believers to "self-consecration, and to plead God's promises, and to wait upon Him for a fresh anointment of power from on high".⁷³ Men like American Baptist pastor, A.J. Gordon, the noted Scottish preacher and author of devotional works, Andrew Bonar, and especially F.B. Meyer, British pastor and lecturer on the deeper Christian life, left a profound impression through their sermons at the Bible conferences of Northfield and Niagara, and through their writings which appeared in periodicals like Truth and Watchword. Furthermore, two special conferences on the Holy Spirit were held - the first in Baltimore in 1890, and the second in Brooklyn in 1894.⁷⁴ At the first of these, F.J. Ellis, speaking on the theme

"The Holy Spirit and the Christian" observed: "Let us not forget that we are to contend for and defend 'the faith of Jesus', but in doing so let us also remember that, after all, the best possible defence that can be made is being made by those whose lives most closely imitate the life of Jesus Christ our Lord".⁷⁵ Thus the Bible conferences, developed in part out of a desire to escape from the delusion of "sinless perfection" as taught in the Holiness revival of the 1850s were drawn back into the movement for personal sanctification.

The type of piety and spirituality admired and desired was of an almost mystical quality. Of W.R. Nicholson, bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church and frequent conference speaker it was written:

The unseen things of God were revealed to his own intuitions, through painstaking waiting before God and sweet communion with his Lord and Saviour. Thus, under the intense light of spirituality, as few, he saw the inner truth and hidden glories of the Holy Scriptures. . . . What an uplift there was in his matchless expositions of the Word! How by his clear analysis, spiritual insight and sublime logic, he inspired faith to a wider sweep of privilege and blessing.⁷⁶

Some would call this emphasis a weakness - an inclination toward "sweetness", "preciousness", "treacle". Well, the other side of this "treacle" was "brimstone".⁷⁷ Fundamentalist preachers of the late nineteenth century were vociferous in rebuking Christians for their worldliness, and the church for its terrible apostasy and its impenitence. The institutional church was condemned for seeking worldly status, developing large-scale organizations, and building beautiful sanctuaries to the glory of man. At the 1886 Prophetic Conference in Chicago A.T. Pierson condemned the church for being wholly worldly and worldly holy. At the same conference Canon Fausset declared that the distinguishing feature of the age was "intense worldliness".⁷⁸

Fundamentalism's anti-worldliness is so pronounced that some church historians would make it the common denominator of all the characteristics which go into defining the movement, at least as it manifested itself after the 1920s. 79

Revivalism and millenarianism in alliance with Biblical literalism, especially as taught by the Princeton theology are the remaining key elements in Fundamentalism. Recent scholarship is debating which of these was the primary force in preparing the way for movement.

George Marsden insists that "the dynamics of unopposed revivalism" is the primary force in the American religious experience that prepared the way for Fundamentalism.⁸⁰ There is no doubt at all that revivalism colored much of Fundamentalism from the start. Some of the important churches of the movement gathered around once-itinerent evangelists who had settled into pastorates. This trend began already in the 1890s and early twentieth century. J. Wilbur Chapmen left the evangelistic field to become pastor of Bethany Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. R.A. Torrey was for many years an evangelist who later in his ministry became administrator at Chicago's Moody Bible Institute from 1899-1908 and the Bible Institute of Los Angeles in 1908, where he helped organize the Church of the Open Door, which he pastored. There were many pastors, who although not full time evangelists can best be understood as revivalists in the style of D.L. Moody. They were deeply concerned with evangelism and made individual conversion and salvation their primary emphasis. Moody was their hero.⁸¹ Daniel Stevick observes that revivalism's "activism, dash, individualism, simplified moral perspective, impatience with learning, conspicuous choristers, mass methods of evangelism, vigorous Gospel songs, and mercurial experience patterns were contributed

directly to the rising Fundamentalist Movement".⁸² Fundamentalism can be seen to a large extent as a sub-species of revivalism in which certain new emphases became popular as part of the anti-modernist reaction.⁸³

Since the First Great Awakening American evangelical Protestantism had for the most part accepted as an essential part of its being the ideas and practices of revivalism. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, "revivalism was not a type of Christianity in America; it was Christianity in America".⁸⁴

Charles Finney adapted revivalism to the temper and mood of the Jacksonian era and fashioned the philosophy and technique for saving souls which has remained with most professional evangelists to this very day. Finney's views on revivalism were disseminated particularly through his widely read handbook on how to conduct revivals Lectures on Revivals of Religion, first published in 1835. By 1842 Robert Baird, who wrote a pioneering study in American church history entitled Religion in America noted that revivals had become "a constituent part of the religious system" to such an extent that "he who should oppose himself to revivals as such would be regarded by most of our evangelical Christians as ipso facto, an enemy to spiritual religion".⁸⁵

Nineteenth century revivalism was not confined to rural and frontier communities, as is commonly thought, but was very influential in the larger urban centers in the East as well as the West. Dwight L. Moody adapted modern revival techniques to the urban setting. During the Moody era revivalists began to promote city-wide interdenominational evangelistic crusades at will.

The use of the press for the purposes of revivalism was popularized by Moody. Both secular and religious papers frequently published long accounts of the evangelist's meetings, sometimes giving verbatim reports of his sermons.

William Hoyt Coleman filed the following report of Moody's 1876 New York crusade conducted in the Hippodrome:

The Hippodrome work is a vast business enterprise, organized and conducted by business men, who have put money into it on business principles, for the purpose of saving men. But through all the machinery vibrates the power without which it would be useless - the power of the Holy Ghost.⁸⁶

Moody was able to bring together the religious elements of cities whose population was in the millions and rally them around a central purpose - a unified crusade to save souls. Son William wrote:

From the very first of his evangelistic work in America Mr. Moody's sound judgment inspired the confidence of men of affairs while his loyalty to the Gospel in all its simplicity, without championing theological fads, recommended him to the ministers who believed in evangelistic efforts, he also earned the support of laymen who were able to give him the opportunity for large enterprises.⁸⁷

Moody consciously worked at maximizing the effectiveness of urban evangelism, and did so out of deep conviction. "Water runs down hill", he said at the onset of his career, "and the highest hills in America are the great cities. If we can stir them we shall stir the whole country".⁸⁸

Revivalism was a pragmatic venture in the Finney-Moody era - so much so that there was grave danger that theology would be modified in order to get the desired results. Finney turned Calvinism inside out, for he believed the doctrines taught in the Presbyterian church which he attended were "a perfect straight-jacket" to the preacher trying to win souls.⁸⁹ Moody claimed to be an Arminian up to the Cross but a Calvinist after the Cross. He in many ways modified Finney in a doctrinally more traditional direction. However individualism, activism, and free will characterized Moody's approach to revivalism, as it did Finney's.

Moody's theology grew out of the pietistic evangelical milieu of the nineteenth century. The evangelist did not articulate doctrine systematically. However this does not mean that Moody's pietism made him indifferent to creeds, doctrine, or theology, as might be said of some of his successors. He left the teaching of the doctrinal aspects of Christianity to others. Moody preached a simple message for the common man looking for salvation. The evangelist said the Gospel could be reduced to the three R's - "Ruin by sin, Redemption by Christ, and Regeneration by the Holy Ghost".⁹⁰ He underscored a simple, pragmatic approach to the Bible. He told Christians:

Take the Bible; study it; leave criticism to the theologians; feed on the Word; then go out to work. Combine the two - study and work if you would be the full orb'd Christian. . . . Pass on the message; be obedient to commands; waste no time in discussion; let speculation and theorizing pass into the hands of those who like that kind of study.⁹¹

Stanley N. Gundry in his Love Them In: The Proclamation Theology of D.L. Moody deals with the contention of William McLoughlin, Bernard Weisberger, and to a lesser degree James Findlay that Moody's evangelistic technique determined his theology and that following Finney's theories, the evangelist turned revivalism into a big business enterprise in which the end justified the means. That Moody was an innovator in terms of the methodology of evangelism is beyond question. However Gundry takes issue with the aforementioned studies which tend to "jump from the fact that Moody used means to the conclusion that Moody thought that the right use of means would provide revival and conversions, much as they understood Finney to have said". This was "neither Moody's practice nor his expressed view".⁹² From the beginning to the end of his career as an evangelist, "Moody eschewed both in word and in practice the type of emotionalism and high pressure that can be so readily

used by evangelists to manipulate crowds, if they so choose, in order to produce 'conversions'".⁹³

Moody was much more influenced in his theology by Calvinists like Charles Spurgeon and C.H. Mackintosh than he was by Arminian Finney.⁹⁴ In a most "un-Finney" like manner, the evangelist answered the question of how he began services for revival purposes by saying: "I don't like the word 'revival'; we cannot tell whether we are going to have a revival or not. That depends upon whether God comes."⁹⁵

Revivalism was also experience-oriented, emphasizing "heart" religion over "head" religion. The pietist strand of Protestantism had always placed primary emphasis on subjective experience. "If you want to get hold of an audience", said Moody, "aim at the heart."⁹⁶ Although emotions were subdued in Moody's meetings, the extremes of other evangelists like Sam Jones ("the Moody of the South"), Milan Williams, and the flamboyant Billy Sunday led Harper's Weekly to call the revival meeting a "Salvation Circus".⁹⁷

Richard Hofstadter has written about the component of anti-intellectualism which is present in Fundamentalism. Revivalism fed this impulse for by it "simple people were brought back to faith with simple ideas, voiced by forceful preachers who were capable of getting away from the complexities and pressing upon them the simplest of alternatives: the choice of heaven or hell".⁹⁸ The revivalist's tendency to think in terms of simple dichotomies became a marked characteristic of Fundamentalism. There was truth and there was error and the Fundamentalists always came out on the side of truth.

When James Brookes, president of the Niagara Bible Conference christened his new periodical The Truth in 1875, his introductory editorial made a point

of assuring readers that the name was not chosen "as indicating an arrogant assumption of special acquaintance with the truth".⁹⁹ Yet the definite impression left when reading The Truth and other than current periodicals like it, was that these men had the whole truth and their opponents little, or none. The Fundamentalist tended to equate his interpretation of the Bible with the Bible itself, which of course was true. Reflecting on his work after the first eleven years of publishing The Truth, Brookes observed that during this time not even once was the editorial "we" used "because no personal opinion has been expressed concerning any subject discussed. The aim, kept steadily in view from the beginning," the editor concluded, was "to present what God reveals, not what man says, and 'not to think above that which is written'."¹⁰⁰

The first article in the first issue of The Truth entitled "Saved or Lost" illustrates the revivalist-Fundamentalist dichotomized view of things.¹⁰¹ Men were saved or lost, belonged to God or Satan, did works of righteousness or works of evil. There were few ambiguities. Like the conversion experience, transitions were not gradual but sudden and radical - from one state to its opposite. George Marsden observes:

Such intellectual categories left almost no room for the motifs of thought that were characteristic of liberal theology and scientific naturalism in the later nineteenth century. Both Darwinism and higher criticism emphasized gradual natural development and the new theology saw God working through such means, emphasizing the synthesis of the natural and supernatural rather than the antithesis. Wherever revivalism had been relatively unopposed in American religious life, there was virtually no preparation for the acceptance of the new categories - indeed there was hardly a way to discuss them.¹⁰²

Richard Hofstadter sees in revivalist Billy Sunday the exemplification of this kind of mentality - "the one-hundred percent mentality" he calls it.¹⁰³

The one-hundred percenter has his mind totally committed and will tolerate no ambiguities, no equivocations, no reservations, and no criticism. He considers his kind of commitment and militancy in defending the truth as an evidence of toughness and masculinity. Hofstadter qualifies this description by admitting: "There are both serene and militant fundamentalists; and it is hard to say which group is more numerous".¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, revivalism is a major source of the militant, anti-intellectual "one-hundred per cent" mentality so prominent in Fundamentalism.

The fourth main element in Fundamentalism is millenarianism. Ernest R. Sandeen heads up the school of thought which sees millenarianism as the primary factor conditioning all other elements in the Fundamentalist formula.

The type of millenarianism which emerged in Fundamentalism was that which surfaced in America by the middle of the nineteenth century and was known as "futurism". John Nelson Darby of England left his imprint on American futurism through his numerous visits to the United States and through his writings. American futurism took on the name "dispensationalism" because of Darby's influence. Dispensationalism was gradually accepted on the American scene. It became a tool in discrediting postmillennialism since it stressed the progressive evil tendency of the current age. Although not all premillennialists were dispensationalists in the early period of Fundamentalism, after 1900 the dispensational premillennialists predominated and to the present day most Fundamentalists are of this persuasion. The nature of dispensationalism and the manner in which it was fed into the American

millenarian stream and popularized by the men of Niagara will be discussed in chapter three of this study.

To this dispensational millenarianism must be added the Princeton Theology, with its defense of Calvinism and especially its articulate definition of Biblical inerrancy. That the millenarian Niagara Creed of 1878 should affirm the inspiration of the "original autographs" in the same year that the phrase became part of the Princeton apologetic demonstrates similarity of views if not direct influence. Benjamin Warfield, one of the chief spokesmen for the Princeton doctrine of inerrancy contributed an article entitled "The Truth on Inspiration" to Brookes' periodical in 1883.¹⁰⁵

Fundamentalism then, according to Sandeen was comprised mainly of an alliance between millenarianism and Princeton Theology, which though not wholly compatible, managed to maintain a united front against Modernism until about 1918. Millenarianism, however, was the chief component.¹⁰⁶ Marsden agrees as to the significance of the Princeton Theology in this amalgam but puts greater emphasis on the Princeton element, alongside the main impulse - revivalism (which Sandeen scarcely mentions), than he would on millenarianism. Marsden asserts that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries "the most natural allies of the revivalist fundamentalist were the Princeton theologians who for generations had been firing heavy theological artillery at every idea that moved and who were almost indecently astute at distinguishing Biblical and Reformed truth from all error."¹⁰⁷ The Princeton Calvinists helped counteract the anti-intellectualism of revivalist elements in Fundamentalism and check the subjectivism of the holiness impulse.

The chief weakness of Sandeen's interpretation of Fundamentalism is his over-emphasis on millenarianism as the chief defining characteristic of the movement. His definition of Fundamentalism is too narrow and temporally circumscribed. It fails to apply to Fundamentalism as it appeared after 1918 and especially as it became so schismatic in the denominations in the 1920s. Whereas dispensational premillennialism characterized most of those in the Fundamentalist movement after 1918, some very important exceptions must be noted.

Some of the key leaders who came under the Fundamentalist banner during the period of acute controversy in the denominations cannot be made to fit Sandeen's definition. Some of these men were not dispensational premillennialists and some did not even uphold the view of inerrancy as taught at Princeton. For example, Sandeen's definition of a Fundamentalist would not apply to such an important and central a figure in the movement as Baptist editor Curtis Lee Laws (1868 - 1946). In the July 1, 1920 issue of his Watchman-Examiner Laws coined the label "Fundamentalist" to designate those like himself who were prepared to do battle for the fundamentals of the faith. However in the same article in which the name was suggested, Laws rejected as a suitable descriptive label the term "premillennialist" because it was "too closely allied with a single doctrine and not sufficiently inclusive."¹⁰⁸ With respect to the Bible, Laws did not argue for inerrancy but took a more moderate position.¹⁰⁹ Canadian Baptist pastor and crusader T.T. Shields (1873 - 1955), one of the "prima donnas" of Fundamentalism (according to George

Dollar) was an amillennialist. Not only did Shields deny the theory that there would be a literal one thousand year reign of Christ on earth, he made repeated open attacks on the dispensationalist Scotfield Reference Bible.¹¹⁰

J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) was Fundamentalism's greatest theologian, even though he very reluctantly accepted a label which he believed made out of basic Christian orthodoxy an "ism." Again, Machen clearly falls outside the narrow millenarian definition of Fundamentalism. In his 1923 classic, Christianity and Liberalism Machen stated of premillennialism:

That belief in the opinion of the present writer, is an error, arrived at by a false interpretation of the Word of God; we do not think that the prophecies of the Bible permit so definite a mapping-out of future events. . . . The recrudescence of "Chiliasm" or "premillennialism" in the modern Church causes us serious concern; it is coupled, we think, with a false method of interpreting Scripture which in the long run will be productive of harm.¹¹¹

The student of Fundamentalism must avoid the error of mistaking one particular strain within Fundamentalism for the source of the entire movement. On the other hand, as is shown in chapter two of this study, although all five strains in Fundamentalism were present at the Niagara Bible Conference and certain aspects received more emphasis at different times in Niagara's twenty-five year history than did others, the most consistent and pronounced element at the conference was millenarianism. It is largely through this emphasis that the Niagara Bible Conference shaped Fundamentalism. The Niagara Bible Conference and the two large prophetic conferences of 1878 and 1886 which it spawned contributed an "apocalyptic version of orthodoxy" to American Fundamentalism.¹¹²

As to the comparative weight of importance which should be given to the various strands feeding into Fundamentalism, one would have to conclude

that the movement was too complex to attribute its rise to mainly one or perhaps two elements. It seems wiser to simply assert that Fundamentalism was synthetic and although unified at first, had the seeds of divisiveness in it right from the beginning. It was a synthetic movement of considerable scope. Although it had definite doctrines and characteristics in common, it still involved large numbers of lay people as well as clergy of diverse denominational background, as will be seen in our study of Niagara. The movement was driven by social as well as theological forces. It owed a great deal to the enthusiasm and distinctive emphases of individual leaders.

It is sufficient to say the Fundamentalism had a multiple ancestry. As we have seen, the family members held together fairly well until the second decade of the twentieth century, after which "family rifts" began to occur.

It is unfortunate that the still unchristened Fundamentalist movement so rapidly moved in the direction so evident in the controversies of the twenties. Just two decades prior to the twenties the great majority of pastors and laymen had not yet been forced, as they later were, to choose sides and take on a specific label - Fundamentalist or Liberal. Although denominations, like the Christian Reformed and those in the Lutheran, Anabaptist, Restorationist, and Holiness traditions did not get involved in the controversy, most denominations were deeply affected. Even those groups not directly involved in the internal controversy felt the ramifications of the external struggle.

At the turn of the century, which is the outer limit of this study, Fundamentalism was a significant force in American life. Alarmed and dismayed at the rapid spread of higher criticism, evolution, the Social Gospel and other forms of what they considered to be liberalism, the Fundamentalists mounted an increasingly well informed rebuttal of the new thought. Fundamentalist vigor was expressed in the burgeoning Bible school movement, the formation of more and more Bible conferences, publications like the Scotfield Reference Bible, The Fundamentals, and the five volume International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, and the great efforts put forth in evangelism and foreign missions.

The Scotfield Reference Bible was almost entirely the work of one man - C.I. Scotfield. However, there was a splendid display of broader Fundamentalist co-operation in the common task of articulating and defending orthodox Christianity. This was seen in the publishing of The Fundamentals, a series of twelve books issued from 1910 to 1915 and financed by two wealthy laymen - Milton and Lyman Stewart. Three million of these volumes were mailed out free of charge to ministers and Christian workers all over America to "get them into line for true service" by exposing them to the orthodox scholarship of "the best and most loyal Bible teachers in the world."¹¹³ The "world" was limited almost entirely to the Anglo-Saxon community - the United States, England, Scotland, and Canada contributing authors. One German, Dr. F. Bettex, professor emeritus from Stuttgart contributed an article on "The Bible and Modern Criticism." Evangelical Anglicans like

Dyson Hague and W.H. Griffith Thomas; veteran millenarians like George Bishop (a Niagara founder) and Arno C. Gaebelain, longtime editor and prophecy lecturer; Princeton theologian Benjamin B. Warfield and Scottish theologian James Orr (both of whom had a reputation for excellent scholarship); and writers reflecting the Keswick holiness tradition - sixty four authors in all, appeared in The Fundamentals. A very high proportion of the contributors were from the old guard of the Niagara Bible Conference.

My purpose is not to analyze and evaluate the twelve volume series but simply to note that in The Fundamentals we see one of the fruits of the alliance of the diverse strands in the Fundamentalist movement - an alliance dedicated at all costs to the best possible articulation of the cardinal doctrines of orthodox Christianity. Unfortunately, at the very time these volumes were being published, the united front was breaking down and the divisive spirit within "the family" was finally expressing itself overtly. Subsequent to The Fundamentals there was a decline from the generally high standards reflected in that publication into a strident reactionary mood in which the gift for scholarly apologetic was largely lost (with some notable exceptions, i.e. J. Gresham Machen, Robert E. Speer, John Alfred Faulker, Edgar Youngs Mullins, and others). Perhaps the freedom and breadth of thinking of the contributors to The Fundamentals might be attributed to the nurturing of many of them - for example Warfield, Orr, Thomas, Melvin G. Kyle, W.G. Moorehead, G. Campbell Morgan, and Bishop H.C.G. Moule in the great traditions of theology. When Fundamentalist leaders rejected continuity with the great theological heritage of the past the movement inevitably narrowed and withdrew

from the mainstream of theological and intellectual exchange and developed a very pronounced fortress mentality. Leaders then became so preoccupied with internal dialogue and applying various tests of "true orthodoxy" to those within the Fundamentalist alliance that they rapidly moved toward a "cultic" mentality and stance.¹¹⁴

Having analyzed and defined the main strands in Fundamentalism and having briefly alluded to the changes the movement underwent in the early twentieth century, we now turn to a closer look at the Niagara Bible Conference and the Niagara-sponsored prophetic conferences. It is here we may see the Fundamentalist amalgam emerge.

FOOTNOTES

1. Mrs. George Needham, "Niagara Bible Conference", Watchword 19(1897): 144.
2. Stewart G. Cole, A History of Fundamentalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1931; reprint ed., Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963), p. 34.
3. Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954; reprint ed., Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963), p. 11.
4. Truth 4(1878): 452.
5. C. Norman Kraus, Dispensationalism in America (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1958), p. 80.
6. Ernest R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970; reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. xix. See also Origins of Fundamentalism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), a reprint of Sandeen's article "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism" in Church History 36(1967): 66-83.
7. Sandeen, Roots, p. xxiii. George Marsden critiques Sandeen's equating of Fundamentalism with millenarianism in Christian Scholars' Review (Winter, 1971): 143. Sandeen replies in Christian Scholars' Review (Spring, 1971): 227-32.
8. George W. Dollar, A History of Fundamentalism in America (Greenville, S.C.: Bob Jones University Press, 1973), p. 5.
9. Timothy P. Weber, Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

10. George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

11. Larry Dean Pettegrew, "The Historical and Theological Contributions of the Niagara Bible Conference to American Fundamentalism" (Th. D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1976). See also Larry D. Pettegrew, "The Niagara Bible Conference and American Fundamentalism", five parts, Central Bible Quarterly 19-20 (Winter, 1976 - Winter, 1977).

12. As cited by Sandeen in Roots, p. xv, quoting from Niebuhr's article in Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1944 ed., vol. 5.

13. See Sandeen, Roots, chaps. 6-10. Marsden in Fundamentalism and American Culture, pp. 202-206 corroborates Sandeen's contention that the common social hypothesis, premised on the conflict between rural and urban elements cannot stand, citing the research of Robert E. Wenger, "Social Thought in American Fundamentalism, 1918-1933" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1973).

14. George Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon, A Comparison with English Evangelicalism", Church History 46(1977): 225.

15. Sandeen, Roots, p. xvi.

16. Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon", 224-25.

17. George Marsden in David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, eds., The Evangelicals, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 149-53.

18. Ibid., p. 152.

19. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, pp. 204-205.

20. As cited in ibid., p. 101.

21. Cole, p. 53.

22. Furniss, pp. 14-15.
23. Sandeen, Roots, p. xvii.
24. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 808. The article on Fundamentalism in the 1974 edition of Encyclopedia Britannica is written by revisionist Ernest Sandeen - see vol. 7: 777-80.
25. John D. Woodbridge, Mark A Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, The Gospel in America: Themes in the Story of American Evangelicals (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 51.
26. Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1973), p. 264.
27. As cited by Robert T. Handy, in "Fundamentalism and Modernism in Perspective," Religion and Life 24(Summer, 1953): 387.
28. Hudson, pp. 271-72.
29. As cited by Handy, 386.
30. Hudson, pp. 270-76.
31. Ibid., p. 270.
32. Ibid.
33. As cited by Bruce Shelley, in "A.J. Gordon and Biblical Criticism," Foundations 14(January - March, 1971): 69.
34. Kraus, p. 14.
35. Truth (19(1893): 615.

36. Ibid., 617.
37. Watchword 9(1887): 121, as cited by Shelley in "A.J. Gordon and Biblical Criticism."
38. Ibid., 6(1884): 98.
39. Ibid., 9(1887): 25.
40. Ibid., 4(1893): 85.
41. A.J. Gordon, The Ministry of the Spirit (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1894), p. 181.
42. Ibid., p. 183.
43. Ibid., pp. 182-83.
44. Shelley, "A.J. Gordon and Biblical Criticism," 73.
45. Leander W. Munhall, The Highest Critics vs. the Higher Critics (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1892), pp. 21-21.
46. Dyson Hague, Who Are the Higher Critics and What is the Higher Criticism? (n.p., n.d.), p. 35. Canon Hague was Rector of the Memorial Church (Anglican) in London, Ontario, lecturer in liturgies and ecclesiology at Wycliffe College, Toronto, and examining chaplain to the bishop of Huron. The material in Hague's booklet on the higher criticism is to be found in toto in the first volume of the twelve volume series called The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth (1910-15). Hague's article, plus numerous other articles on the higher criticism in The Fundamentals provide a broader Fundamentalist view on the subject which acknowledges the light some of the new scholarship had shed upon the Scriptures. In his Higher Critics Hague insists that the conservatives are not obscurantists. To the contrary. "The desire to receive all the light that the most fearless search for the truth by the highest scholarship can yield is the desire of every true believer in the Bible. No really healthy Christian mind can advocate obscurantism. The obscurant who opposes the investigation of scholarship, and would throttle the investigators, has not the Spirit of Christ. In heart and attitude he is a Mediaevalist" (p. 29).

47. Munhall, The Highest Critics, p. 7.

48. Ibid., p. 136.

49. Ibid., p. 16.

50. Ibid., p. 143.

51. Ibid., p. 14.

52. Both sides in the Fundamentalist-Liberal debate had a hard time covering up their biases. The Fundamentalists at least never left anyone guessing about theirs. Thus Canon Dyson Hague argues that "the conclusions of an avowedly prejudiced scholarship must be subjected to a peculiarly searching analysis. The most ordinary Bible reader is learned enough to know that the investigation of the Book that claims to be supernatural by those who are avowed enemies of all that is supernatural, and the study of subjects that can be understood only by men of humble and contrite heart by men who are admittedly irreverent in spirit must be received with caution" (The Higher Criticism, p. 29). Coming to the heart of the matter, Hague asserts: "If we have any prejudice, we would rather be prejudiced against rationalism. If we have any bias, it must be against a teaching which unsteadies heart and unsettles faith" (ibid., p. 33).

53. The closest Munhall comes to acknowledging some possible good that might come from the higher criticism is reflected in the following statement: "Those Higher Critics who, by proper literary and historical tests are trying honestly, reverently and prayerfully to ascertain the exact text of the Holy Scriptures, I bid God's speed! for I am in profound sympathy with their work" (The Highest Critics, p. 175).

54. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

55. Ibid., p. 177. Munhall's defensiveness shines through when he speaks of "men of affairs." Although he states that many of his theological opponents are not such men, Munhall affirms that he is. He writes: "I claim to be a man of affairs. In the past fifteen years I have preached to more than 7,000,000 of hearers, a greater number than any living man, with possibly one exception, during the same time. I have seen more than

100,000 persons publicly avow their faith for the first time in Jesus the Savior of men. I have seen many thousands of Laodicean Christians repent to do their first works" (ibid., p. 178). With the definition of "a man of affairs" decidedly in Munhall's favor, the evangelist can write: "If any of the Critics were to deign to notice what I have written they will probably brush it aside by saying, He is unscholarly, uncritical, and uncompréhensive in his treatment of the case; but since they cannot truthfully say, He is unintelligible, untruthful and unscriptural, it matters little to me what they may say. I have not written for the Critics, but for the multitude of the intelligent men and women in the church of God who are wondering what it all means, and have not the time or patience to go deeply into these matters" (ibid., p. 176). There was a struggle going on for the allegiance of the "multitude of the intelligent men and women in the church of God" and Fundamentalist ministers were caught in the middle of that struggle. There is some justification for believing that at least in part their extreme reaction to liberalism was a response not only to a theological threat, but to some of them also a threat to their station and esteem.

56. Bernard Ramm, The Evangelical Heritage (Waco: Word Books, 1973), p. 92.

57. Truth 19(1890): 364.

58. Sandeen, Roots, p. xviii.

59. Cole, p. 34.

60. The World's Christian Fundamentals Association founded in 1919 had a nine point creed - cf. Sandeen, Roots, p. 245.

61. As cited by Perry Miller in The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939), p. 20.

62. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

63. Bruce Shelley, Evangelicalism in America (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), p. 29.

64. The Evangelicals, p. 292. Ahlstrom's chapter "From Puritanism to Evangelicalism: A Critical Perspective" is most perceptive.

65. Jeremy Rifkin with Ted Howard, The Emerging Order (New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1979), p. 152.

66. Carroll Edwin Harrington, "The Fundamentalist Movement in America, 1870-1920" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1959), pp. iii and iv.

67. See Paul Clifford Wilt, "Premillennialism in America, 1865-1918 With Special Reference to Attitudes Toward Social Reform" (Ph. D. dissertation, The American University, 1970). Also see Norris Magnuson, Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical-Social Work, 1865-1920 (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press and The American Theological Library Association, 1977).

68. See Benjamin B. Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, 2nd ed., (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing House, 1948).

69. Watchword 13(1891): 60.

70. Truth 1(1875): 4-5.

71. See Appendix A for the entire Niagara Creed.

72. Sandeen traces this change in Roots, pp. 178-81, as does Marsden in Fundamentalism and American Culture, pp. 77-80. See also Vinson Synan, pp. 45-46 in The Evangelicals.

73. This excerpt from the original call issued by Moody in 1880 is taken from Arthur T. Pierson's "Story of the Northfield Conferences", Northfield Echoes 1(1894); 2.

74. Proceedings of these conferences are recorded in A.C. Dixon, ed., The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit (Baltimore: Wharton, Barron and Co., 1890), and A.C. Dixon, ed., The Holy Spirit in Life and Service (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895).

75. F.M. Ellis in The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit, p. 148.

76. As cited in Introduction, W.R. Nicholson, Oneness With Christ, ed. James M. Gray (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1951 (1903)), p. 13.
77. Daniel B. Stevick, Beyond Fundamentalism (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), p. 29. Stevick says Samuel Butler called this kind of piety "brimstone and treacle".
78. George C. Needham, ed., Prophetic Studies of the International Prophetic Conference (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1886), p. 32 and p. 96.
79. George Marsden in Christian Scholar's Review (Spring, 1971): 232 writes: "My suggestion, based on what I see as the most usual characteristics of those who have called themselves Fundamentalists since the 1920s is that the definition of Fundamentalism is complex, normally including such factors as millenarianism, opposition to liberal theology, anti-evolution, Biblical literalism, revivalism, separateness of the church from the world, and individual moral purity. The common denominator for these characteristics is, I suggest, anti-worldliness".
80. Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon", 255.
81. Brenda M. Meehan, "A.C. Dixon: An Early Fundamentalist", Foundations 10 (January-March, 1967): 51.
82. Stevick, p. 30.
83. Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon", 226.
84. Shelley, Evangelicalism, p. 46. Cf. the opening sentence in the Introduction of The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900, An Anthology, ed., William G. McLoughlin (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968), p. 1 "The story of American Evangelicalism is the story of America itself in the years 1800 to 1900."
85. As cited by Shelley in Evangelicalism, p. 46.

86. As cited in William R. Moody, The Life of Dwight L. Moody, "The Official Authorized Edition" (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900), p. 281. This quotation does not prove that Moody thought business technique could save souls, as William McLoughlin suggests by leaving out the second sentence in this citation of Coleman in William McLoughlin, Jr., Modern Revivalism (New York: The Ronald Press, 1959), p. 166.

87. Ibid., p. 263.

88. Ibid.

89. Charles G. Finney, An Autobiography, (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1908), p. 59.

90. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, p. 246.

91. As cited by William R. Moody, p. 497.

92. Stanley N. Gundry, Love Them In: The Proclamation Theology of D.L. Moody (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), pp. 80-81.

93. Ibid., p. 78.

94. Ibid.

95. As cited in ibid., p. 84.

96. As cited by William R. Moody, p. 464.

97. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, p. 441.

98. Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 84.

99. Truth 1(1875): 1.
100. Ibid., 11(1885): 529-30.
101. Ibid., 1(1875): 5-7.
102. Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon," 226-27.
103. Hofstadter, pp. 118-19.
104. Ibid., p. 118.
105. Truth 9(1883): 124-29.
106. Sandeen, Origins, p. 3.
107. Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon," 228.
108. As cited by LeRoy Moore, Jr., in "Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen," Church History 37(1968): 197.
109. Ibid. See also Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, pp. 107-08.
110. Dollar, p. 111.
111. J. Gresham Machen, Christianity and Liberalism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d. 1923), p. 49. Walter Lippman in his Preface to Morals wrote of Machen's work: "It is an admirable book. For its acumen, for its saliency, and for its wit, this cool and stringent defense of orthodox Protestantism is, I think, the best popular argument produced (in the controversy between Christianity and Liberalism). We shall do well to listen to Dr. Machen" (as cited on the cover of Christianity and Liberalism). In his mammoth Religious History of the

American People Sydney Ahlstrom states: "Machen's Christianity and Liberalism (1923) even after a half century remains the chief theological ornament of American Fundamentalism" (p. 912).

112. C. Norman Kraus, ed., Evangelicalism and Anabaptism (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1979), pp. 54-55.

113. Letter of Lyman Stewart to Milton Stewart, 26 October, 1909, Stewart Papers, as cited by Sandeen in Roots, p. 195. The twelve books were published between 1910 and 1915 by the Testimony Publishing Company of Chicago. The Fundamentals were republished in 1917 in four volumes by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA). In 1958 as a Jubilee Year Project, marking its fiftieth year of ministry, BIOLA prepared The Fundamentals in a revised, up-to-date two-volume form. In 1961 it was again reissued by BIOLA in one volume. The series has remained so important to the evangelical movement that in 1980 the four-volume 1917 BIOLA edition was reprinted by Baker Book House in a hard cover, gold embossed edition.

114. Edward John Carnell, The Case for Orthodoxy (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 113-14.

CHAPTER II

"COME YE APART AND REST AWHILE"

There was no wish on the part of the brethren, who were gathered together to the name of Jesus, to have a large meeting, or to attract the slightest attention of the public. On the other hand, it was their aim to keep as quiet as possible, that they might enjoy a season of refreshing for their own souls after the incessant labors of the year. They heard the voice of the Master saying, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31), . . . they heard His tender invitation, "Come and dine" (John 21:12); for they knew that they must themselves be first fed, before they could meet the need of hungry souls.

James Brookes, president of the Niagara Bible Conference, Truth 2(1876): 425-26.

The meetings of this Conference have been so remarkable for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit; its testimony clear and positive on the great doctrines of the faith once for all delivered to the saints has been so owned of God; and the blessings of its influence through representatives in the pastorate in missions in pagan lands, have been so multiplied, that the brethren who originally gathered for study of the Word of God have been led to organize the Conference into a more formal shape in order to perpetuate its teachings and testimony.

Announcement of the incorporation of the Niagara Bible Conference, Truth 17(1891): 225.

Summer gatherings for spiritual nurture were not unique when the Niagara Bible Conference was organized in 1875. A distinctive feature of religious life on the American frontier was the camp meeting. The dramatic Presbyterian revivalist James McGready is credited with inaugurating this phenomenon during the days of the Western Revival of 1798-1810.¹

McGready had a remarkable power over audiences. So many people came to attend the evangelist's preaching services in Logan County, Kentucky, the meetings had to be held out-of-doors. Attenders lingered on for several days and temporary lodging in wagons and tents had to be set up.

The July 1800 McGready revival was the first organized camp meeting in America. An open air auditorium was erected in a clearing near the Gasper River Presbyterian church. Tents and wagons surrounded the clearing. For three days the Spirit swept over the campground, convicting and converting sinners through McGready's impassioned pleadings. The camp meeting idea caught on quickly and soon other Presbyterian preachers, as well as Baptists, and especially Methodists were conducting similar gatherings, usually co-operatively and on a grand scale. The most notable camp meeting in the history of the movement was the one held at Cane Ridge, Kentucky in August, 1801. Estimates of the crowd range from 10,000 to 25,000.

The camp meeting phenomenon spread over the entire south, reaching down as far as Georgia. 1800 to 1830 was the peak "harvest time" for conversions and the addition of members to Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches. After 1830, the primary concern of these meetings shifted from religious experience to doctrine.²

A new emphasis in camp meeting revivalism developed shortly after the close of the Civil War, and this was the institutional Holiness camp meeting. In the spring of 1867 a call was issued by thirteen Methodist ministers of New York for a larger gathering to be held in Philadelphia on June 18, 1867. The object of this convocation was to lead interested Christians to organize a camp meeting for the promotion of the work of entire sanctification or "Christian perfection," which entailed a "second blessing" experience which purified the believer of inward sin and gave him "perfect love" toward God and men. This experience did not elevate the Christian to a state

of "sinless perfection" as the Wesleyan doctrine was often misunderstood to teach, but led to a perfection of motives and desires.³ As a result of the Philadelphia meeting the influential National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness was founded, out of which the separatistic Holiness movement soon grew.⁴

The American camp meeting tradition undoubtedly influenced the formation of the Niagara Bible Conference but only in an indirect way in that the concept of summer gatherings for spiritual nurture was not new. The object of Niagara was not primarily evangelism, as was that of the early frontier camp meetings, nor was it the pursuit of the "second blessing," as was the case with the holiness camp meetings. The purpose of Niagara was Bible study. One clear connection between the smaller pre-Niagara meetings begun in 1868 and the holiness gatherings of the same period is that the immediate fore-runners of the Niagara sessions felt impelled to put topics related to the correct teaching of holiness high on the agenda of their meetings so they could refute what they considered to be the errors of the perfectionists.

One might compare Niagara with the Chautauqua movement begun in 1874, only one year before the formal beginning of the Believers' Meeting for Bible Study. Although Chautauqua began as a brief summer school course for the training of Sunday school teachers at a small retreat center at Lake Chautauqua, New York, it soon expanded to provide popular education through correspondence courses in literature, science, history, and other subjects. By the end of the nineteenth century, the institution had become a summer center for "a bewildering variety of activities in education, religion, discussion of

public issues, music, art, theater, sports, hobbies and clubs."⁵ Imitative assemblies like the one at Lake Chautauqua sprang up in fixed localities all over America and the original Chautauqua agreed to share its name with them. Travelling tent companies that brought musicians, famous orators, editors, and world travellers to thousands of American towns and villages during the early decades of the twentieth century simply appropriated the title Chautauqua. Whereas these latter tent shows died out in the early 1930s the institution founded in New York in 1874 still thrives. However one cannot link the original Chautauqua institution in any significant way with Niagara since the purpose of the two movements were so distinctly different - the one with a very broad educational and cultural function and the other very specialized in the area of Bible study, and even that in the one tradition of conservative evangelicalism within the framework of premillennial eschatology.

The real roots of the American Bible conference movement are to be found in the Bible conferences conducted in England in the late 1820s, in Ireland in the 1830s and in the Irish revival of 1859-60. A series of annual meetings for the study of prophetic truth were held at the Albury, Surrey, home of the banker Henry Drummond from 1826 to 1830. Almost every British millenarian of note attended these conferences, which provided a context in which to hammer out central convictions and isolate areas of disagreement. The Albury conferences gave structure to British millenarianism, consolidating both the theology and the group of men who were to defend it.⁶

The Albury conferences provided a model for the prophetic studies conducted by a group of millenarians meeting near Dublin on the estate of Lady

Powerscourt during the years 1831 to 1833. John Nelson Darby and other members of the group eventually known as the Plymouth Brethren attended the Powerscourt conferences where Darby introduced the ideas of a secret rapture of the church and of a parenthesis in prophetic fulfilment, i.e. the period between the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit forming the church and the rapture of the church just prior to the seven year end-time period known as the Great Tribulation.⁷ These prophetic insights, and other topics discussed at Powerscourt and in smaller Brethren Bible study groups became key items on the agendas of Niagara and later American prophetic conferences. Members of the Plymouth Brethren sect attended Niagara and Brethren writings were avidly studied and highly lauded by leaders of the Bible Conference. For example, in 1895 James Brookes wrote:

More than sixty years ago, a movement was started, which promised to be of incalculable service to multitudes. The leading spirits were J.N. Darby and B.W. Newton, both men of decided ability, extensive learning, profound acquaintance with the Word of God, and ample means to publish and disseminate their views. . . .

Their books and tracts were largely circulated, bringing comfort and peace and joy to thousands of souls, quickening interest in the study of the Bible, and spreading like a wave of blessing through the Church of England and other religious bodies.⁸

Bible study groups formed in the wake of the Irish revival of 1859-60 provided the immediate model for the American counterpart begun in 1868 and enlarged and formalized in 1875 and 1876. There was an upsurge of evangelical piety in Ireland beginning in 1859 and continuing on into the 1860s.⁹ George Needham, one of the co-founders of the first American Believers' Meeting for Bible Study had participated in the Irish revival and in the Bible study groups set up to confirm converts in their new found faith. Indeed, when

Needham came to America in 1868 he testified that the thrill of the Irish Bible conventions was still fresh on his soul. In recounting the history of Bible conferences Needham wrote:

Modern Bible conventions are of Irish origin. They are the outcome of the great revival which swept over Ireland in the years 1860 and 1861. This deep movement of God's Spirit focalized itself in Dublin, where the idea of congregating assemblies of converts from all parts of the island found shape in yearly "Believers' Meetings."¹⁰

During his first weeks in America Needham searched for "Believers' Meetings" such as he had attended in Dublin, but could not find them. He then shared his interest in such a gathering with others of like mind. James Inglis, editor and publisher of the millenarian periodical Waymarks in the Wilderness was particularly enthusiastic about the idea and proceeded to call the first meeting in his New York office. Eight men gathered for several days of intensive Bible study. Inglis had a deep concern to combat what he believed to be erroneous ideas of perfectionism which were so widespread at that time in America. Thus two of the topics presented at the first Believers' Meeting for Bible Study were "The Two Natures in the Believer" and "The Personality and Ministry of the Spirit". Other subjects dealt with were "The Verbal Inspiration of the Bible", "The Atonement and Priesthood of Christ", and "The Personal Coming of Our Lord."¹¹

The second American Believers' Meeting for Bible Study was held in 1869 in Philadelphia. Added to the roster of speakers was Dr. James Hall Brookes, noted Bible teacher and pastor from St. Louis. Brookes represented staunchly Calvinistic Old School Presbyterianism. Needham recalled how it fired his young Irish heart to "look upon, and listen to the black haired,

black-eyed robust Giant of the West" then in the prime of his manhood. Bookes gave a "magnificent" exposition of the text "Waiting for the Son from Heaven."¹² Subsequent informal meetings were held in St. Louis (1870) and Galt, Ontario (1871), but then interrupted by the deaths of James Inglis and Charles Campbell, key leaders in conferences. The meetings commenced privately again near Chicago in 1875 under the leadership of evangelist D.W. Whittle, musician P.P. Bliss (both of whom had been associated with D.L. Moody), and James Brookes.¹³

The 1875 Believers' Meeting for Bible Study marked the beginning of what was soon to be called the Niagara Bible Conference, the mother of all American Bible conferences, the "Monte Cassino and Port Royal of the movement".¹⁴ The 1875 meeting was private but in response to numerous requests to open the sessions up to all interested believers, the conference went public.

This newly formed annual summer retreat for study and fellowship itinerated for a number of years before taking Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario as its home until 1897. The sites for the conference were: Chicago, 1875; Swampscott, Massachusetts, 1876; Watkins Glen, New York, 1877; Clifton Springs, New York, 1878-80; Old Orchard, Maine, 1881; Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1882; Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 1883-97; Point Chautauqua, New York, 1898-99; Asbury Park, New Jersey, 1900. There were no meetings held in 1884.

The conference usually opened with a Wednesday evening prayer meeting and then for seven successive days participants generally heard two addresses in the morning, two in the afternoon and one in the evening. On Sunday

there was a gospel message in the morning, a communion service in the afternoon, and a missionary message in the evening. Participants came with notebook and pen in hand and the many texts cited would be taken down for future, closer examination and study.¹⁵ As to the Niagara site, Brookes affirmed that a more delightful summer resort could not be found on the continent.¹⁶ He described the 1892 conference in the following manner:

The meeting this year, commencing July 7 and closing on the evening of July 13, was more largely attended than ever before. Often every seat in the pavilion was occupied, and the porches were filled with eager hearers of the Word. The place too becomes more beautiful as the years go by, and it would be difficult to find a spot better suited to the quiet and prayerful study of the Sacred Scriptures. The building in which the Conference meets, overlooking Lake Ontario and the river Niagara, and surrounded by green trees, is secluded from the noise of the world; and so excellent were the arrangements for the accommodation of the guests, both in Queen's Royal Hotel and in the boarding houses of the village, that not a word of complaint was heard from anyone.¹⁷

As many as one thousand believers would gather for one week at this, "the quietest and sweetest of all retreats."¹⁸

The founding father and controlling spirit of the Niagara Bible Conference was noted author and long-time Presbyterian pastor James Hall Brookes (1830-97). He was the main speaker at the 1875 meeting and was elected president of the conference. In 1875 Brookes began publishing his own periodical The Truth or Testimony for Christ which became the chief organ of Niagara. It published announcements of the meetings, reports of conference messages and general items of interest to evangelical Christians. The periodical The Watchword, edited by Baptist pastor A.J. Gordon (1836-95), made brief references to Niagara during Gordon's lifetime but began carrying regular reports of the meetings in 1895 when Robert Cameron became editor.

Presbyterian pastor-evangelist W.J. Erdman (1834-1923) was secretary of Niagara. He had a broad grasp of the Scriptures and was especially skilled in giving expository Bible readings. Another evangelist who was a leader at Niagara was Leander W. Munhall (1843-1934), one of the few Methodists associated with the conference. Baptist George Needham (1840-1902) worked quietly in the background helping organize the meetings. Rev. and Mrs. Needham both contributed messages at Niagara although it appears that Mrs. Needham spoke only to an audience of women. Miss Emma Dryer, who pioneered a school of "Bible Work" for evangelism among the poor in Chicago and was associated with Moody in the early stages of Moody Bible Institute conducted afternoon meetings for ladies at the 1880 Niagara Conference.¹⁹ Brookes felt it was wrong for women to preach to a mixed audience and took issue with some of his colleagues at Niagara who believed otherwise.²⁰

The overall objective of the Niagara Bible Conference was said to be that of "leading earnest and inquiring souls into a deeper and more practical acquaintance with God's Word."²¹ However, that there were doctrinal distinctives to be upheld and "neglected truths" to be highlighted is made very clear in the early literature of the movement. The basis of fellowship was a fourteen point doctrinal statement - this was the "bond of union with those who wish(ed) to be connected with the Believers' Meeting for Bible Study."²² In an 1879 editorial on the conference, secretary Erdman reiterated the general aim of the meetings was a devotional one - i.e. "the only object in view is the devout and diligent searching of the Bible, in order to obtain clearer and more consecrating views of Him who is the centre of God's counsels, and

the sum of His revelation."²³ But again, the doctrinal ground upon which the brethren stood was set forth "in order to avoid the possibility of a mistake."²⁴ The summary of doctrine was concluded with the comment: "If any who choose to attend do not accept these truths, they are requested and expected to be silent. Controversy is positively forbidden."²⁵

The Themes of Niagara

The foremost concern of the Niagara Bible Conference was prophecy. This theme is evident in every single conference of the twenty-five year history of the movement.

Unfortunately notes of the messages given at the 1876 Swampscott conference did not appear in the pages of The Truth, but the substance of several Bible readings given there were reproduced in book form. Even the title of the book, Bible Reading on the Second Coming, denotes the apocalyptic emphasis.²⁶ The study of prophecy in general, and the promulgation of premillennialism in particular, was clearly the *raison d'être* of the Niagara Bible Conference.

In the first public meeting the president affirmed belief in the any-moment coming of Christ for true believers and distinguished between Christ's coming for His people and His coming with them.²⁷ Furthermore, he stated:

I believe the thousands of scattered Christians whose hearts have grasped this truth will be heard declaring as with united voice, "the Lord is at hand." They can no longer keep silence. This truth, proclaimed in the spirit's power, will save the church from shipwreck."²⁸

The 1877 meeting was held at Watkins Glen, New York. President Brookes related that "the coming of the Lord in its bearing upon Israel, the Church,

and the world at large, received much attention, and of course it was found to be a most profitable subject for study and meditation."²⁹ Once again the Bible studies given at the conference were not published in The Truth because the speakers did not get the notes of their addresses to Brookes, as they had promised.

Although the 1878 Believers' Meeting for Bible Study held at Clifton Springs, New York was not as well organized and as inspirational as the previous year's conference, Brookes' report notes that "the testimony of Dr. Rufus Clark of Albany to the power and value of preaching the coming of the Lord was particularly gratifying." Clark had just recently become convinced of the truth of the premillennial advent.³⁰

The major accomplishment of the 1878 conference was the drafting of the declaration of doctrinal belief, the fourteenth article of which clearly set forth the doctrine of the premillennial advent as the blessed hope for which all Christians should be constantly looking - see Appendix A .

A few months after the 1878 conference was over, The Truth announced that the leaders of the Believers' Meeting had taken steps to call a special conference on the Second Advent. The circular issued by a committee headed by Brookes stated:

When from any cause some vital doctrine of God's Word has fallen into neglect or suffered contradiction and reproach, it becomes the serious duty of those who hold it not only strongly and constantly to re-affirm it, but to seek by all means in their power to bring back the Lord's people to its apprehension and acceptance. The precious doctrine of Christ's personal appearing, has, we are constrained to believe, long lain under such neglect and misapprehension. . . . So vital, indeed, is this truth represented to be, that the denial of it is pointed out as

one of the conspicuous signs of the apostacy of the last days. . . . In view of these facts, it has seemed desirable that those who hold to the personal pre-millennial advent of Jesus Christ, and who are "looking for that blessed hope" should meet together in conference, as our honored brethren in England have recently done, to set forth, in clear terms, the grounds of their hope, to give mutual encouragement in the maintenance of what they believe to be a most vital truth for present times, and in response to our Lord's "Behold I come quickly," to voice the answer by their prayers and hymns and testimony, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."³¹

The well attended First American Bible and Prophetic Conference conducted October 30-31 and November 1, 1878 at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, New York, was a virtual coming-out party of millenarianism. All of the thirteen papers and three published addresses of the Prophetic Conference dealt in one way or another with the premillennial advent. A doctrinal statement presented at the close of the conference declared belief in the imminent return of Christ to occur at any moment and firmly rejected postmillennialism. The following resolution was passed unanimously by the conference: "Resolved that the doctrine of our Lord's premillennial advent, instead of paralyzing evangelistic and missionary effort, is one of the mightiest incentives to earnestness in preaching the Gospel to every creature until He comes."³²

The Believers' Meeting for Bible Study continued from summer to summer with the thread of premillennialism showing through in all the proceedings. Prior to the 1885 conference, the Canadian brethren gathered for four days to hear special addresses on the Second Advent. The pre-conference meetings began with a paper on the history of the doctrine of the Second Advent and ended with a presentation by Maurice Baldwin, Bishop of Huron on the topic,

"The Relation of the Second Coming to Missions."³³

Interest in premillennialism had been so stimulated by the annual Niagara conferences and the 1878 Prophetic Conference held at New York that many requests came to the men who had planned the New York conference to call another. What the men of Niagara had hoped would happen, had indeed occurred. The Baptist periodical The Standard reported in its November 25, 1886 issue:

One of the prominent participants in the programme which was announced for the second meeting in Chicago, November 16-21, 1886, suggested that it seemed a strange thing that he should be a speaker in the meetings of today, whereas at the time of the former session (1878) he was inclined to ridicule the doctrine. Premillennial views, whatever may be said of them, have become so widespread in the various denominations, not excluding Baptists, that it is folly to ignore this mode of Christian thinking, or to attempt to silence the discussion which is in progress.³⁴

George C. Needham in the Preface to the report of the proceedings of this conference asserted that "since the New York Convention in 1878, the doctrine of our Lord's expected advent has gained ground among spiritual believers of all churches, as the revival of no other truth in modern times has done."³⁵

This Second American Bible and Prophetic Conference was held in Farwell Hall, Chicago, November 16-21, 1886. It extended over a much longer period of time than the 1878 conference and featured more speakers. Thirty-four millenarians either spoke at the conference or signed the call. Of these, nineteen had been associated at the Niagara Conference and twenty had participated in the 1878 conference.³⁶ The members of the committee arranging the 1886 conference, together with the speakers on the program, formed a Who's Who of first-generation Fundamentalism.³⁷ All participants at the conference accepted the 1878 premillennial creed with its affirmation

of the any-moment coming. In addition to numerous strong presentations of various facets of the truth of the Second Advent, dispensational concepts are more in evidence than they were in 1878. Distinct dispensational schemes are set forth by A.J. Frost and W.E. Blackstone.³⁸ This approach involved recognizing clearly defined epochs or divisions of time in each of which God worked with man in a specific way. A broadened purpose given for the conference was to call attention to the doctrine of last things as a bulwark against the skepticism of modern theology.³⁹ A detailed analysis of the messages given at the 1886 conference, as well as those presented at the 1878 conference is given in chapter four of this work.

Besides the promulgation of the truth of the premillennial return of Christ, the defense of the verbal inspiration of the Bible became increasingly important at Niagara as higher criticism infiltrated American seminaries and gradually spread to the churches. The first article of the Niagara Creed stated very clearly the doctrine of inspiration, declaring, as did the Princeton theologians, that the "original autographs" were free from error - see Appendix A. Conference issues of The Truth over and over again report messages which resoundingly affirmed the plenary and verbal inspiration "of all that holy men of old wrote."⁴⁰ In 1887 the leaders of Niagara organized a Bible Inspiration Conference, held in Chambers Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, November 15-18. W.R. Nicholson, Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church acted as chairman; George C. Needham as secretary, and A.T. Pierson, one of the most prominent evangelicals of his day, a prolific author and vigorous missionary advocate, edited the proceedings. Among the speakers

were James Brookes; J.M. Stifler, Baptist professor of New Testament at Crozer Seminary from 1882 to 1902; W.C. Moorehead, professor of New Testament at the United Presbyterian Seminary at Xenia, Ohio from 1873 to 1899, in which year he served as president; and A.T. Pierson. These men appeared regularly on the Niagara program.⁴¹ Pierson was one of the chief apologists of the early Fundamentalists. His lengthy Many Infallible Proofs was very influential in Protestant circles, appearing in numerous editions and being translated into a number of foreign languages.⁴²

The "battle for the Bible" had begun in earnest in American Protestantism in the 1880s. The need to adjust traditional views of the Bible was being forced upon theologians by new forms of thought coming in the form of evolutionary naturalism, higher criticism, and Idealistic philosophy. The two successive ministers of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887) and Lyman Abbott (1835-1922) probably did more than the theologians to popularize a new synthesis for the masses. In a very unique manner these men led the way in absorbing evolution, higher criticism and romantic idealism (a sentimentalizing rather than an overturning of post-Kantian idealism) into the mediating Evangelical Liberalism.⁴³

The new concepts were accepted by Beecher and Abbott within the framework of Romantic Evangelical terms. Viewing the Bible as literature or poetry was a convenient way to rationalize much of the higher criticism. The belief in man's spiritual growth was used to support the idea of evolutionary progress. The supernatural was to be seen through the natural. As to the dualism of Idealism which contrasted the natural world known through

science and logic and the spiritual world known through intuition and sensitivity - Beecher pointed out that this view was positive in that it highlighted religious experience as opposed to the cold rigor of the old theology. Paul's description of the conflict between "flesh" and "spirit" could now be understood in terms of lower animality versus higher religious impulses.⁴⁴

Beecher's spiritual successor Lyman Abbott wrote in 1892: "Every man falls when, by yielding to the enticements of his lower, animal nature, he descends from his vantage ground of moral consciousness to the earthiness out of which he had begun to emerge."⁴⁵ The evangelical tradition of condemning the sins of the flesh was thus reinforced, with alcohol and sex seen as the chief temptations. George Marsden observes: "In the pulpit, liberals could not easily be distinguished from conservatives on such practical points, and practical morality was often for American Protestants what mattered most."⁴⁶ Episcopal orator Phillips Brooks, second only to Beecher as a popular preacher, summarized his main emphasis in a sermon which reconciled evolution, competitive individualism, and the ethics of Jesus. In answer to the question "What do you need?" he simply replied, "Go and be moral. Go and be good."⁴⁷

In scholarly circles two developments, one among the Congregationalists at Andover Theological Seminary and the other among the Presbyterians at Union Theological Seminary illustrated the ordeals of theological transition. When between 1879 and 1882 a number of the "old faculty" at Andover retired there was an almost immediate shift of the school toward the new liberal

trends. In 1886 the new faculty issued a volume entitled Progressive Orthodoxy in which the real issue was said to be between Christianity as a supernatural redemption and a mere naturalism. Although the actual doctrines proposed in these essays were in many respects orthodox, a progressive principle was plainly evident. Theology was no longer seen as a fixed body of eternally valid truth but rather as an evolutionary development that needed to be adjusted to the standards and needs of modern culture.⁴⁸

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (Northern) stood firmly on the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy as a fundamental teaching of the church. In 1893 Charles Briggs, professor of Old Testament studies at Union Theological Seminary was tried for heresy because he did not uphold this view of the Bible. James Brookes was a member of the committee of fifteen bringing the unfavorable report on Briggs to the General Assembly. The Assembly adopted the report and suspended Briggs from the Presbyterian ministry. When a self-appointed committee of eighty brought a protest against the Assembly's action, a committee of five was appointed to review the matter. Two members of this committee - Hiram W. Congdon and James Brookes were staunch leaders at the Niagara Bible Conference. The committee of five reaffirmed the action of the General Assembly. By the end of the decade two other seminary professors - Henry Preserved Smith and Arthur Cushman McGiffert, also accused of heresy, joined Briggs in their exit from the Presbyterian Church. Indeed, already in 1892, in response to the General Assembly's actions against Briggs, Union Theological Seminary had severed

its ties with the denomination.⁴⁹

The leaders of Niagara reflected on these theological developments with a great sense of alarm. They lamented over the fact that a "loose and infidel view of inspiration" was commonly accepted by preachers and all too frequently taught in the schools of theological training. The growing disregard for the Bible in these institutions, it was charged, stemmed from the "pride of intellect, the conceit of learning, the 'oppositions of science falsely so called' (I Timothy 6:20), the glamour of German rationalism, or other irrationalism."⁵⁰ Since the infidelity which destroyed the church in Germany had invaded many of the seminaries and religious periodicals and pulpits of America, charged the Niagara guard, the most dangerous enemies to the cause of Christ were His professed followers.⁵¹

The men of Niagara felt that "the assaults from without would be nothing, were it not for the base treachery within the citadel." Thus it is that Jesus receives "His deadliest wounds in the house of His friends; when Professors appointed to train young men for the ministry are busily engaged mutilating His word, and with an impudence which the conceit of learning ever begets."⁵²

The Niagara leaders excluded from their fellowship all men whose trumpet, in their opinion gave an "uncertain sound." The conference planners, we are told, "do not seek for popular preachers and professors to draw a crowd, but for teachers who are loyal to our Lord Jesus Christ and to His Word; and none other will they have."⁵³ Brookes made it very clear that

those who represented the school of Dr. Lyman Abbott and Rev. Phillip Brooks "are not wanted and would not be heard" at the Niagara Bible Conference. Furthermore, the president of Niagara wanted it known in no uncertain terms that "all deniers of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and the utter ruin of man, and of the atonement made by Christ Jesus, the Lord, and of regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and of the personal and premillennial coming of Christ as the hope set before us, are rigidly excluded."⁵⁴

James Brookes was in the center of the Briggs' trial and published several articles in The Truth against the heretical professor.⁵⁵ David Williams, in his biography of Brookes tells of a personal encounter between the Niagara president and Dr. Briggs during the days of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1893.

By chance Dr. Brookes went to the hostelry which was later recognized as the headquarters of the Briggs' following. Dr. Brookes was about the only orthodox Presbyterian in the hotel. It was inevitable that the two noted men would meet. Sure enough, one day they almost ran into each other in the elevator. There was a courteous though formal exchange of greetings, and then Prof. Briggs said, at once:

"Look here, Brookes, why are you always attacking me in your Truth?"

Dr. Brookes gave his reason boldly. He felt that Briggs was assailing the foundations on which the Bible rested, and he said so. He then proceeded to prove his charge by quoting word for word - giving page, and number of lines from the top of the page - the most heterodox sentences from Briggs' book.⁵⁶

When the Niagara Conference was incorporated in 1890 and the original name "The Believers' Meeting for Bible Study" changed to "The Niagara Bible Conference" the doctrinal statement of 1878 was read article by article and once more adopted and embodied in the act of incorporation, Brookes observed:

Of course no human measures can wholly prevent the inroads of error and the wiles of the devil; but it is a comfort to know that if there comes any departure from these articles of faith, the conference will

cease to exist, as it ought to cease. Better a thousand times that there should be no conference than a meeting of professing Christians, who will teach or receive teaching contrary to the Word of God.⁵⁷

These early Fundamentalists guarded their institution well against future apostasy.

Prophecy and upholding the inspiration and orthodox understanding of the great doctrines of the Scriptures were major concerns to the men of Niagara. However other themes received attention on the conference agendas as well. The Watchword recalled in 1895 that the studies at Niagara had "unavoidably mirrored the times in the world of religious thought, in the endeavor to meet the needs of Christians sorely tried and perplexed amidst the confusions of this closing age."⁵⁸

The pre-Niagara conferences had opposed the heretical doctrine of perfectionism and this emphasis was carried on in the public meetings with positive teaching on sanctification being a regular feature.⁵⁹ Many of the Niagara speakers also participated in Moody's Northfield conferences which greatly resembled the British Keswick deeper life conferences in both doctrine and style. A.J. Gordon, who participated in both the Niagara and Northfield conferences was a leader in developing a theology of the Holy Spirit. The role of the Spirit is highlighted in Gordon's ten books, particularly so in his The Ministry of the Spirit and The Holy Spirit and Missions. The Baptist pastor testified that there were two distinct crises in his ministry and these came through discovering the doctrine of the premillennial advent and the doctrine of the infilling and empowering for service of the Holy Spirit. He stated: "Although the apprehension of the

doctrine of Christ's second advent came earlier than the realization of the other doctrine (of the Holy Spirit) . . . its discovery constituted a no less distinct crisis in my ministry."⁶⁰

The dispensationalist and holiness teachings propounded by the Calvinistically oriented teachers of Niagara were closely connected in that both traditions believed that the present age was the dispensation of the Spirit. As mentioned in chapter one of this study, the connecting link between the Wesleyan view of instant sanctification and the Calvinist doctrine of constant and intense struggle was the Keswick teaching which saw sanctification as a process, but one which began with a distinct crisis consecration experience.⁶¹ Besides Gordon, James Brookes, J. Wilbur Chapman, William J. Erdman, Henry Frost, George Needham, Bishop W.R. Nicholson, A.T. Pierson, and C.I. Scofield of the Calvinist Niagara guard wrote books on the Holy Spirit.⁶² The latter eventually "more or less canonized Keswick teachings in his Reference Bible."⁶³

The first major public conference on the Holy Spirit was called and organized by two Niagara men - George C. Needham and A.C. Dixon. It was held at the Mount Vernon Place Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Maryland from October 29 to November 1, 1890. As a result of the strong emphasis at this conference on the need for men of God to be infilled by the Holy Spirit we are told that "at one time no less than one hundred ministers requested prayer for the fullness of the Holy Ghost."⁶⁴ Dixon, recalling his visits to the majestic Niagara Falls used an analogy from that setting to make a major point.

"According to your faith be it unto you," is a law never to be changed. Faith is the connecting wire between the battery of God's power and the hearts of men. We look at the swift current of Niagara Falls and strive to imagine what a force it would be, if utilized in manufacture or in generating electricity. God's power is like the Niagara current, always the same, to be turned for accomplishment of his purpose by the channels of Christian faith.⁶⁵

The emphasis on power for service (which was a typical Keswick emphasis) was even more pronounced in the second major conference on the Holy Spirit held in Brooklyn in October of 1894. The overall theme of this convention was "The Holy Spirit in Life and Service." The speakers underscored the necessity of the Spirit's enduement for service in a host of evangelical endeavors - evangelism, missions, Sunday School work, rescue mission work, church administration, and the work of bringing back spirituality to the church.⁶⁶

Another subject which was of much concern to the men of Niagara was that of the worldliness and apostasy of the church. The conference leaders believed that the name Christian had been lost in an "accretion of worldly maxims and practises" and that true believers were called "out of the world to walk in Christ in separation."⁶⁷ A fortress mentality is evident in the announcement: "It will be comforting to many saints scattered throughout the country to know that measures have been adopted, looking to the permanency of the Believers' Meeting for Bible Study."⁶⁸ To the leaders of the conference this retreat center was, it seems, the last hope for the survival of primitive Christianity. There is a note of alarm in the plea:

Above everything else, let there be daily and earnest supplication that God may use the next Conference to stem the tide of infidelity and

worldliness in the church, to exalt the name of His dishonored Son, to vindicate His insulted Word, to manifest the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. . . . Something must be done, or Christianity itself must perish.⁶⁹

The nurture and equipping of church leaders was another prominent emphasis at Niagara. The annual summer study program was frequently called a "Bible School" in evangelical circles.⁷⁰ Interest in the work at Niagara built up in the 1880s to the point that in 1890 plans were laid to start a Summer Bible School for young men. For two weeks following the regular conference meetings it was projected that three teachers would remain and conduct classes. In announcing these plans, the doctrinal articles of Niagara were once again summarized, with the warning given that if any prospective students were "already determined to reject them (i.e. the articles) it would be better for such not to come at all, because they will hear nothing from their teachers contrary to the statements just made."⁷¹ As to the teachers, we are told that they "have no sympathy whatever with higher criticism, a Proto and Deutero Isaiah, a theory of inspiration that extends to the thoughts, but excludes the words of the Bible, future probation, the salvation of the heathen without Christ, nor with any other new-fangled tom-foolery, now misleading so many professing Christians."⁷² Even though the leaders at Niagara did not follow through on this extension of the regular conference program, the Niagara Bible Conference maintained its strong teaching - equipping emphasis which affected conservative evangelical church life right across the United States and parts of Canada. George Needham claimed of this aspect of Niagara:

It is not an exaggeration to state that no other informal body has exercised so potent and marked an influence in shaping and moulding the clear and emphatic teaching of many evangelists, pastors and missionaries, who with no uncertain sound lift up their voices in proclaiming God's Word in many fields of labor. From the Atlantic to the Pacific coast are to be found numbers of young men in their Associations, Bible teachers and Sunday School workers, besides countless more private Christians, who rejoice today in the clear light of Bible knowledge, which has come to them directly or indirectly through these annual gatherings.⁷³

The equipping of Christian workers came about through the practical emphasis at the conference sessions on how to study and interpret the Bible. The literal method of interpretation was insisted upon and the Bible was taught as best interpreting itself. Although not original with the teachers at Niagara, it was at Niagara that the Bible reading was popularized and put into the hands of thousands of Christian workers as a ready method of systematically presenting Biblical truth. Bible readings were simply public readings of a series of Biblical texts on a given topic with remarks that were designed to "call special attention to the testimony of the Holy Ghost in His Word."⁷⁴ A word or concept like "believe" or "faith" would be traced through the Scriptures and then arranged in an outline, often in seven points. It is claimed that British Plymouth Brethren itinerant Henry Moorhouse and George Needham, then also associated with the Brethren, first introduced Bible readings to America. The Brethren were most likely the originators of the Bible reading.⁷⁵

The Niagara Conference reports tell of the good results which came from this relatively new method of Bible study. In 1882 Brookes wrote:

Many have publicly acknowledged the greatness of the blessing received through the teaching of God's Word, and they return to their homes refreshed, strengthened, and stimulated to greater fidelity in preaching

that Word, and in labor for the Master. These results have been produced not by exciting exhortations, nor by learned discourses, nor by new and startling themes, but by simple Bible readings, in which the Sacred Scriptures have been their own interpreter.⁷⁶

Numerous "how to" lectures were given at Niagara to equip men to preach and teach the Word. Topics included, "How to Study the Bible," "What and How to Preach," "Methods of Bible Study," "Hints for the Study of I John," "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth," and "Dispensational Progress of Redemption."⁷⁷ Dispensationalism as a hermeneutic was introduced gradually into the teaching at Niagara and by the late 1880s was gaining acceptance as being the only correct approach to the Scriptures.

The teachers of Niagara encouraged an inductive approach to the Bible. They led Bible students to do their own independent study first before consulting commentaries. The helps most frequently suggested were a concordance, a Bible dictionary and a commentary. W.J. Erdman urged, "Never consult a commentary on any doctrine in cold blood; think, study, search first yourself."⁷⁸

Niagara meetings were study sessions. Attenders came with Bible and notebook in hand. The Bible was "the centre and circumference of the meeting."⁷⁹ Each point a speaker made had to be buttressed by Scripture and it was not uncommon to give in each study forty, fifty or more texts. Brookes writes: "It has been frequently said by ministers of the gospel that they hear more Scripture at these conferences in one week than they heard in three years in theological seminaries."⁸⁰

Not everyone, even in conservative theological circles accepted the simple approach of the Bible reading as an acceptable method of instruction.

Francis L. Patton of Princeton Seminary rejected the substitution of the Bible reading for the sermon.⁸¹ But the men of Niagara were undaunted. "Formalists sneer at the leaders of Niagara as 'text-slingers', and they joyfully accept the name," affirmed Brookes. And he added: "They sling text and this is all they do; but the texts go like the smooth stones from David's sling that smote the boastful and blasphemous Goliath of Gath."⁸²

Niagara was not only a place of instruction and nurture, it also had an evangelistic aspect. Sunday mornings were devoted to gospel presentations and during some conferences special efforts were made to reach people in the community with the message of salvation. For example, during the 1883 conference, evangelistic services were held each night in the Niagara Town Hall resulting in about twenty conversions.⁸³ Many of the leaders at Niagara were successful evangelists in their own ministry, either as itinerants or as pastors. Brookes' evangelistic book The Way Made Plain was disseminated widely during the Civil War leading to many conversions.⁸⁴ During the last two years of his life during which he was Pastor Emeritus of the Washington and Compton Avenue Presbyterian Church in St. Louis (now Memorial Presbyterian Church) Brookes was able to accept invitations to do evangelistic work in various parts of the United States. These special meetings were said to have been conducted with "marked success."⁸⁵

Many of the Niagara guard were either full-time evangelists or spent part of their careers in this kind of work. Evangelist Daniel W. Whittle,

along with musician P.P. Bliss worked as associates of D.L. Moody.⁸⁶ The scholarly Presbyterian J. Wilbur Chapman had also worked with Moody in the 1890s and also conducted evangelistic crusades on his own.⁸⁷ In 1895 Moody referred to Chapman as the greatest evangelist in the country.⁸⁸ Other evangelists among Niagara men were Baptist George C. Needham, Methodist Leander W. Munhall, and Presbyterian William J. Erdman. William E. Blackstone was a lay evangelist with a Methodist background who became well known through his widely circulated book on prophecy, Jesus is Coming.

The cause of missions was also advocated at Niagara. Henry Frost, founder of the North American branch of the China Inland Mission received his call to missions at Niagara. It was here, in 1885 that he heard the first missionary sermons in his life - from evangelist William E. Blackstone and Canadian Presbyterian missionary Jonathan Goforth.⁸⁹ Foreign missions was highlighted at the next four conferences (1886-89), and through this emphasis faith missions received a great impetus. A number of attendants at Niagara were sent forth as missionaries, their support being covered by the conference or by individual members.

Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission made a profound impression through his two messages delivered at Niagara in 1889. Taylor scarcely made any reference to China or to the Mission but rather gave two devotional expositions - one on the Song of Solomon and one on faith in God.⁹⁰ After Taylor's early departure from the conference there was a request to hear more about foreign missions. Plymouth Brethren evangelist Reginald Ratcliffe and missionary volunteer Robert Wilder spoke "burning words . . .

on the responsibility of each succeeding generation of believers to obey the great command, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.'"⁶⁸ Wilder was one of the main forces behind the formation of the American Student Volunteer Movement which was dedicated to enlisting college students for foreign missions. In 1892, on his way to India, he founded the British Student Volunteer Movement. W.J. Erdman described the response of the Niagara audience to Ratcliffe and Wilder's missionary presentation:

After singing and prayer, the Secretary, who had in mind the general guidance of the meeting, suddenly found himself entirely emptied of every idea and preference, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon the believers present. The rest of the hour was filled with voluntary praises, prayers and consecration of young men and women to service in the foreign field. It was a meeting never to be forgotten, and money for the China Inland Mission came in without advertisement of urging on the part of any.⁹¹

The experience Erdman so vividly described, was surpassed the next day when the conference reassembled. Although Henry Frost had already received gifts and pledges of money sufficient for the support of two missionaries, in this subsequent meeting, Frost recalled that

people had become intoxicated with the joy of giving, and that they were seeking another opportunity for making free-will offerings for the Lord's work in China . . . promises and money came flowing in, until, this time, I had scarcely a place to put them. There I stood in the midst of the assembly - without ever wishing it or thinking such a thing could be - suddenly transformed into an impromptu Treasurer of the China Inland Mission. And afterwards, upon counting what had been given, I found enough to support not two missionaries but actually eight, for a whole year in inland China.⁹²

The North American branch of the China Inland Mission owes its formation almost entirely to individuals associated with the Niagara Bible Conference.

One aspect of missions which was of particular interest at the conference was that of Jewish evangelism. Being premillennialists, the teachers at Niagara believed firmly that God was not finished with the Jews as a national entity. There was to be a national restoration in Palestine. Zionism was lauded by many Niagara participants and the zeal among Jews to return to their homeland was seen as further proof of the literal fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.

Numerous Niagara lectures were devoted to explaining the place of Israel in God's economy. The unfolding of events was described as follows: the temporary rejection of Israel, the gathering out of an elect number of Gentiles during the present dispensation, the restoration of Israel to Palestine, the conversion of Israel en masse at the return of Christ to earth (i.e. the second phase of the Second Coming or coming of Christ with His saints), and Israel's dignity and glory during the millennial age.⁹³

James Brookes told his Niagara audience that the abundant promise of the true Christ to bring deliverance to Israel was so familiar to all who were present that no time needed to be taken to publicly read the corroborating texts. Brookes simply listed the texts and asked his hearers to look them up at their leisure.⁹⁴

A number of Niagara participants were directly involved in Jewish evangelism. William E. Blackstone founded the first premillennialist interdenominational Jewish mission in America in Chicago in 1887. Arno C. Gaebelein, who came to America from his native Germany in 1879 and was noted for his comprehensive knowledge of Hebrew, served with the Hope of Israel

Mission of New York (a Methodist work) in the 1890s. Eventually, nearly every major American city with a substantial Jewish population had some kind of evangelistic witness to the Jews.⁹⁵

Jewish evangelism used the doctrine of premillennialism as a key to reach Jews. Timothy Weber observes:

While nonpremillennialist evangelicals tried to convince Jews that they were wrong to expect a political kingdom in their future, premillennialists agreed with those Jews who demanded literalistic fulfilments to Old Testament prophecies. They assured Orthodox Jews that they were perfectly correct in expecting the restoration of David's throne, adding only that the Bible promised the Messianic Kingdom at Christ's second coming, not at His first.⁹⁶

In his periodical, Our Hope Arno Gaebelin stated that:

A Christian who does not believe in the second coming of Christ is therefore wholly unfit to deal with the Jews. More than that, the church-missions among the Jews which are run with the un-Scriptural postmillennial argument, are a dead failure. The true way to present the Gospel to the Jews is to show them the truth of the two advents in the Old Testament, and also how the New Testament looks forward to the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom.⁹⁷

Those who gathered at Niagara were called "Lovers of Israel." We are told that lectures by men like E.F. Stroeter, "God's honored missionary to the Jews," were received with particular pleasure by the listeners. An 1897 report states that although Stroeter himself was not Jewish "the cause of Zion had nevertheless burned itself into his soul, and made him a fervid proclaimer of the promises and blessing awaiting the seed of Abraham."⁹⁸ The same description could be given to all the participants at Niagara.

Another topic given prominence at Niagara was that of dispensational truth. The term "dispensation" was used almost from the beginning of the meetings. In an 1877 lesson on Bible study, W.J. Erdman stated that his

method would bring to light "resemblances and differences, types and antitypes, shadows and body, times and seasons, peoples and dispensations."⁹⁹ The 1878 Niagara Creed declared that "the world will not be converted during the present dispensation." It is not always clear in the early days of Niagara if the term "dispensation" is used in its more general sense (as the virtual equivalent of "covenant"), or in the more specific sense as taught by the Plymouth Brethren.

Evidence of the distinctive Darbyite understanding of dispensational truth by Niagara men becomes clearer in the years 1878 to 1890. Henry Parsons was a prominent Niagara proponent of a Darbyite dispensational approach to the Scriptures, as was William Blackstone and C.I. Scofield. Parsons' lecture at the Prophetic Conference of 1878 was entitled "The Present Age and Development of Antichrist." He spoke of at least five dispensations.¹⁰⁰ In a lecture at Niagara in 1886, Parsons mentioned eight dispensations.¹⁰¹ In 1889 he gave a lecture entitled "The Dispensational Progress of Redemption."¹⁰² Blackstone set forth his dispensational scheme at the second Prophetic Conference in Chicago in 1886.¹⁰³ C.I. Scofield presented his now famous sevenfold dispensational outline in an 1888 Niagara lecture entitled "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth."¹⁰⁴ A fuller treatment of the origins and impact of dispensationalism is given in the next chapter.

The Character of Niagara

Although the major concerns of Niagara were prophecy, the defense of Scripture against higher criticism, upholding a pure church with pure doctrine, inspiring zeal for evangelism and missions, and training pastors

and Bible teachers to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" (particularly through the grid of dispensationalism), the overall character of the conference always remained that of a quiet, devotional, and pietistic retreat. The chief object of the fellowship meetings and Bible lectures at Niagara was "the deepening and quickening of Spiritual Life in the hearts of God's people." It was hoped that the Holy Spirit would graciously use the lectures for the promotion of piety.¹⁰⁵

The leaders of Niagara sought always to be practical and not merely theoretical in their emphasis. Growth in personal godliness was constantly stressed. In an 1887 announcement, the secretary W.J. Erdman wrote: "It may again be repeated that this Meeting to which Christians of every name are cordially invited, has had from the beginning as its object not merely the study of the Word of God, but rather through such study the mutual comfort and refreshment of the children and servants of God, the increase of their work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁰⁶ Henry Frost reflected the spirit of Niagara when he recalled:

Two passages, even in those early days, stood out before me: the first was, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," and the second, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The first impressed upon me that all searching of Scripture would be valueless, unless its certain and positive result was the living out of the things learned; and the second convinced me that the person of Christ is the interpretation of both Old and New Testaments, and is to be the soul's one constant objective. In other words, it became plain to me from the beginning that to know and not to do could never mean anything but condemnation, while all true knowledge must be derived from Christ and would result in the revelation and reproduction of His character.¹⁰⁷

The speakers at the conference were not chosen for their great scholarship, eloquence, or popular appeal, but because they were deeply versed in

"the things of God" and could quietly and clearly open up spiritual truths to others. James Brookes insisted that at Niagara "all speech making, and learned discourses and philosophical speculations, and eloquent addresses, and expressions of ~~personal~~ opinion" were strictly forbidden.¹⁰⁸ In an age of large, fashionable churches, professional choirs, and eloquent pulpiteers such as Henry Ward Beecher, Phillips Brooks, and T. Dewitt Talmage, Niagara stood out as an unsophisticated, quiet center of fellowship and worship, conducted "without ostentation and with only the nearest semblance of advertising; with no attractions of singing and musical instruments, without badges, salutes, mottoes, sensational oratory, or any of the usual accessories of a modern conventicle."¹⁰⁹ Here was a simple organization for the promotion of personal piety, headed by plain men, telling a plain story, in a plain manner.¹¹⁰ The leaders didn't even care to attract a large crowd. Brookes affirmed that "the brethren who have charge of this meeting are not at all eager to get a crowd to attend. They would esteem it a far greater privilege to assist one hundred, or even ten, earnest and humble believers, who desire to know more of God's Word, than to make speeches to ten thousand curiosity seekers."¹¹¹ The approach of Niagara was a quiet critique of both the sleek, efficient organization patterns so lauded in the late nineteenth century burgeoning world of big business and the imperialistic, expansionist evangelicalism so ascendent in the churches of the Gilded Age. Niagara was entirely unique, and as George Needham wrote "as unlike ordinary denominational conventions, modern camp-meetings and Sunday-school assemblies as the quiet informal family reunion in the home, where all is love and peace, is unlike

a mercantile bazaar with its attendant confusion and excitement."¹¹²

The type of fellowship participants at Niagara testified to was of an almost mystical quality. Of the Watkins Glen meeting of 1877 Brookes writes: "Indeed self seemed to be lost in the adoring contemplation of Jesus, and all hearts and minds flowed together in a common desire to exalt His precious name."¹¹³ Letters testifying to the impact of this conference verify this sentiment. One pastor wrote of this seven day retreat as a mountain top experience, concluding "I scarcely expect anything beyond it until He comes."¹¹⁴ Another attender, "a beloved evangelist" wrote: "I have never felt the presence of Jesus more consciously than I did through those blessed days."¹¹⁵ At the close of the meeting, with tears in her eyes, a sister said to a friend, "I never expected to be so near heaven on earth."¹¹⁶ Such testimonies could be multiplied many times.¹¹⁷

Often the high point at a Niagara Conference came on Sunday when the Lord's Supper was shared. Typical of the kind of fellowship enjoyed on these occasions is Brookes' description of the 1885 communion service:

At sunset on the Lord's day a large company, more than could crowd into the pavilion, gathered to show His death till He come. These Conference Communion have always been very precious, partly no doubt because believers of every evangelical denomination are assembled unto His name alone, utterly forgetful of their little differences, and lost to all earthly distinctions in adoring contemplation of His glorious person and finished work. The meeting of the present year formed no exception to the rule, which has made the memory of such seasons sweet and hallowed through all the months of separation.¹¹⁸

It was especially at occasions such as Communion that the interdenominational character of Niagara was evident. President Brookes frequently alludes to this feature of Niagara. He reports that the 550 persons attending

the 1889 conference "representing Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalian, Methodists, Presbyterians and even Brethren" celebrated holy communion together in adoring exultation of that name which is above every name."¹¹⁹

It is noteworthy that at Niagara Baptists like George Needham and Pedobaptists like James Brookes could forget their doctrinal differences regarding the ordinances and share the Lord's Supper together. This interdenominational view of participation in communion was quite different from the official position of some of the denominations and sects represented at the conference. Most Plymouth Brethren practised closed communion in their own fellowships. The American Baptists' official view restricted communion to "regenerated persons, baptized on a profession of faith, and walking orderly lives in church fellowship."¹²⁰ Communion was seen as a church ordinance to be observed by churches only. Furthermore, the Directory affirms that Baptists do not invite Pedobaptists to their communion "because they do not regard such persons as baptized; they have only been sprinkled. The fact that they think themselves baptized, does not make it so. If they desire to commune, let them be baptized according to Christ's command."¹²¹

Not only was open communion practiced, teaching about church government and baptism was absent from the roster of topics presented at Niagara. There was no article in the Niagara Creed concerning baptism. Obviously one of the ways of maintaining harmony at the conference was avoiding discussion of controversial questions of church polity. At Niagara the fellowship value of communion took precedence over denominational positions, which at least for the time of the retreat became unimportant.

For all practical purposes, the Niagara Bible Conference acted as an interdenominational church "aiming to manifest the primitive, New Testament idea of an ecclesia."¹²² Although the conference leaders were significantly influenced by English Plymouth Brethren founder John Nelson Darby's concept of the church which implicated all denominations in apostasy and called all true believers to separate themselves, few American ministers and laymen were willing to leave their denominations. Most of the men at Niagara accepted Darby's brand of dispensational theology but rejected the schismatic, separatistic elements in his thought. Indeed, most of the early leaders at Niagara decried the divisions among the Brethren and the bitter sectarian spirit evident among them.¹²³

Brookes and most of the leaders at Niagara accepted the general idea that denominations were becoming apostate - in fact they believed this was predicted in the Bible as an end-time phenomenon. But these men also believed that the true church transcended denominations and consisted of all true Christians, regardless of churchly affiliation.¹²⁴ Thus James Brookes could write of those gathered at Niagara: "The brethren were assembled to exalt the name of Jesus, wholly forgetful of all other names and personal preferences, wholly laying aside all sectarian prejudices, standing on common redemption ground."¹²⁵ This interdenominational ecclesiology, which was to become such a characteristic feature of Fundamentalism was rooted in the benevolent empire movement of the early nineteenth century in which individuals, not church bodies, cooperated in voluntary societies for missionary, educational, and reforming activities. The concept was also

promoted by Congregationalism's teaching that all true believers are already one.¹²⁶ C. Norman Kraus observes that the men-in the Bible and prophetic conference movement "tried to adapt Darby's dispensationalism - which had antidenominationalism as a point of departure to a nondenominational or interdenominational philosophy."¹²⁷

While the leaders of Niagara were deeply disturbed at the inroads of higher criticism and rationalism in the major denominations, by and large they were not ecclesiastical separatists. When a religious periodical charged James Brookes with trying to disrupt the Presbyterian Church and bring divisions, the miffed editor offered five hundred dollars in cash to the brother bringing the charge if he could provide proof of Brookes ever writing one line "avowing any such purpose" and another five hundred dollars if he could produce one reputable witness who would testify "that he ever heard the person named avow any such purpose."¹²⁸ Some of the later Niagara leaders did leave their denominations and after the second decade of the twentieth century, Fundamentalists in larger numbers began separating from what they considered to be liberal and apostate denominations. Men like Brookes, A.J. Gordon, and W.J. Erdman, however, were committed to remain within the denominational system. In 1899 a relatively new Niagara participant, Arno C. Gaebelein sought counsel about his proposed break with the Methodists. He was discouraged by Leander Munhall and W.J. Erdman, both early leaders in the Niagara Conference, but C.I. Scofield, one of the later leaders encouraged him to make the break.¹²⁹ Both Gaebelein and Scofield became aggressive and influential leaders in twentieth century Fundamentalism.

The Demise of Niagara

It is ironic that the chief reason for the founding of the Niagara Bible Conference i.e. the study of prophetic truth, should also become the chief cause of its demise. Although the public literature of the movement portrays the unsettled location (after 1897), the emergence of numerous other Bible conferences, and the death of Niagara's president James Hall Brookes as causes of the conference's demise, in reality these were only external factors.¹³⁰

It was true that numerous other Bible conferences patterned after Niagara emerged in the 1880s and 1890s. Many were smaller retreats with a limited impact but a number of larger influential conferences also developed. However the Niagara guard never saw these conferences as a threat to their own work at Niagara-on-the-Lake but rather as an extension of it. Indeed, the Niagara leaders were frequently the initiators of new Bible conferences and the speakers at them were the same men who lectured at Niagara. For example the Seaside Bible Conference meeting from 1888 to 1893 in New Jersey earnestly contended for the faith in the same spirit as did Niagara. James Brookes spoke at the 1893 meeting of this conference, held at Asbury Park, New Jersey. Leander Munhall was the superintendent of the conference and the list of speakers reads like a typical Niagara roster.¹³¹ Far from discouraging such meetings, the president of Niagara was delighted at their appearance. In 1893 he wrote:

Such gatherings as that at Asbury Park are to be commended, because they confirm confidence in the truth of God's Word, because they tear off the mask of baptized infidelity, because they lead to a deeper study

of the sacred Scriptures, because they unite the hearts of the remnant in these last and perilous days in warmer brotherly love, because they set forth the coming of the Lord as our only hope.¹³²

Staunch Niagara millenarians like A.C. Dixon and James Stifler spoke at the Old Point Comfort Bible Conference in Virginia in the 1890s.¹³³ J. Wilbur Chapman helped found the famous Winona Lake Bible Conference in 1895. At first this Illinois retreat was under Presbyterian control, but then it became interdenominational.¹³⁴ Moody's Northfield Conference, begun in 1880, had become as highly respected as the Niagara Conference, but again, there was no sense of rivalry between the two summer retreats. Many of the same speakers lectured at both Northfield and Niagara.¹³⁵

The American Bible and Prophetic Conferences begun by the men of Niagara in 1878 continued to be held at regular intervals up to the year 1918. These meetings were conducted in a somewhat different fashion than the regular Niagara sessions in that they consisted largely of the reading of a series of carefully prepared papers, usually on the theme of prophecy. However their intent was the same - to earnestly contend for the faith. The same issue of Watchword and Truth which announced the close of the Niagara Bible Conference informed readers that plans were being made for the Fourth American Bible and Prophetic Conference, which was later held at Clarendon Street Baptist Church, Boston, December 10 - 15, 1901. Of the eighteen addresses delivered at this conference, ten were given by men who had been associated with Niagara. A.C. Dixon was president of the conference and W.J. Erdman secretary.¹³⁶

The real reason for the disbanding of the Niagara Bible Conference

was discord among its leaders over certain aspects of eschatology, particularly disagreement regarding the question of whether Christ would come for true believers before the end-time seven year period of persecution and terror known as the Great Tribulation or after it. The doctrine of imminency (Christ could come at any moment) and the doctrine of the secret rapture (true believers would be suddenly and silently "snatched away") were associated with the pretribulation theory. Most pretribulationists also accepted a dispensational view of God's dealing with mankind.

An influential member of the conference executive, Canadian Baptist Robert Cameron, was the first of the Niagara group to change from pre to posttribulationism. He convinced the noted Biblical scholar Nathaniel West of the correctness of the posttribulation position and West proceeded to attack the theory of the secret rapture in a series of pamphlets and articles.¹³⁷ The leaders of Niagara began to take sides and many became convinced that their beloved retreat had been teaching error for almost twenty-five years. During the last years of the conference, secretary W.J. Erdman, professors William G. Moorehead and James M. Stifler, and missionary executive Henry W. Frost changed their minds and joined the Cameron-West camp.¹³⁸ Arno C. Gaebelein, editor of the Our Hope magazine founded in 1894 and C.I. Scofield, editor of the famous Scofield Reference Bible (1909) headed up the pretribulationist forces, which eventually dominated Fundamentalism.

James Brookes was willing to have posttribulation views aired in The Truth. But the whole controversy troubled him. He was a staunch pretribulationist himself and felt that it was "nothing more than fair and right"

that the other view should be heard, but nevertheless he lamented:

It is a sad fact that pre-millennialists, notwithstanding their knowledge of the truth, are going to pieces like the Plymouth Brethren. There are those who look for the coming of the Lord every hour. There are those who think that He will not come until the end of the tribulation. There are those who think that only those who watch for Him will be caught up to meet Him in the air.¹³⁹

Dr. Brookes died in April of 1897. The May, 1897 issue of The Truth was its last. The Niagara Conference met that summer, as usual with a memorial service being conducted to honor the departed president. The reports of this 1897 conference were published in the July-August issue of The Watchword, which had been edited by Robert Cameron since the death of A.J. Gordon in 1895. With the September, 1897 issue, Watchword united with Truth under the name The Watchword and Truth, edited by Robert Cameron and devoted to advocating "the primitive faith, the primitive hope, and the primitive love."¹⁴⁰

The 1898 Niagara meeting was held at Point Chautauqua, New York, located almost directly across the lake from the famous Chautauqua Assembly Grounds.¹⁴¹ Attendance was down from previous meetings. Arno C. Gaebelein spoke at this conference and two of his three Bible lessons were published in The Watchword and Truth.¹⁴² By this time Gaebelein and W.J. Erdman were engaged in a paper discussion of alternate views of imminence and the coming of the Lord "for" His saints, although the debate was not vociferous as yet.¹⁴³

The 1899 meeting of the conference was again held at Point Chautauqua, and again with a smaller attendance. Outlines of nine lessons are given in The Watchword and Truth but the reporting is very sketchy.

In his report of the twenty-fifth anniversary meeting of the Niagara Bible Conference held July 10-17, 1900 at Seaside Auditorium in Asbury Park, New Jersey Robert Cameron noted that there was a marked absence of young people at this meeting and the number of evangelists and pastors did not seem to be so great as in former years. The editor further observed that while there was "the same love and loyalty to the Word, the same clear and Scriptural teaching and same quiet devotion" which had always characterized these meetings, there was now "an evident absence of the fervor and depth of conviction which marked the teaching of former years." He asked: "Is it the calm before the storm; or is it a lapse from the first warm fervor of a great spiritual movement and life; or is it the gradual withdrawing of the Holy Spirit from the christian assemblies preparatory to the Apostasy, the Antichrist and the Advent?"¹⁴⁴ In the description of proceedings at this conference, Cameron did not allude specifically to the doctrinal controversy that troubled the Niagara group but did call for an informal meeting of Niagara leaders to discuss differences of opinion regarding prophetic truth. Two months later, in an editorial, the implication of divided leadership came through rather clearly. Cameron wrote:

As to the private meeting of the Teachers, we still feel that as the end is evidently drawing near, a meeting of the men most deeply taught of God ought to be held to consider, amongst other things (1) What we are specially to watch as evidences of the near and speedy coming of the Lord; (2) What aspects of truth need now specially to be emphasized; (3) What forms of apostasy need most carefully to be guarded against; (4) What can be done to unify and to make more harmonious the teachings of those who are now to the front as defenders of the faith and exponents of prophetic truth. . . . There ought to be a greater unity of testimony amongst us.¹⁴⁵

A meeting of leading teachers of the Niagara Conference was held in Brooklyn on November 14, 1900. It was successful enough to lead to another similar meeting in February, 1901, which lasted for three days. At this lengthier consultation, although great divergencies of opinion on prophetic themes was evident, some unanimity of thought and feeling was achieved. Great interest was expressed in continuing Bible and prophetic conferences. Nevertheless, shortly after this second consultation, the convening committee of the Niagara Conference met and decided to discontinue the Niagara meetings. In the announcement of this decision, the Niagara Conference was lauded as having been "perhaps second in spiritual power to no other," yet since so many other similar conferences and summer Bible schools were operating in so many places and Niagara's attendance was greatly decreased, we are told that the brethren regretfully made the difficult decision to close the conference.¹⁴⁶

✓ The last recorded minutes of the Niagara committee also veil the fact that doctrinal differences was the chief factor in Niagara's demise. They simply say that the principal reason for closing the conference was "decreased attendance of late years and the increase of similar Bible conferences in different parts of the country."¹⁴⁷ We have already shown that this was not the main factor in Niagara's closure.

It is unfortunate that a spirit of controversy and bitterness soon to become endemic to Fundamentalism should have surfaced so early in its history and especially at the Niagara Bible Conference, the retreat up until the late 1890s known for its quiet and harmonious family spirit, "where all is love

and peace." In the struggle to be the rightful heirs of James Brookes and the successors of the Niagara witness, two distinct groups formed, with C.I. Scofield and Arno C. Gaebelein as champions of the dispensational, pretribulational side and Robert Cameron, Nathaniel West, and W.J. Erdman upholding a posttribulational view.¹⁴⁸ With Scofield's assistance, Gaebelein secured the mailing lists of The Truth and advertised his periodical, Our Hope, as the doctrinal successor to it, choosing to ignore whatever legal rights Robert Cameron had to support his claims to succession. The latter had purchased The Truth from the publisher Fleming H. Revell after Brookes' death in 1897.¹⁴⁹

Robert Cameron, heading the posttribulational wing of Niagara, devoted his energies to the construction of a united front for both post and pre-tribulationists. He was successful only to a very limited degree. Meanwhile, Gaebelein capitalized on the positive aspects of pretribulationism, which he instinctively knew held a greater appeal to Americans attracted by the millenarian message. That message, according to Gaebelein, insisted that the hope of Christ's return had to be an imminent hope or it was not a hope at all. If tribulation preceded the coming of Christ, then believers could not look forward to the Second Advent but had to look for suffering. Using such arguments, Gaebelein led his followers in a vigorous campaign of expansion.¹⁵⁰

Within months of the news of the demise of Niagara, Gaebelein and C.I. Scofield were formulating plans to start a new annual conference to carry on the prophetic witness of the Niagara Bible Conference. By the summer of 1901, with the help of some wealthy Plymouth Brethren supporters, Gaebelein

started the Sea Cliff Bible Conference at Long Island, New York which continued in the tradition of Niagara for eleven years.¹⁵¹ The aggressive editor and organizer was the driving force behind the calling of the great prophetic conferences in Chicago in 1914 and New York in 1918.¹⁵² Gaebelein literally crisscrossed the continent during the first two decades of the new century holding Bible and prophecy conferences in more than a hundred cities and towns ranging from Washington to Winnipeg to San Francisco.¹⁵³ The appearance of the famous Scotfield Reference Bible in 1909, with a new improved edition coming out in 1917, and the gratuitous distribution of William Blackstone's 252 page dispensational prophetic handbook Jesus is Coming to ministers, missionaries, and theological students aided Gaebelein's campaign immensely. C. Norman Kraus observes: "The dispensationalists (i.e. Gaebelein, Scotfield, et. al.) had won the day so completely that for the next fifty years friend and foe alike largely identified dispensationalism with premillennialism."¹⁵⁴ Not only was the Niagara witness to the authority and inerrancy of the Scriptures carried on into twentieth century Fundamentalism, its dispensational approach to "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" dominated the movement. It is this legacy we now further examine.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a more detailed discussion of the frontier camp meeting see William Warren Sweet, Revivalism in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), pp. 122-26; Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958), pp. 20-34; and Vinson Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 23-26.
2. Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, p. 26.
3. Ibid., p. 13. See also Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957; reprint ed.; New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965), especially ch. 7 "Sanctification and American Methodism."
4. Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, pp. 36-54. Synan states: "With the opening of the Vineland, New Jersey Camp meeting on July 17, 1867, the modern holiness crusade began. This may properly be considered the beginning of the holiness movement in the United States. Those who attended felt unanimously that this meeting was destined to 'exert an influence over all Christendom' as well as 'to initiate a new era in Methodism'. Little did these men realize that this meeting would eventually result in the formation of over a hundred denominations around the world and indirectly bring to birth a 'Third Force' in Christendom, the pentecostal movement" (p. 37).
5. Theodore Morrison, Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion, and the Arts in America (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. vi. See also Joseph E. Gould, The Chautauqua Movement (Albany: The State University of New York, 1961; reprint ed., 1970), and Victoria Case and Robert Ormond Case, We Called it Culture (New York: Doubleday, 1948; reprint ed.; Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1970).
6. Sandeen, Roots, pp. 18-19.

7. Ibid., p. 38. For more information on Powerscourt see Harold H. Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren: 1825-1850 (London: Pickering and Inglis Ltd., 1967), pp. 1-17, and F. Roy Coad, A History of the Brethren Movement (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 108-110.
8. Truth 19(1895): 249. Plymouth Brethren evangelist Reginald Radcliffe spoke at the 1889 Niagara Conference - cf. Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, "By Faith" Henry Frost and the China Inland Mission (Philadelphia: China Inland Mission, 1938), pp. 149-50. Arno C. Gaebelein, one of the speakers at the 1898 Niagara sessions held at Point Chautauqua, New York tells of meeting a Plymouth Brethren couple, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Emory Fitch at the conference - cf. Arno Clemens Gaebelein, Half a Century: The Autobiography of a Servant (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," 1930), p. 71 and p. 83. Gaebelein, prominent in the closing years of Niagara, acknowledged his indebtedness to Darby and other Plymouth Brethren writers. In his autobiography Gaebelein confessed: "I found in his writings (Darby's), in the works of William Kelly, McIntosh, F.W. Grant, Bellett and others the soul food I needed. I esteem these men (all Brethren) next to the Apostles in their sound and spiritual teaching" (p. 85).
9. For a description of the Irish revival see J. Edwin Orr, The Fervent Prayer (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), ch. 7 "The Awakening in Ulster."
10. George C. Needham, ed., The Spiritual Life Bible Lectures (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1895), p. 18. Other accounts by Needham of the origins of the Bible conference movement are found in the Introduction of James H. Brookes, Present Truth (Springfield, Ill.: Edwin A. Wilson, 1877), pp. 12-13; Watchword 13(1891): 59-61; and Northfield Echoes 1(1894): 92-93.
11. Northfield Echoes 1(1894): 93.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Sandeen, Roots, p. 132.

15. Ibid., pp. 135-36; Truth 16(1890): 362-63.
16. Truth 16(1890): 362.
17. Ibid., 18(1892): 636.
18. Watchword 19(1897): 144.
19. Truth 5(1880): 429. For an account of Emma Dryers efforts in Bible school work and city evangelization, see James F. Findlay, Jr., Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837-1899 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969; reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), pp. 321-55.
20. James Brookes, "Ministry of Women," Truth 21(1895): 87-92.
21. Ibid., 4(1878): 452.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 5(1879): 270.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 271.
26. James H. Brookes, Bible Reading on the Second Coming (Springfield, Ill.: Edwin A. Wilson Publisher, 1877). In an editorial on the Clifton Springs meeting of 1878, Brookes affirms the "personal and premillennial coming, as the only hope of a suffering church and groaning creation" (Truth: 4(1878): 404).
27. Brookes, Bible Reading, pp. 32-34.

28. Ibid., p. xiii.
29. Truth 3(1877): 507.
30. Ibid., 4(1878): 403-404.
31. Ibid., 505-507.
32. Nathaniel West, ed., Premillennial Essays (New York: R.H. Revell, 1879), pp. 11-14.
33. Truth 11(1885): 410-15 gives a summary of the proceedings of this four day prophetic conference. For a complete record of all the addresses see The Second Coming of Our Lord, Being Papers Read at a Conference Held at Niagara, Ontario, July 14-17, 1885 (Toronto: S.R. Briggs, Willard Tract Depository, n.d.).
34. As cited by Sandeen in Roots, p. 154.
35. Needham, Prophetic Studies, p. 2.
36. Sandeen, Roots, p. 157.
37. Dollar, p. 45.
38. Prophetic Studies, pp. 166-77 and pp. 194-204.
39. Ibid., p. 216.
40. Truth 5(1879): 271. See also ibid., 6(1880): 425; 7(1881): 482; and 9(1883): 254.
41. Pierson contributed the lecture "The Bible Vindicated" at the 1889 Niagara meetings - see Truth 15(1889): 451-61.

42. A.T. Pierson, Many Infallible Proofs (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1886).

43. McLoughlin, The American Evangelicals, p. 22. Beecher and Abbott were heavily influenced by the great liberalizer of mid-nineteenth century American theology Horace Bushnell (1802-1876). Through his writings, Bushnell promulgated three major propositions, each elaborated in a major work. In Christian Nurture (1847) he argued that conversion should be gradual and come through education rather than through a sudden, dramatic experience. In Natural and Supernatural (1865) he stated that the natural and supernatural were consubstantial and evident in almost all forms of being. In The Vicarious Sacrifice (1866) he declared that Christ's death was an example of God's eternal love rather than a satisfaction for sin. The "new theology" that was built on the above premises provided the religious background for a social gospel movement that was rapidly nearing maturity as the century drew to its close - cf. Charles Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915, 6th pr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 5.

44. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 26; Paul A. Carter, The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), pp. 50-55. A recent biography of Beecher is Clifford E. Clark, Jr., Henry Ward Beecher: Spokesman for a Middle-Class America (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978). In a letter to a friend, cited by Clark, Beecher gave the following estimate of himself: "I know my place and rank, I think. I belong to the second place (among) men. I shall do good while I am alive, not so much in discovering or organizing truth as in applying it, and rousing men to activity" (p. 277).

45. As cited by Carter, p. 50.

46. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 26.

47. As cited in *ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

49. Sandeen, Roots, pp. 170-72; Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 117; David R. Williams, James H. Brookes: A Memoir (St. Louis: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1897), pp. 221-23.

50. Truth 7(1881): 482.
51. James H. Brookes, Israel and the Church (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Ass'n, n.d.), p. 195.
52. Ibid.
53. Truth 16(1890): 170.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., 19(1893): 223-26; 622-25. See also negative comments on Briggs and higher criticism in James H. Brookes, "God Spake All These Words," abridged ed. (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, n.d. (1894)), pp. 61-62, 66, 72-73.
56. Williams, A Memoir, pp. 221.
57. Truth 16(1890): 386.
58. Watchword 17(1895): 90-91.
59. Truth 2(1876): 492-97; 8(1882): 397-99, 402-03; 9(1883): 460-64, 475-78, 516-23; 12(1886): 508-11.
60. A.J. Gordon, How Christ Came to Church (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1895), p. xiii.
61. Cf. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, pp. 72-80.
62. Ibid., p. 246 n. 6.
63. Ibid., p. 79.

64. A.C. Dixon, The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit, p. vi.
65. Ibid., p. 2.
66. A.C. Dixon, The Holy Spirit in Life and Service, pp. iii and iv.
67. Watchword 19(1897): 144. See also F.L. Chapell, "The Secularization of the Church, ibid., 13(1891): 91-92, 117-19, 145-46; and F.M. Ellis, "The Spiritualization of the Church", 62-63, 120-23, 151-53.
68. Truth 7(1881): 483.
69. Ibid., 22(1896): 422.
70. Ibid., 8(1882): 467.
71. Ibid., 16(1890): 364.
72. Ibid.
73. Watchword 13(1891); 59-60.
74. Truth 1(1875): 454-55. See also ibid., 23(1897): 81-82 for another explanation of a Bible reading.
75. Needham, Spiritual Life, pp. 11-13; McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, pp. 159-60; Sandeen, Roots, p. 138. William Moody in his Life of D.L. Moody, pp. 137-43 shows the influence of Moorhouse on Moody. The latter regularly used the Bible reading in his evangelistic work.
76. Truth 8(1882): 385.
77. Ibid., 2(1876): 497-98, 498-500; 9(1883): 468-71, 523-27; 14(1888): 464-73; 15(1889): 477-80.

78. Ibid., 3(1877): 92.
 79. Ibid., 16(1890): 389.
 80. Ibid.
 81. Presbyterian and Reformed Review 1(1890): 36-37.
 82. Truth 7(1881): 482.
 83. Ibid., 9(1883): 433.
 84. One of the reprints of this book, first issued in the early 1860s is James H. Brookes, The Way Made Plain (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1871).
 85. Williams, A Memoir, p. 249.
 86. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, p. 286.
 87. Ibid., p. 377. From 1892 to 1895 Billy Sunday was Chapman's advance man. When Sunday started preaching on his own he made up for his lack of formal theological education by borrowing his sermons wholesale from Chapman and then interspersing them with illustrations he had picked up from Moody and other evangelists - *ibid.*, pp. 405-406.
 88. Ibid., p. 377.
 89. Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, "By Faith," pp. 149-50. See chapter 7 "Wider Vision" for a fuller description of how Niagara influenced Frost to devote his life to missions.
 90. Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission (London: The China Inland Mission, 1943), p. 445.
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91. Ibid., p. 446.

92. Ibid., p. 447.

93. Truth 9(1883): 5-16. See also two lectures given by Henry Martyn Parsons (named after Henry Martyn, noted British missionary to India and Persia) - "Israel and the Nations in the Messianic Kingdom," and "The Restoration of Israel" in ibid., 20(1894): 421-25 and 426-34. Although an American, Parsons pastored Knox Presbyterian Church in Toronto in the 1880s.

94. Ibid., 513-14. See also J.T. Cooper, "Return of Israelites to their own Land and the Restoration of them to their Kingdom," ibid., 455-57; also Brookes' Israel and the Church, a work devoted entirely to explaining the place of Israel in God's economy.

95. Weber, Living in the Shadow, pp. 142-44. See also Gaebelein, Half a Century, pp. 25-72.

96. Weber, pp. 141-42.

97. As cited in ibid., p. 142. For more on Our Hope and the work of Gaebelein among the Jews see David A. Rausch, Zionism Within Early Fundamentalism 1878-1918 (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979), pp. 237-62.

98. Watchword 19(1897): 143.

99. Truth 2(1877): 91.

100. Premillennial Essays, pp. 204-21.

101. Truth 11(1885): 460-66.

102. Ibid., 15(1889): 477-80.

103. Prophetic Studies, pp. 194-204.
104. Truth 14(1888): 464-73.
105. Needham, Spiritual Life, p. 5.
106. Truth 13(1887): 228-29.
107. As cited by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor in "By Faith," p. 33.
108. Truth 9(1883): 253.
109. Watchword 19(1897): 144.
110. George Needham said of his own preaching: "By no means advertise me as being sensational or magnetic, or eloquent, or scholarly or smart, or any such thing, but only as a plain man, telling a plain story, in a plain manner" - as cited by Sandeen in Roots, p. 137.
111. Truth 9(1883): 253.
112. Ibid., 8(1882); 467-68.
113. Ibid., 3(1877): 506-07.
114. Ibid., 508.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., 5(1879): 411-12; 7(1881): 484; 8(1882): 470.

118. Ibid., 11(1885): 467. For Brookes' entire communion message see ibid., 467-71.
119. Ibid., 15(1889): 433.
120. Edward T. Hiscox, The New Directory for Baptist Churches (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894: reprint ed., 1906), pp. 130-41.
121. Ibid., p. 451.
122. Watchword 19(1897): 144.
123. James Brookes, "Brethren Fighting", Truth 21(1895): 309-12.
124. Gaebelein, in Half A Century, pp. 77-78 tells how the truth that "there is but one church; not different bodies, but one body" came to his heart "as one of the greatest of all revelations."
125. Truth 9(1883): 433.
126. H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy and Lefferts A. Loetscher, American Christianity (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 2:66-67.
127. Kraus, Dispensationalism, p. 56.
128. Truth 12(1886): 506.
129. Gaebelein, Half a Century, p. 81
130. Watchword and Truth 22(1900): 227; ibid., 21(1901): 150; Sandeen, Roots, pp. 208-13.
131. See "Asbury Park Conference," Truth 19(1893): 549-51.

132. Ibid., 551.

133. Sandeen, Roots, p. 165 and 194.

134. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, p. 261; Dollar, p. 261.

135. Watchword and Truth 22(1900): 226 announced dates and speakers at Northfield. A.T. Pierson, prominent in both Northfield and Niagara wrote a history of the former - see A.T. Pierson, "The Story of Northfield Conferences," Northfield Echoes 1(1894): 1-13. See also Findlay, pp. 339-53 for more on this important conference.

136. Addresses on the International Prophetic Conference (Boston: Watchword and Truth, 1901), pp. 3-5. Other conferences in this series (in addition to New York, 1878; Chicago, 1886; Allegheny, 1895; and Boston, 1901) included the one at Moody Bible Institute, February 14-17, 1914 and two conferences held in 1918 - the one at Philadelphia, May 28-30, and the other at New York, November 25-28. Although not officially a part of the American Prophetic Conference series begun by the men of Niagara, the Bible Inspiration Conference held in Philadelphia in 1887, and the two conferences on the Holy Spirit (Baltimore, 1890 and Brooklyn, 1894) were all headed up by Niagara men and owed their inspiration to Niagara.

137. Robert Cameron, Scriptural Truth About the Lord's Return (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1922), pp. 145-46. See also Appendix C.

138. Ibid., p. 148.

139. Truth 21(1895): 187.

140. Watchword 19(1897): 142.

141. Watchword and Truth 20(1898): 144.

142. Arno. C. Gaebelien, "The Prayer of Habakkuk," ibid., 267-68; "The Song of Moses," ibid., 272-74.

143. Our Hope 5(1898-99): 17-19 and 156-62.

144. Watchword and Truth 22(1900): 227.

145. Ibid., 292.

146. Ibid., 23(1901): 150-51.

147. Moody Monthly, July 22, 1922, pp. 1104-05.

148. Sandeen in Roots, p. 221, n. 25 points out that "one party in American millenarianism - beginning with James Inglis and James H. Brookes and continuing through C.I. Scofield and Arno C. Gaebelein to later twentieth-century defenders such as Lewis Sperry Chafer - has consistently maintained the Darbyite dispensational theology. The posttribulationists rejected the most important of Darby's positions, and it seems only logical that they should no longer be classed as dispensationalists."

149. Sandeen, Roots, p. 217; Kraus, Dispensationalism, p. 104.

150. Sandeen, Roots, pp. 217-20.

151. Arno C. Gaebelein, "The Story of the Scofield Reference Bible," Moody Monthly, January, 1943, pp. 278-79. See also Gaebelein, Half a Century, pp. 116-17.

152. Half a Century, p. 110.

153. Ibid., Part iv "From Coast to Coast," pp. 101-243. Gaebelein records several visits to Vancouver and Victoria where he held conferences in different churches - p. 181.

154. Kraus, Dispensationalism, p. 104. Although the dispensationalists dominated the premillennial movement, it must be remembered that there still remained a segment of premillennialists which did not identify with dispensationalism. The premillennialist group within the Northern Baptist Convention led by Baptist editor Curtis Lee Laws which took on the name "Fundamentalist" in 1920 identified with neither dispensationalism nor with the crusade against evolution. This group, popularly called "The Fundamentalist Fellowship," were moderate conservatives.

CHAPTER III

"RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH"

Not only is Christianity dependent upon inspiration, and therefore can not exist without it, but in its true sense it is dependent upon verbal inspiration.

James Brookes, Truth 9(1883): 124.

There is great need of something being done in the way of training those who are candidates for the ministry, and thousands of those already in the work who have simply no idea of how rightly to divide the word of truth. When I learned to study and divide the "Word of God" dispensationally, it became a new book and everything fell into its right place.

Letter in Watchword and Truth
23(1901): 167.

The doctrine of an inspired, infallible Bible was viewed by nineteenth century evangelicals as the moat surrounding the citadel of supernatural redemption. If men got over this moat, true believers were convinced the citadel would fall. Christianity's survival depended on the inspiration of its written record; the Holy Bible.

Belief in the Bible as an infallible compendium of verbal propositions was based on a view of truth as directly apprehended facts. Until the shaking of the foundations of American evangelicalism after the 1870s, two premises were considered sacrosanct - God's truth was a single unified order; all persons of common sense were capable of knowing that truth. In 1870, Scottish Common Sense Realism still ruled as the American philosophy, a philosophy marvellously well suited to the prevailing ideals of American culture.¹

Based on the theories of Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid (1710-1796), the Common Sense School stated that the human mind was so constructed that it could know the real world directly, without interposing "ideas" between it and the real world, as John Locke had taught. Reid affirmed that the common language built on fact, accurately reflected the common convictions of mankind. From his own innate common sense man could intuitively derive the validity of such abstract ideas as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the concepts of rewards and punishments after death. In Reid's doctrine the existence of common sense had theistic presuppositions; its truths were "the inspiration of the Almighty." Speaking out of this framework, theologians asserted that a person of simple common sense could rightly understand the Scriptures and his common sense perceptions were reliable.²

Evangelicals believed the empirical method, as articulated by seventeenth century philosopher Francis Bacon was the surest way to build on the common sense foundation of Reid. Whether the field of study was theology or geology, the inductive method could be used to classify the data and arrive at certainty of knowledge. The Scriptures were a compilation of hard facts, the firmness of which was assured by their supernatural inspiration. In our knowledge of the past, we had to rely on the testimony of honest witnesses. Surely the human authors of the Bible were such witnesses and thus Scripture was not to be regarded as representing the points of view of its authors regarding the past, but it was rather an infallible representation of the past itself. If anyone approached the Bible in an objective scientific

spirit, the force of the rational evidence would convince the honest searcher of the truths of orthodox Christianity.³ Niagara apologist A.T. Pierson expressed the basic philosophical assumptions of the early Fundamentalists when he said: "I like Biblical theology that does not start with the superficial Aristotelian method of reason, that does not begin with an hypothesis, and then warp the facts and the philosophy to fit the crook of our dogma, but a Baconian system, which first gathers the teachings of the word of God, and then seeks to deduce some general law upon which the facts can be arranged."⁴

Truth came in precisely stated propositions. The Bible was just such truth, "a stable entity, not historically relative, best expressed in written language that, at least potentially, would convey one message in all times and places."⁵ George Marsden suggests that we compare the late nineteenth century Common Sense view of truth and error in relationship to the prevailing modern views as we might express the relationship between Ptolemaic and Copernican accounts of the universe.

As in the Ptolemaic astronomy the earth was regarded as a fixed point with the heavenly bodies all revolving around it, so in the Common Sense view of knowledge there was one body of fixed truth that could be known objectively, while around it revolved all sorts of errors, speculations, prejudices and subjective opinions. Most other modern schemes of thought have tended toward the view that all observers, like all bodies in the Copernican universe, are (as it were) in motion - caught in historical processes. Rather than seeing truth as objectively existing at one fixed point, they have viewed knowledge as at least to a considerable degree relative to a person's time and point of view.⁶

This was the philosophical framework out of which the early Fundamentalists operated in enunciating their theological views. The theory of

* inspiration which emerged, has in its main outlines characterized Fundamentalistic thought ever since.

The Nature of True Inspiration

The theory of inspiration set forth by the early Fundamentalists was an amalgum of European theological scholarship, particularly Louis Gausson's Theopneustia, subtitled The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures deduced from Internal Evidence, and the Testimonies of Nature, History and Science, and the work of the Princeton theologians, probably most lucidly expressed in the writings of B.B. Warfield.⁷ The teachers at Niagara drew from these sources and defended and popularized the view known as the plenary-verbal theory of the inspiration of the original autographs.⁸ Through the Niagara Conference lectures, articles in The Truth and The Watchword, pamphlets, and books, the men of Niagara, particularly president James Brookes and apologist A.T. Pierson, forcefully impressed the plenary-verbal theory of inspiration on the common evangelical mind of the late nineteenth century.⁹

The defense of the plenary-verbal inspiration of the Bible became increasingly important at Niagara as higher criticism spread throughout American Protestantism.¹⁰ The very first issue of Brookes' Truth carried an article by Bishop Ryle on the inspiration of the Bible.¹¹ The first article of the Niagara Creed of 1878 spelled out the conference doctrine of the Scriptures very clearly:

We believe "that all scripture is given by inspiration of God," by which we understand the whole of the book called THE BIBLE: nor do we take the statement in the sense in which it is sometimes foolishly said that works of human genius are inspired, but in the sense that the Holy Ghost gave the very words of the sacred writings to holy men of old; and that His divine inspiration is not different in degrees,

but extends equally and fully to all parts of these writings, historical, poetical, doctrinal and prophetic, and to the smallest word, and inflection of a word, provided such word is found in the original manuscripts, 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Mark 12:26,36; 13:11; Acts 1:16, 2:4.¹²

Again in 1879 the plenary and verbal inspiration "of all that holy men of old wrote" was affirmed.¹³ In an 1880 conference message Rev. W.W. Clarke asserted that if we come to the Scriptures as critics, it is a sealed book; "if as students, God opens it to us by His Spirit. The Bible is a scroll; it is holy, sanctified, set apart; it is God's own book."¹⁴ Notes on the 1881 conference state that every one of the leaders "is a firm believer in the verbal inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, and hence they bring to the study of the very words of the Holy Ghost a delight and diligence and reverence, which is impossible to those who hold the loose and infidel view of inspiration, now so commonly accepted by preachers, and alas! too frequently taught in our Theological Seminaries."¹⁵

In an 1883 issue of The Truth we are told that the men of Niagara "have no sympathy with new-fangled and unscriptural notions, . . . but cling closely to the written word, believing in verbal inspiration, and demanding the clear and explicit testimony of Scripture to sustain all instruction that is given."¹⁶ In 1887 the leaders of Niagara organized a Bible Inspiration Conference, held in Chambers Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, November 15-18.¹⁷ For the 1893 Niagara Conference, secretary W.J. Erdman stated that more than unusual attention would be given to both prophecy and the authority of the inspired Word. This would be done by design and by the "expressed desire of brethren in this country and in Europe, and in view of the critical

condition of affairs civil and religious throughout the nations." Erdman concluded with the confident note, "The sure word of prophecy will yet be found to confute all criticisms and theories that minimize the supernatural and divine in the Word of God and history of man."¹⁸

Although the men of Niagara acknowledged that the Bible had a human side as well as a divine, the supernatural element was emphasized so much that they almost lost sight of the natural. These early Fundamentalists, along with the Princeton theologians,¹⁹ denied an outright mechanical dictation theory of inspiration, yet in the Niagara view, the authors of Scripture came out as little more than secretaries. James Brookes even used the word "dictation" in referring to the Spirit's mode of communicating through Old Testament writers.²⁰ The Niagara president insisted that inspiration controlled not only the thoughts but the actual words of Biblical writers.

If holy men of God were left to choose their own words, or to express their thoughts in language of their own selection, it would be madness to say, "The prophecy came not by the will of man;" but "Holy men of God spake." It does not say that they thought, but they spake, being moved, impelled, borne along, like ships before the wind, by the Holy Ghost.²¹

A.J. Gordon's explanation of the role the human writers played in producing the Scriptures also tended toward the dictation model. Although Gordon admitted that the style of Scripture was according to the "traits and idiosyncracies of the several writers, as the light within the cathedral takes on its various hues from passing through the stained windows," he went on to assert that the writers must have been reporters of what they

heard and their individuality was "subordinated to the sovereign individuality of the Holy Spirit."²² The divine aspect so overshadowed the human that Gordon asserted that the Bible's divinity lifted it

. . . above those faults of style which are fruits of self-consciousness and ambition. Whether we read the Old Testament story of Abraham's servant seeking a bride for Isaac, or the New Testament narrative of the walk of the risen Christ with his disciples to Emmaus, the inimitable simplicity of diction would make us think that we were listening to the dialect of the angels, who never sinned in thought, and, therefore, cannot sin in style, did we not know rather that it is the phraseology of the Holy Spirit.²³

The view that inerrancy resided in the original autographs removed the whole question of inspiration beyond the realm of discussion. Since the original manuscripts were not available for examination and minor errors in copying and translation were said not to invalidate inerrancy, these apologists could never be proven wrong.²⁴ The early Fundamentalists were confident along with the Princeton theologians that "all the affirmations of Scripture of all kinds, whether of spiritual doctrine or duty, or of physical or historical fact, or of psychological or philosophical principle, are without any error, when the ipsissima verba of the original autographs are ascertained and interpreted in their natural and intended sense."²⁵

Although the means of verifying errors in the Bible were effectively removed by the original autograph theory, the thought was still there that the whole Christian faith would be ruined if one error were actually proved. As we have seen, James Brookes staked everything on the plenary-verbal view of inspiration, stating categorically, "The question here presented, therefore, is vital to the continued existence of Christianity."²⁶ This all-or-nothing attitude toward inspiration has remained central in Fundamentalist thinking.

A.T. Pierson, the most influential apologist of the Niagara guard, perhaps best summarizes the most representative view of inspiration held by the early Fundamentalists of the conference movement. In Pierson's lengthy Knowing the Scriptures, we find the following: verbal inspiration is an absolute necessity if there be divine inspiration at all; it is not necessary to comprehend the mode of inspiration, only its result - i.e. the investment of the message with unique authority as from God; inspiration is true only of the original documents, now no longer extant.²⁷ He then makes this admission:

Many mistakes may have been made by copyists, and some interpolation by officious scribes and translators are fallible. It is the part of reverent criticism to seek, by careful examination and comparison of all existing documents, to detect errors and restore as far as possible the Scriptures in their original purity.²⁸

The early Fundamentalists were not closed to "reverent" criticism.²⁹

Pierson concludes his summary by affirming: "That which is essential in inspiration is the action of the mind of God upon the mind of man, in such way and measure as to quicken and qualify the human medium for the true conveyance of the Divine message."³⁰

Interpreting the "Word of Truth"

New ways of understanding the divine message emerged in the nineteenth century. The higher critics said that questions of authorship, dating, literary genre, and influence of culture had to be asked before one could decode the message. It seemed to conservatives as if the Bible was being taken away from the layman and reserved for scholars. Yet the perspicuity of the Bible was a concept dear to the evangelical mind.

The "dispensational" approach to the Bible, developed by the Plymouth Brethren in England in the 1830s and 40s, and popularized by the Fundamentalists of Niagara and the American prophecy movement in the 1880s and 90s, became synonymous with perspicuity - it "cleared up all."³¹ This method recognized clearly defined "dispensations" or divisions of time in redemptive history in each of which God worked with man in a specific way. It carefully observed vital distinctions in the Bible, such as that between Israel and the church and noted how God's purposes for each differed. It taught a novel theory called the "secret rapture," by which was meant the sudden (and to the unbelieving world silent) catching up of the saints to be with the Lord, immediately after which the terrible seven year Tribulation would break out only to end in the judgment of the Second Coming. This secret rapture could occur at any moment. Furthermore, it insisted on a literalistic interpretation of the Scriptures, not allowing their meaning to be "spiritualized." Symbols, metaphors, and allegories were recognized as being utilized by Scriptural writers, but, as an early Niagara dispensationalist avered, "unless they (i.e. the figures of speech) are so stated in the text, or plainly indicated in the context, we should hold only to the literal sense."³²

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) is recognized as the originator of the dispensational system of theology which swept through British and American millenarian circles the last half of the nineteenth century. Darby did not originate the idea of dividing redemptive history into various dispensations or eras and this concept is not really the distinctive feature of the system.³³ The nomenclature of the system is misleading since it does not put the emphasis

on the main feature of the system as Darby formulated it - i.e. distinguishing between God's dealing with Israel and His work with the church. The number of dispensations or eras is not the issue in the system, although a minimum of three are required - a dispensation before the church age, the dispensation of the church, and one after the rapture in which God resumes His dealing with Israel. Dispensationalism's basic concern is the radical separation between Israel and the church.³⁴

John Nelson Darby was born in London of Irish parents. He trained for a career in law and was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-two. During his first year in law practice he was converted and left that profession to prepare for holy orders. By 1825 Darby was a zealous evangelical preacher of the Church of England in a large, struggling parish in Ireland.

Darby soon became disaffected with the established church. In 1826 a group of Dublin Anglicans had started private meetings for closer communion and Bible study. It was to this group that Darby turned when he left the formal ministry because he could not condone the church's alliance with the state.³⁵ The Dublin fellowship had been formed by the coalescing of a number of smaller groups which had begun independently. Here the first tentative steps were taken towards the establishing of the Brethren movement. Plymouth, England also had a strong and influential fellowship group which Darby began attending in 1831. It was from this connection that the new movement derived the name Plymouth Brethren.³⁶

In 1831 the influential Powerscourt Conferences began near Dublin. It was at these annual Bible conference sessions that Darby, interacting with

other members of the Brethren movement, fleshed out his prophetic views.³⁷

Basic to the new theological views which were systematized in the 1830s and 40s was Darby's ecclesiology. Already in late 1826 the young curate was deploring the church's appeal to the secular power on the ground that the church was a heavenly society.³⁸ Over the next few years Darby was to teach that the church of true believers was separate from the visible institutional church, which in his view was apostate. In fact the true church was so spiritual that it existed outside of history. It was a parenthesis in the overall plan of God. It was established on the Day of Pentecost only after the Jews rejected the Messiah who had come to set up the Kingdom. This new spiritual body was unknown to the Old Testament writers and called a mystery in the New Testament. Upon the formation of this heavenly people, the church, God stopped the prophetic clock. However with the rapture of the church, the Kingdom, postponed so long, would be restored to God's earthly people. The return of the Jews to Palestine was a key part of the prophetic timetable.³⁹

It was at the Powerscourt Conference of 1831 that the then in vogue historicist interpretation of prophecy was rejected and the futurist interpretation, along with the literal-day theory affirmed. Darby himself had already arrived at these conclusions by the late 1820s. The historicist school of prophetic interpretation believed that the events described in Daniel and Revelation were being fulfilled in European history. One interpreter even went so far as to say that all of the first fifteen chapters of Revelation had already been fulfilled and that in 1827 European history was hovering somewhere between the twelfth and the seventeenth verses of Revelation 16.⁴⁰

Chronological estimates in the historicist scheme were based on what was known as the year-day theory. "Year" was to be substituted wherever "day" was mentioned in the writings of Daniel and Revelation. When Daniel 9 spoke of weeks, they were interpreted as periods of seven years. Months were to be interpreted as periods of thirty years. Using these calculations made 1798 a very significant date in the history of the world. By affirming that the papacy had come to power in 538 A.D., 1798, the exact year the French banished the pope, became the beginning of the end. This "deadly wound" received by the papal Antichrist had been specifically described and dated in Revelation 13.⁴¹

The futurists taught that none of the events of Revelation beyond the first three chapters had yet occurred but would transpire very quickly immediately after the end of the church dispensation. Along with this, they rejected the historicists' year-day theory so vital to the dating of the 1260 years to 1798. The new theory, the literal-day position, simply held that the 1260 days of Revelation 12:6 meant days and not years.

The futurist interpretation was already taught in the sixteenth century by Roman Catholic commentators seeking to counter Protestant attacks upon the papacy as the Antichrist. The first Protestant statement of futurism came from the pen of Samuel R. Maitland, in his 1826 volume entitled An Enquiry into the Grounds on which the Prophetic Period of Daniel and St. John has been Supposed to Consist of 1260 Years. In seeking to discredit the year-day theory Maitland attempted to improve Anglican relations with Roman Catholics by relieving the pope of the title "Antichrist." However what Darby and

other new converts to the literal-day theory saw in it was that the 1260 days of Revelation 12:6 equalled three and a half years (based on thirty days to a month), and joined to the forty two months of Revelation 13:5 became the seven year period of Tribulation.⁴² A resurgence of millenarian interest in both Britain and America coincided with the collapse of the Millerite movement in the United States and the development of Darby's dispensational system wedded to a futurist literal-day method of interpreting prophetic events.⁴³

Plymouth Brethren missionaries travelled to many countries and a flood of books and tracts from Brethren leaders made their way to the Continent and to America. Most of Darby's doctrines were well received by a significant portion of the American evangelical community. Darby himself visited the United States and Canada seven times between 1862 and 1877. Many ministers and Christians from non-Brethren denominations came to hear his Bible expositions and were taken up with his teaching. The Brethren leader was invited to speak in numerous churches of mainline American denominations. He made his greatest impact in a few larger cities - St. Louis, Chicago, New York, and Boston. It was in these centers that dispensational theology made the most significant inroads into American denominations and Darby gained some very influential and widely respected champions for this theology from among high ranking denominational leaders.⁴⁴ In St. Louis, James Brookes opened the pulpit of his Walnut Street Presbyterian Church to Darby and other Brethren leaders. It is probable that while in Boston, Darby had contact with A.J. Gordon, pastor of the Clarendon Baptist Church

from 1869-1895. Gordon was an outstanding leader in the American millenarian movement during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and was involved in Niagara and in the great prophecy conferences of 1878 and 1886. Darby's views were particularly well received among the Baptists and Presbyterians, particularly Old School Presbyterians like Brookes. Those committed to Calvinism (as was Darby) usually responded most readily to dispensationalism. In a day in which theological liberalism was emerging and the outright denial of many of the basics of orthodoxy was shocking the evangelical world, Darby's system provided both an explanation and a powerful apologetic.⁴⁵

Darby did not hesitate to speak to his American audiences about the ruin of Christendom. With heresy trials already looming in major American denominations and many churches showing increased signs of worldliness and carnality, it was not difficult for hearers to accept Darby's indictment. However, when Darby spoke of the necessity of true believers separating themselves from their denominations to meet with the Brethren "gathered only in the name of the Lord," his plea frequently fell on deaf ears. Many American ministers and laymen were ready to accept Darby's theology, but they were not ready to join his sect. During his last few years in America, he lamented: "Eminent ministers preach the Lord's coming, the ruin of the church, liberty of ministry, and avowedly from brethren's books, and stay where they are, and there is a general deadening of conscience."⁴⁶

American prophetic journals greatly assisted in the dissemination of dispensational thought. Darby's doctrines of the secret rapture and the distinction between Israel and the church were unmistakably present in the

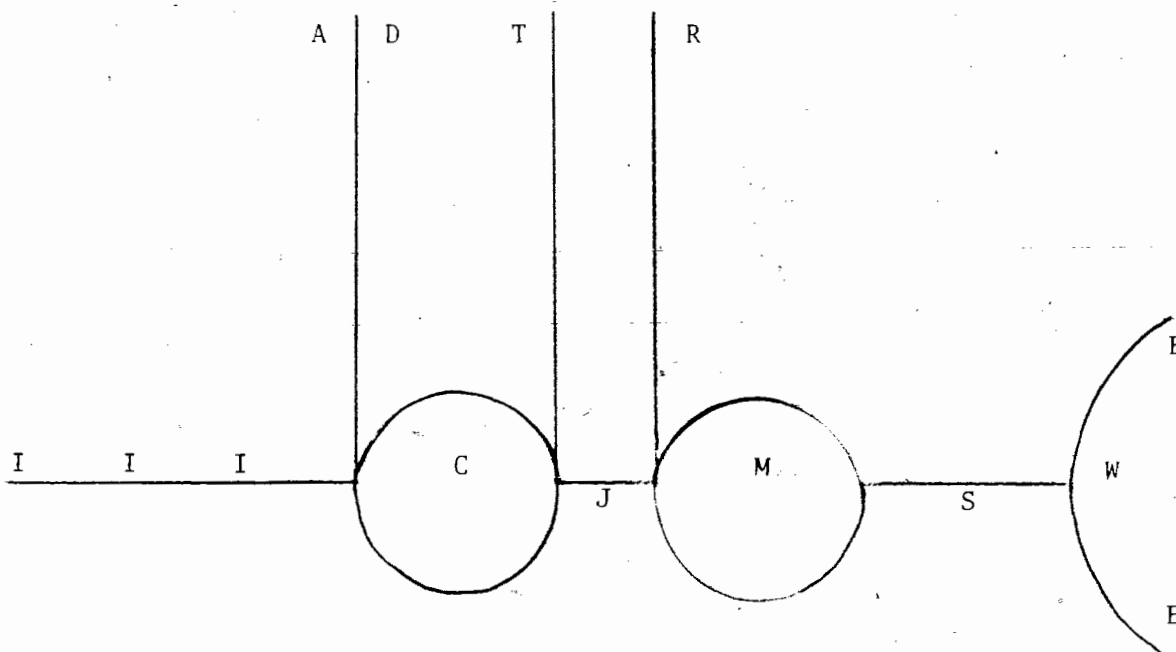
respected Prophetic Times (1863-74), but no source is given for these ideas other than Scripture. However the periodical Waymarks in the Wilderness, and Scriptural Guide, edited by James Inglis from 1864 to 1872 does provide a clearly documented connecting link between Darbyite dispensationalism and the pioneers of the Niagara Bible Conference. There is no doubt that Inglis taught a Darbyite eschatology. Some Plymouth Brethren writers contributed to the prophetic journal and works of Brethren were continually reviewed and referred to. In an 1872 issue of Waymarks Inglis freely admitted regarding the Brethren, "we gratefully own our indebtedness to them under God for the testimony they have borne to our standing in Christ and the hope of our calling."⁴⁷ In 1869 James Brookes joined the second annual meeting of the Inglis-called Bible conference held in Philadelphia and was one of the speakers.⁴⁸ In his 1870 book Maranatha: or The Lord Cometh, James Brookes utilized the dispensational outline of Professor W.C. Bayne of McGill University, a Plymouth Brethren dispensationalist. Bayne's outline appeared in an 1864 Waymarks' article entitled "The Dispensations, Prophetically and Doctrinally Considered."⁴⁹ Brookes presents the dispensations as follows:

1. Eden dispensation, to the fall of Adam
2. Antediluvian dispensation, to the deluge
3. Patriarchial dispensation, to the fearful judgments upon Egypt
4. Mosaic dispensation, to the "total apostasy of God's ancient people . . . fit only to be torn to pieces by the Roman eagles"
5. Messianic dispensation, to the "open rejection of Messiah, and . . . his murder by execution upon the cross . . . "
6. Dispensation of the Holy Ghost or of the Gospel
7. Millennial dispensation.⁵⁰

In true Darbyite fashion, Brookes states the pattern is clear and is an omen of the future.

Thus do we see that in each of the five preceding dispensations, man, tried under any and all circumstances, has proved to be a wretched failure; and each has closed amid increasing tokens of human depravity and divine wrath. Why will it not be so in the sixth dispensation?⁵¹

In 1871 Waymarks published an article written by Brookes in which dispensational teaching is again clearly evident.⁵² We are not surprised therefore that at the first public meeting of what was soon to be called the Niagara Bible Conference Bible readings were given on "dispensational truth" and kindred subjects.⁵³ In his address, president Brookes emphasized the any-moment coming of Christ for His people, as well as His later return with them to usher in the millennial kingdom. The judgment of the saints and the marriage supper of the Lamb were described.⁵⁴ The work of the Anti-Christ in the Tribulation, the fate of the Jews, and other related prophetic truths were elucidated in the ~~last~~ half of Brookes' address, which is nothing less than a powerful apologetic for Darbyite dispensationalism.⁵⁵ The following illustrative diagram, presumably used at the conference, portrayed the entire system in a few graphic strokes:



III represents the history of Israel up to the time of our Lord's rejection.

AD represents His ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost at the beginning of the present dispensation.

C is the Church age, during which the Holy Ghost is gathering out of all nations the body and bride of Christ.

T is the translation of the risen and changed saints at the coming of the Lord for His waiting people.

J is the short period of terrible judgments, described in the Apocalypse, chapter 6-19, when the Antichrist shall reign and Israel shall be taken up again.

R is the revelation of Christ with all His saints here on earth.

M is the millennial kingdom for a thousand happy years.

S - Satan is loosed out of prison for a little season.

W is the final judgment of the dead before the great white throne.

EE is Eternity.⁵⁶

In the same year of the first public Bible conference, Brookes published an article in Truth entitled "Dispensational Truth" in which he clarified the key feature of the new hermeneutic - the distinction between God's dealings with the Jews and His dealings with Christians. The clear-cut distinction between the Jewish and Christian dispensations must be maintained, he said, for "the failure of many to discover which of the two dispensations any particular statement of truth is to be referred, is the source of much of the confusion and perplexity that prevail concerning the meaning of the Bible."⁵⁷ The differences between the "calling" of the Jew and the Christian were delineated as follows: the Jew's calling was earthly, the Christian's heavenly; corporately the place of Israel was earthly, while the corporate position of the church was heavenly.⁵⁸

Hence we find that the promise to the Jew was of a specified land on earth, and of earthly blessings conditioned on his faithfulness; so that he was right in regarding the increase of good and riches as the mark of Jehovah's favor. No such promises as these are addressed in the New Testament to Christians, but on the other hand, they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth; their inheritance is in heaven;

they take joyfully the spoiling of their goods; and well know that hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁹

Brookes was so taken up with the importance of distinguishing between Israel and the church that he wrote a series entitled "Israel and the Church" for the Truth and also wrote a lengthy book on the same subject.⁶⁰

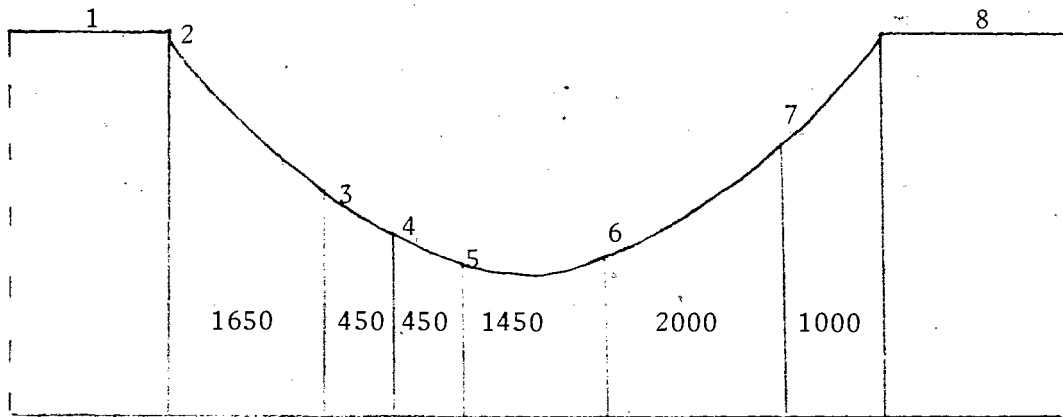
Brookes, and soon a host of others, persistently preached dispensational truths at Niagara. Dispensationalism was embedded in the Niagara Creed in 1878. In an 1879 article which is a summary of a lecture given at Niagara, Brookes delineated the following: (1) the rapture or "snatching away" of believers is what the Bible calls the coming of the Lord for His saints; (2) this first phase of Christ's coming could occur at any moment and would occur before the seven year period known as the Great Tribulation (which the Jews and unbelieving worldlings would pass through); (3) the Holy Spirit indwelling the Church was hindering the full revelation of the Antichrist. "Until He be taken out of the way by the rapture of the Church, the apostacy cannot be consummated, because the Church indwelt by Him is the salt of the earth, preventing the leaven of evil from spreading into total corruption. But when the salt is removed, the whole mass will be speedily leavened, and the full development of iniquity will follow." (4) After the seven years of tribulation, the Lord will return with his saints.⁶¹

In dating events, the Niagara president drew from Daniel 9 in which the prophet stated (as seen through Brookes' grid):

From the decree of Artaxerxes to restore and build the wall of Jerusalem, given 454 years B.C., as Archbishop Ussher, Tregelles, and others have shown, there was to be a period of seventy heptads (seventy sevens), or 490 years to the establishing of the millennial kingdom.

Sixty-nine heptads, or 483 years transpired the very year of our Lord's crucifixion (A.D. 29). Then ensues a dateless interval (between the 69th and 70th heptad) occupied with the Church. After this 'that Wicked shall be revealed', at the beginning of the seventieth period (seven years), confirming a covenant with many of the Jews for one heptad, and in the midst of the heptad, forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, 'he shall cause the oblation and the sacrifice to cease'; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never before, ended by the personal appearing of Christ with His risen and raptured saints.⁶²

Other Bible teachers injected dispensational truth into the early meetings of Niagara. Secretary W.J. Erdman, in an 1880 lecture entitled "No Millennium before the Second Coming," taught most of the distinctions as outlined by Brookes.⁶³ However in the 1890s, Erdman changed his views on a number of crucial points of dispensational eschatology. Perhaps most notable of the early Niagara dispensationalists was Henry M. Parsons, who in the 1880s was pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto. In an 1885 Niagara lecture, Parsons charted out eight dispensations.⁶⁴



- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Holiness. | 5. Jewish - Moses to Christ. |
| 2. Ante-Diluvian - Adam to Noah. | 6. Christian - Christ's Ascension to His Return. |
| 3. Post-Diluvian - Noah to Abraham. | 7. Millennial - Christ's Return to Final Victory. |
| 4. Patriarchal - Abraham to Moses. | 8. Holiness. |

By the time of the 1886 International Prophecy Conference dispensationalism had gained an increased acceptance, an acceptance which grew immensely and spread in the 1886 to 1900 period. By the turn of the century, the dispensational hermeneutic was coming to be dominant in Fundamentalist thinking. The task of spreading the new approach to the Bible was aided by the fact that the rise of liberalism forced many conservative evangelicals into a close, defensive alliance. Those upholding the old orthodox doctrines needed each other in the battle against liberalism and under these circumstances, dispensationalists received a hearty welcome in more conservative evangelical circles.⁶⁵

Dispensational truths were present but not pronounced at the First American Bible and Prophetic Conference of 1878.⁶⁶ However by 1886 dispensationalism had gained considerable ground and was more frequently and more clearly evident in the lectures at the Chicago Prophetic Conference of 1886 and the Niagara Bible Conference meetings. Indeed what one student of dispensationalism has noted of the Chicago Conference, i.e. "what one might call the dispensationalist mood had settled over the assembly," was rapidly becoming true of the entire Bible Conference and prophecy movement.⁶⁷

The six day prophecy conference was held in Chicago's Farwell Hall (seating capacity of over 1300) and was well attended. Each day's messages were taken down by stenographers and published next morning in the Chicago Inter Ocean. Within one week of the end of the conference, the addresses had been bound and set "flying through the land" under the title Prophetic Studies of the International Prophetic Conference, edited by George C. Needham,

secretary of the conference.⁶⁸

There was not complete unanimity on all points of dispensational truth among the speakers at Chicago, but the minority report did not seem to have a very large following. Even the influential A.J. Gordon, still holding to the historicist interpretation of prophecy, could not stop an almost wholesale move among the early Fundamentalists to futurism. In his conference address "Modern Delusions," the Boston pastor affirmed the more traditional view that the prophetic Scriptures, especially those in Daniel and Revelation, gave the entire history of the church in symbolic form. In the book of Revelation, vision after vision and seal after seal, vial after vial were seen as having had successive correspondence with events in history, leaving only the last portion of the book yet to be fulfilled in immediate connection with Christ's return. According to this view, the Pope was the Antichrist. Gordon pled that Protestant interpreters not forsake this position.⁶⁹

With the Reformers, Gordon believed that the Roman apostasy, "that career of blood and blasphemy unmatched by anything in human history," was orchestrated by Satan. In fact, Satan was the real Pope and demons the real cardinals.⁷⁰ He concluded his address with great fervor and conviction. The papal "Man of Sin," he expostulated, had been accurately photographed on the camera of prophecy thousands of years ago and no detective searching for him today would need any other description of him than that found in the pages of the Bible.

Taking these photographs of Daniel and John and Paul, and searching the world upside down for their originals, I am confident that this same detective would stop at the Vatican, and after gazing for a few

moments at the Pontiff, who sits there gnawing at the bone of infallibility, which he acquired in 1870, and clutching for that other bone of temporal sovereignty which he lost the very same year, he would lay his hand on him and say: "You are wanted in the court of the Most High to answer to the indictment of certain souls beneath the altar 'who were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they bore', and who are crying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?'"

My brethren, let us search the Scriptures anew and let us be sure that they do not require it of us before we silence our testimony against the Man of Rome as Antichrist.⁷¹

A more scholarly and apparently more convincing case for the true identity of the Antichrist from the futurist viewpoint was given by W.G. Moorehead, professor and later president of the United Presbyterian Seminary at Xenia, Ohio. Moorehead's theme was "The Antichrist" and he began his address by describing the three prevailing schools of interpretation regarding not only the Antichrist but the topics which he said all related to each other - topics like the church, Israel, the coming of Christ, and the establishment of the promised kingdom.⁷² The professor explained:

By some Antichrist is identified with a person or a system that long since appeared in the world and passed away (the preterist school). By others, he is now upon the stage of action awaiting the doom his sins and crimes so justly merit (the presentist or historicist view). By others still, Antichrist is regarded as yet to come; that while he has had and now has his forerunners who prepare for him his way, himself is still to appear (the futurist position, to which Moorehead held).⁷³

After a long and detailed description of the various facets of Biblical teaching on the Antichrist, Dr. Moorehead concluded on an ominous note. He stated that there were principles then at work in modern society which, if left unchecked, would soon make the advent of the Antichrist not only possible, but certain. The lawless drift was already there - a precursor of worse to come.

Who does not perceive that the forces are already loose in the world that tend to the disintegration of the whole social fabric? Who does not perceive that the ax is already aimed at the chief hoops which bind together the staves of the civil polity? Socialism, nihilism, anarchy, naturalism, materialism, humanitarianism, spiritualism - restlessness and discontent everywhere - is it any wonder that already men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking for the things about to come upon the earth? We have only to suppose the portentous movements of the time grow and gather head until the hindrance is gone, the barrier thrown down, and then? Yes, what then? Then cometh the Antichrist, the devastator of the world!

The Lord help us to watch and be sober!⁷⁴

The pessimism already evident in the 1878 conference had grown to almost alarmist proportions in the 1886 meetings. Dispensational doctrine was used to verify what believers saw all about them - progressive evil in modern society. In his conference address A.T. Pierson clearly enunciated the Darbyite cycle of progress, spiritual declension, and catastrophic judgment. He even pointed out the structural similarity in the different dispensations. Dispensation followed dispensation, all marked by seven features essentially the same.

First, an advance in fullness and clearness of revelation; then gradual spiritual declension; then conformity to the world ending with amalgamation with the world; then a gigantic civilization, brilliant but Godless; then parallel development of evil and good, then an apostasy, and finally a catastrophe.⁷⁵

Of the present dispensation Pierson asserted:

We have the ripest form of worldly civilization, but the RIPENESS BORDERS ON ROTTENNESS: while men boast of the fabric its foundations are falling into decay, and that awful anarchy which is the last result of atheism even now threatens to dissolve society itself.⁷⁶

The same outlook was reflected by Ernest Stroeter, professor at Wesleyan University and popular Niagara speaker. In his address "Christ's Coming Premillennial" the professor expressed the conviction that Satan took

possession of the advances of civilization "so that the enormous progress of our age in civilization and general culture does not indeed cause, but accelerate disintegration and decay." But this is what Christ predicted and the apostles said we should expect from the course of world development "in this present evil age." Luke 17:26-30, II Timothy 3, and II Thessalonians 2:8 were cited as Scriptural proof for Stroeter's observations.⁷⁷

In his address, William Blackstone clearly articulated a scheme consisting of seven "aions" or dispensations - a scheme very similar to that of Brookes. The lay evangelist asserted that these dispensations were "all arranged according to a plan" and that there was "no key to Scripture more potent" than this recognition of dispensations.⁷⁸ Each "aion" ended in judgment and the decadence at the end of each age got progressively worse as the last dispensation approached. Blackstone concurred with those who exclaimed, "Ah! what a dark picture!" "Indeed it is, but it's true, for it was painted by Jesus," was the speaker's reply.

The whole history of the race has been one mighty panorama, showing that "the wages of sin is death." Each dispensation has ended in judgment - Eden in the expulsion, Antediluvian in the flood, Post-diluvian in Sodom, Patriarchial in the Red Sea, Mosaic in the cross and destruction of Jerusalem. So will this Christian dispensation end in judgment.⁷⁹

A statement made by Blackstone suggests that he held to the view later espoused by Scofield that there were different methods of salvation in each dispensation. He asserted: "Now whatever salvation God may have for the heathen by the law of conscience, as stated in Romans 2:14-15, none of them can become members of this body or bride of Christ without hearing the gospel."⁸⁰

There is ample evidence of distinctly dispensational doctrines in other addresses given at the Chicago conference. Henry M. Parsons projected a well-developed dispensational view in his message "Judgments and Rewards."⁸¹ Bishop W.R. Nicholson, who spoke at the 1878 conference seems to have made considerable progress toward a more integrated dispensationalist position. In his Chicago address entitled "Messiah's Kingly Glory" the bishop clearly taught that Christ withdrew His offer of the kingdom to the Jewish people in the latter part of His ministry.

Where, then, is this kingdom? It is not yet. It will be inaugurated at Christ's second coming. For while, in His earlier ministry, the Lord Jesus offered to the Jewish people the kingdom of heaven as nigh at hand, yet; at a later date, and because of their rejecting Him, His preaching of the kingdom underwent a remarkable change. It was no longer nigh at hand; it had been postponed. . . .

The present time, then, is an interregnum in the kingdom. ⁸²

The postponement of the kingdom and subsequent "interregnum" in which church age is a parenthesis in God's plan was a widely taught doctrine by the men of Niagara.⁸³ Writing in the early 1890s, A.J. Gordon indicated how widespread this doctrine had become.

Is the dispensation in which we are now living a parenthesis or is it a complete chapter? . . . If we accept the verdict of the maturest biblical scholarship, the answer is overwhelmingly with Dr. Storrs that the present order is parenthetical, not final; preparatory, not ultimate.⁸⁴

In the post 1886 period, speakers at the Niagara Bible Conference and writers for its organ, Truth assumed the dispensational approach to be ipso facto the one true method of Biblical interpretation. They became increasingly dogmatic in their statement of the system. In an 1888 session at Niagara Rev. E.P. Marvin stated emphatically:

A knowledge of the distinctive characteristics of the dispensations is essential to true interpretations of the Word, and to effective service. Without this we must be confounded with absurdities in study, and baffled with obstacles in service for lack of understanding of the signs of the times.⁸⁵

In 1888 C.I. Scofield's lecture at Niagara gave in abbreviated form the system that he later put into a book and shortly thereafter incorporated into his famous Reference Bible.⁸⁶ He was certain that his were the right divisions of Scripture and he made it clear at the outset of his address that he did not intend to use one minute of his precious sixty in speaking of those "arbitrary, artificial, and frequently most infelicitous divisions" which other men had made. He had no time to clear away such "rubbish"; instead he wanted to help beginners in Bible study to see that Scripture was not "a confusion of jarring and discordant ideas but a divinely ordered thing- beautiful, exceedingly, in its majestic completeness, bearing everywhere the evidence of unity, but the unity of perfectly co-ordinated diversities."⁸⁷ He then proceeded to call attention to the ten chief divisions of the Word of God i.e. the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God; the seven dispensations; law and grace; the believer's two natures; the believer's standing and state; salvation and rewards; believers and professors; the five judgments; the two resurrections; the two advents of Christ.⁸⁸

Scofield and other Niagara speakers presented their views through the "Bible reading," a plain exposition of a series of Biblical texts related to a given topic.⁸⁹ Scofield made it his aim to teach Bible students how to classify the Scriptures for themselves.⁹⁰ Even fellow conservatives who did not have a very high opinion of the Bible reading (it was just another form

of "proof-texting") had to admit that those who attended the Bible conferences and used the new form of exposition became thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures. Francis L. Patton, Professor at Princeton Seminary in a lecture to homiletics students commented concerning the dispensational Bible reading approach to the Bible:

"With some of the theology of some of the members of this school I have no sympathy; and I particularly object to their arbitrary and unhistorical system of interpretation. But few, I fear, know the English Bible as they do. I advise you to learn their secret in this regard, but do not adopt their shibboleths; and, I warn you against supposing that you have given an adequate substitute for a sermon when, with the help of Cruden's Concordance, you have chased a word through the Bible, making a comment or two on the passages as you go along.⁹¹

Although the teachers at Niagara boasted that through the Bible reading "little that is human" was introduced into the study of Scripture⁹² and that this was truly an objective approach to the Bible, in practice this did not occur. Bible students were taught to come to the Scriptures with a grid - the dispensational grid of "right divisions." Soon charts were developed to graphically portray every aspect of prophetic truth. Unbelievers in the dispensationalists' claim to objectivity would ask: how objective could a student be in coming to the Bible armed with a prophetic chart and with a system of rules on how to divide and classify?

The new Fundamentalist approach to the Bible was eminently successful. By learning the right definitions and applying the system correctly, even the simple layman could perceive new vistas of Biblical understanding. In fact by 1894 the new hermeneutic had gained so much ground at Niagara that C.I. Scofield could say to those attending the conference:

It is a very great comfort in speaking from this platform, and I am sure it is felt by other brethren as well as by myself, that one is not under the necessity of defining every term used. Elsewhere it might be required at the outset to explain that the word "dispensational" refers to the fact that the Scriptures divide time into distinct periods, called ages, or dispensations, each of which has its own peculiar character in respect of God's dealing and man's responsibility; and that the synoptic gospels are Matthew, Mark, and Luke. ⁹³

The teachers at the Niagara Bible Conference had done their work well. By the early 1890s dispensationalism had not only been widely accepted as a hermeneutic, but had been found to be effective as a tool to discredit postmillennialism and liberal theology. It also greatly strengthened the argument for premillennialism. Although not all premillennialists were dispensationalists, the growing body of dispensational premillennialists won the day so convincingly that to the present time virtually all Fundamentalists are dispensational premillennialists.

FOOTNOTES

1. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 14.
2. Ibid., pp. 14-17; McLoughlin, The American Evangelicals, pp. 1-8; Paul Edwards, ed., The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 8 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967), 7:118-121.
3. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, pp. 56-57; pp. 113-14. A.T. Pierson asserted that if the evidences of Christianity were studied in a truly impartial and scientific spirit, "all honest doubt would be removed." So confident was he of the evidential power of the facts of the Bible that he could write, "The consequence of searching the Scriptures would be the ruin of false faiths" - Many Infallible Proofs, p. 14.
4. As cited by Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 55.
5. Ibid., p. 110. In the Bible was to be found an "objectively knowable and universally normative fixed body of truth" p. 261, n. 21. This view ran directly counter to the relativistic perspective of emerging liberal Protestantism and the already present and flowering Romantic Idealism of men like Horace Bushnell and Henry Ward Beecher - cf. McLoughlin, The American Evangelicals, pp. 14-22.
6. Ibid., p. 114.
7. Gausson was a Swiss theologian whose work was quickly translated and distributed in the English speaking world, being quoted in America by 1842. James M. Gray, Dean of Moody Bible Institute asserted that the day an English edition of Theopneustia came into his hands marked a new epoch for him and that any Christian who read and studied this book need never again be troubled by attacks on the Word of God - see Theopneustia (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, n.d.), p. ii. The best expression of Warfield's bibliology is a single, large volume reproducing the major writings of the Princeton theologian on inspiration entitled The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948).

8. Reference to inspiration of the original manuscripts appeared in the Niagara Creed at the same time the term began being used at Princeton. Brookes followed the Princeton scholarship on this subject very closely, at first critiquing Hodge and Warfield's article in the Presbyterian Review 2(1881) and then withdrawing his main criticisms upon receiving and publishing in The Truth an article by Warfield entitled "The Truth of Inspiration", Truth 9(1883): 124-29. In his popular "God Spake All These Words" written in 1894, Brookes quotes both European and Princeton authorities to bolster the plenary, verbal view - Anglican Bishop Ryle of England as well as Scottish evangelist and Bible teacher Robert Haldane and Irish pastor-scholar Alexander Carson (the latter two wrote widely quoted books on inspiration), the Swiss professor Gausson, as well as Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton, "the first of American theologians" (according to Brookes) - cf. "God Spake," pp. 55-57.

9. Brooke's periodical contains numerous articles on inspiration by the editor as well as by other noted evangelical apologists like A.T. Pierson - see Pierson's Niagara lecture "The Bible Self-Vindicated," Truth 15(1889): 451-61. Brookes' greatest statement on inspiration came in 1894 in his "God Spake All These Words." Pierson wrote numerous books, but Many Infallible Proofs, and Knowing the Scriptures (New York: Gospel Publishing House, 1910) are particularly forceful in defending the plenary-verbal theory of inspiration.

10. For example, Leander Munhall, popular Niagara speaker, wrote The Highest Critics vs. the Higher Critics precisely for the purpose of taking on the arguments of Julius Wellhausen, George Adam Smith, Charles A. Briggs and the like. Munhall wrote: "The doctrine of verbal inspiration is simply this: The original writings, the ipsissima verba, were given word by word, from God; and these gentlemen are only throwing dust into the air when they rail against verbal inspiration. . ." (pp. 20-21).

11. Truth 1(1875): 246.

12. Ibid., 4(1878): 452-53.

13. Ibid., 5(1879): 271.

14. Ibid., 6(1880): 425.

15. Ibid., 7(1881): 482.

16. Ibid., 9(1883): 254.

17. Sandeen, Roots, p. 159.

18. Truth 19(1893): 354. See also the summary of Erdman's conference message, "The Supernatural, The Safe Standpoint in the Study of the Sacred Scriptures," ibid., 473-75.

19. Warfield, Inspiration and Authority, p. 173, p. 203, p. 421.

20. Cf. Israel and the Church, p. 170 where the Old Testament writers are said to be "honest historians, honest because the Spirit of God dictated the words they should write." In "I Am Coming": A Book of That Blessed Hope, 5th ed., rev. (London: Jas. E. Hawkins & Co., 1895), p. 121 Brookes speaks of the Holy Spirit dictating a letter to the apostle Paul.

21. Brookes, "God Spake," p. 84.

22. Gordon, The Ministry of the Spirit, pp. 173-77.

23. Ibid., p. 177.

24. In his The Highest Critics Leander Munhall wrote: "But some say, 'Since we do not have the original writings, what is the use of insisting upon the doctrine of verbal inspiration?' I answer, there are two sufficient reasons: First. If the original writings were not inspired of God verbally, then we have no Word of God. Second. Is there no difference between an inexact copy of an inerrable record and a faulty copy of an uncertain record (p. 21)?" He affirms that although transcribers, translators, and revisers were not inspired, they were kept from serious error by the hand of God and that scholars combing through and comparing the various readings in the multitude of manuscripts available had not found one variant which threw any doubt on any important doctrine - pp. 20-22.

25. B.B. Warfield, "The Truth on Inspiration," Truth 9(1883): 125.

26. Brookes, "God Spake," p. 96. Cf. Truth 9(1883): 124 cited at the beginning of this chapter.
27. Pierson, Knowing, pp. 17-18.
28. Ibid., p. 18.
29. "Reverent" criticism meant the critic accepted the Bible's full inspiration.
30. Pierson, Knowing, p. 18.
31. Arno C. Gaebelein told readers of his Our Hope periodical that many a believer hungering and thirsting for a better knowledge of the Word would come to him after his sermon or lecture exclaiming, "It is just what I wanted to hear for such a long time, and it has opened my eyes." Gaebelein observes: "We find that dispensational truths, dividing the Word of truth rightly, are and ever must be the starting point. . . . Dispensational truth clears all up. . . ." Our Hope 5(1901): 294.
32. William E. Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, presentation ed. (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1916, [1908]), p. 21.
33. Sandeen notes of Darby: "The concept of dispensations served as a necessary not sufficient constituent of his theology" - Roots, p. 86. "Unsystematized Dispensationalism," or pre-Darbyite approaches to dividing history into eras are described by Charles Caldwell Ryrie in Dispensationalism Today (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), pp. 67-74.
34. Ryrie, pp. 44-45; Daniel P. Fuller, Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum? The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 10-12.
35. Rowdon, Origins of the Brethren, pp. 46-48.
36. Ibid., p. 37.

37. Ibid., pp. 1-17.

38. Ibid., p. 47.

39. Sandeen, Roots, pp. 66-70. Sandeen correctly observes that Darby's doctrine of the church was the catalytic agent for the rest of his beliefs. The doctrine of the heavenly body, the church, necessitated a rapture of that body away from earthly matters, where the Jews were involved. The secret rapture idea led to the necessity of dividing the New Testament into Jewish and churchly texts. Much controversy surrounds the origin of the secret rapture idea, however there is strong evidence that the concept originated in the 1830 Scottish revival of charismatic gifts (tongues, visions, and prophetic utterances) and Edward Irving's Catholic Apostolic Church, founded in London in 1832 after Irving was dismissed from the Presbyterian Church for teaching the heresy that Christ had a sinful human nature. Darby visited the Scottish charismatics (where the secret rapture doctrine was apparently first promulgated), observed the phenomena, but left convinced that the gifts were a delusion. However, as one recent student of the nineteenth century roots of contemporary prophetic interpretation concludes, Darby's exposure to the Scottish charismatics became "grist for his mill" and the impressions he carried with him, after some years of reflection, would play their part in the formulation of the teaching of the secret pretribulation rapture - Ian Rennie in Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque, eds. Dreams, Visions and Oracles (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 52. A Brethren writer Samuel Tregelles in The Hope of Christ's Second Coming (Scottsdale: The Evangelical Fellowship, Inc., n.d. [1864]), pp. 30-31 states the theory of the secret rapture was first brought forward "about the year 1832," as an "utterance" at Edward Irving's Church and it "came not from Holy Scripture, but from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God, while not owning the true doctrines of our Lord's incarnation. . . ." Niagara's Robert Cameron was quite adamant in a 1902 Watchword and Truth article in stating that it was "unwise to thrust upon the saints an acceptance of a doctrine that was never heard of, in all Christendom, until seventy years ago, and then for the first time from the lips of a man who was deposed from the ministry as a heretic, and which was sanctioned by what has been clearly demonstrated to be the voice of 'lying spirits.'" See Appendix C of this work for a larger excerpt of Cameron's expose of the origins of the secret pretribulation rapture. See also Dave MacPherson, The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin (Kansas City: Heart of America Bible Society, 1973).

40. Ibid., p. 37. Scarcely a year passed without some historicist millenarian prediction being unfulfilled. This was particularly true from 1843 to 1848 and from 1867-1870 when there was great civil unrest. Some of these "scholars" seemed to have had an indestructible faith in their ability to

predict the next prophetic event. Michael Baxter, Church of England, missionary to Canada, itinerant lecturer in the United States, and editor of his own prophetic journal, was a latter-day prophet extraordinaire. He was convinced that Louis Napoleon was the Antichrist and wrote a book to prove it. In fact he predicted incorrect dates from 1861 through 1908. The height of his prophetic career came when he predicted that the Second Coming would occur on March 12, 1903, between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m. - *ibid.*, p. 59 and p. 98; cf. Our Hope 10(1903-4): 514-15.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38; Rennie, p. 51. The events of Revelation were seen as a recapitulation of Daniel's prophecy - i.e. Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 were three and one half times or the three and a half years of Antichrist's devastating work (Daniel 9:27), precisely the last half of the Tribulation in which John saw the same demonic devastation.

43. See chapter 4 of Sandeen, Roots, "The Second Phase of the Millenarian Revival in Britain and the United States 1845-78." The historicists looked for the Second Coming in either the 1840s or 1860s. In America, historicism received a near fatal blow with the failure of William Miller's prediction of the Second Coming, first set for 1843 and then changed to October 22, 1844.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-77; Kraus, Dispensationalism, pp. 45-48.

45. Rennie, pp. 56-58; Sandeen, Roots, pp. 75-78; Kraus, Dispensationalism, pp. 46-47.

46. As cited by Sandeen in Roots, p. 79.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

48. Northfield Echoes 1(1894): 93.

49. Kraus, Dispensationalism, p. 37.

50. As cited in *ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

51. Ibid., p. 38.
52. Ibid., p. 39.
53. Truth 2(1876): 491, reporting on proceedings at Swampscott, Mass.
54. Brookes, Bible Reading, pp. 32-40.
55. Ibid., pp. 40-77. Brookes made only very slight and passing acknowledgement of intellectual indebtedness to the Plymouth Brethren and it seems he should have acknowledged their influence on his thinking much more. He regularly recommended their writings in his periodical, visited Brethren leader B.W. Newton in 1862, and personally knew many of the Brethren. Brookes had also opened his pulpit to Brethren preachers like John Nelson Darby, Malachi Taylor, and Paul J. Loizeaux - Truth 23(1897): 256-57; Sandeen, Roots, p. 139; Kraus, Dispensationalism, pp. 46-47. Niagara leader Robert Cameron freely acknowledged his indebtedness to Brethren leaders like Darby, Newton, Mueller and Kelley - cf. Cameron, Scriptural Truth About the Lord's Return, p. 22.
56. Brookes, Bible Reading, opposite p. 1.
57. Truth 2(1876): 525.
58. Ibid., 526-27.
59. Ibid., 526. The usual dispensational distinction between the Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Heaven (cf. Truth 8(1882): 322-31) is not held in as precise a manner by Brookes - see his Israel and the Church, pp. 127-28.
60. Truth 8(1882): passim and Israel and the Church.
61. Truth 5(1879): 145-51.

62. Ibid., 151. Although twentieth century Fundamentalists slightly modified some of the details of this chronology, they definitely followed the main outline of Brookes' interpretation as popularized by Brookes' disciple, C.I. Scofield. Kraus' statement is accurate: "There can be no doubt that the teaching and writing of Brookes did a great deal to make the dispensationalist interpretation the predominant one in the conference movement by 1900" - Dispensationalism, p. 39.

63. Truth 6(1880): 513-18.

64. Ibid., 11(1885): 461.

65. Weber, Living in the Shadow, p. 24. Controversy over the incursion of liberalism into the faculty of Andover Seminary was in full swing in the 1880s - cf. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 25.

66. There was one presentation of full-fledged dispensationalism in the closing address of the conference given by Dr. W.P. Mackay. Since Mackay was a visitor to the conference from Hull, England, this cannot be taken as good evidence for the early assimilation of dispensationalism by American premillennialists. Best evidence of incipient American dispensationalism is evident in the outline given by popular Niagara speaker Henry M. Parsons in his paper "The Present Age and Development of Antichrist," published in Premillennial Essays, pp. 204-21. Bishop W.R. Nicholson of the Reformed Episcopal Church picked up the theme of the special endtime work of God with the Jews in his paper "The Gathering of Israel" (pp. 222-40). However Kraus rightly notes that a fully developed dispensationalism is not present yet in most of these early Fundamentalist conference speakers. Nicholson, for example, still held to an essential continuity between the church and the millennial dispensation in contrast to the later insistence that a different covenant, Jewish in character and closely associated with the Davidic covenant would be instituted with the restored Jewish nation - Dispensationalism, p. 86.

67. Kraus, Dispensationalism, p. 97.

68. Prophetic Studies, Preface.

69. Ibid., pp. 70-71.

70. Ibid., p. 67.
71. Ibid., p. 71.
72. Ibid., p. 97.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., p. 107.
75. Ibid., p. 32.
76. Ibid., p. 33.
77. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
78. Ibid., p. 200.
79. Ibid., p. 199.
80. Ibid., p. 200. Daniel P. Fuller in his Gospel and Law deals with the entire issue of the sharp distinction between the grace of God which is for the church and the law which is for Israel. He argues for continuum, not contrast and discontinuity between law and gospel.
81. Ibid., pp. 78-83.
82. Ibid., pp. 145-46.
83. Truth 20(1894): 422, 474.
84. A.J. Gordon, The Holy Spirit in Missions, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896), p. 11.

85. Truth 14(1888): 449.

86. "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth," ibid., 464-73; C.I. Scofield, Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Publishers, n.d.); C.I. Scofield, ed. The Scofield Reference Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1909). The notes in this Bible defined orthodoxy for millions of Fundamentalists in the twentieth century. In 1967 the New Scofield Reference Bible appeared with a more legible type and additional marginal notes, headings and footnotes. Scofield's dispensationalism, is nowhere changed but merely updated and clarified where misunderstandings had arisen. The new Bible was sold over one million copies since 1967, which is about half what the older version sold in the thirty years between 1915 and 1946. The lasting popularity of the Scofield Bible is a tribute to the great influence dispensationalism has had on American evangelicals. Although based largely on the old King James Version, and having to compete with a number of new English translations, the New Scofield Reference Bible (along with the dispensationalist Ryrie Study Bible in the New American Standard Translation) continues to sell well and continues to equip American Fundamentalists to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" (Fuller, p. 1).

87. Truth 14(1888): 465.

88. Ibid., 465-73.

89. See chapter two of this work for a discussion of the Bible reading.

90. Truth 14(1888): 465.

91. Presbyterian and Reformed Review 1(1890): 36-37.

92. George C. Needham in Introduction, Brookes, Bible Reading, p. viii.

93. C.I. Scofield, "The Dispensational Place of the Synoptic Gospels," Truth 20(1894): 471-75.

CHAPTER IV

"LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE"

Brethren, premillennialism pure and simple forms a breakwater against every advancing tide which would throw upon the clean beach of a God-given theology the jelly-fish theories evolved out of man's erratic consciousness, pride and self-will. "Waiting for the Son from heaven" is an antidote against the feverishness of the age, as shown in its excited race after theological novelties.

"Reasons for Holding the Bible and Prophetic Conference" in George C. Needham, ed. Prophetic Studies of the International Prophetic Conference, p. 216.

While historians disagree on the major roots of Fundamentalism, there are two basic doctrines which all would accept as being integral in the inception of the movement. The first, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is the conviction that the Bible is the inerrant, verbally inspired, literal Word of God. The second is the centrality of premillennial eschatology, the eager "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13), and this before the millennium.

There is a direct line of continuity between these two truths, as taught in the Niagara movement and the centrality of these doctrines in twentieth century Fundamentalism. In the formative stages of Fundamentalism we may see the systematizing of these doctrines into a decisive foundation. They are woven into the fabric of the movement.¹

Affirmations Asserted 1875 - 1885

The first decade of the Niagara Bible Conference was one devoted to asserting and establishing the doctrine that Jesus Christ was returning -

visibly, corporeally and cataclysmically before the millennium of peace and prosperity would break upon a renovated earth. The main foes in this early period, as James Brookes put it, were the postmillennialists who substituted "death, or the Holy Spirit's work, or startling providences, or something else, in place of His own personal appearing; and it is coming to pass that a precious and prominent word exerts little or no influence over their hearts and lives."² There was no doubt about it, as far as Niagara leader Nathaniel West was concerned postmillennialism was "replete with manifest error" and the only pre-advent millennialists found in all the Bible were Satan, "who would have Christ seated in His visible kingdom and glory on earth, not only before the second advent, but even before the crucifixion," and the Antichrist, "the last mock-Messiah of the Jews."³

Although the main point to be made in Niagara's early history was that the premillennial advent of Christ was the blessed hope of the church, an increasing number of articles which explained the details of advent truth appeared in Truth. James Brookes was the leader in teaching the finer points of the Second Advent doctrine but others contributed liberally as well.⁴

Of the two special Niagara sponsored prophetic conferences conducted in this first decade, the 1878 conference was by far the most significant. The 1885 conference, organized by the Canadian contingent of Niagara leaders, met at Niagara-on-the-Lake for four days prior to the regular Niagara convention. It did not seem to leave a very noticeable impact, although the eight papers of the gathering were published in book form.⁵

The First American Bible and Prophetic Conference held at Holy Trinity

Episcopal Church, New York, October 30, 31, and November 1, 1878, was of historic significance for premillennialism and must be considered as the first important conference of Fundamentalism in America.⁶ Niagara met some of the need for intensive exploration of millenarian truth, but the desire for a dignified, but resounding public testimony to the vigor of the millenarian forces and authority of their message led the Niagara leaders to put out a call for this meeting. The New York Tribune printed a special edition for this gathering, which it called "a novel religious conference."⁷ Proceedings were edited by Nathaniel West and published in 1879 under the title Premillennial Essays.

Of the thirteen essays and three addresses published, nine were given by men who had been (or were to be) active at Niagara. Most of the speakers emphasized the common elements of millenarianism and all of them opposed postmillennialism. Special efforts were made to dissociate the conference from Millerite adventism even though some Adventists had joined in the call for the conference and were in attendance.

In his paper entitled "Christ's Coming: Is It Premillennial?" Dr. Samuel Kellogg, professor of systematic theology at Western (Presbyterian - U.S.A.) Seminary from 1877 to 1886 spoke to the basic issue about which the conference was endeavouring to raise consciousness - Christ's coming was premillennial and not postmillennial. He dealt with the postmillennial view by posing the question: "Does the word of God teach that, prior to the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to look for the conversion of the world to Him, and a prolonged season of universal peace and prevailing righteousness,

or does it teach the contrary?"⁸

The refutation of the postmillennial claim of universal conversion before the Second Advent was as follows:⁹ (1) the postmillennial claim was unscriptural; indeed, there was not one single statement in the New Testament which affirmed that the world would be converted before Christ's return; (2) the New Testament implied just the opposite from what the postmillennialists taught, i.e. Acts 15:14 - God intended to take out from among the Gentiles a people, not save them all, and Matthew 24:14 the Gospel would be preached "for a witness unto all nations" (i.e. not universal conversion) and then the end would come; (3) postmillennialism interposed so long a period before the Second Advent that it could not possibly occur within the lifetime of any individual generation of believers. This was contrary to the teaching of Christ in Mark 13:35 (the call to watch). Kellogg approvingly quoted Archbishop Trench who stated that it was necessary that Christ's coming should be possible at any time and that no generation of believers should regard it as impossible of occurring in their time. "Those, therefore, who fix a time in the distant future before which Christ cannot come, equally with those who fix a time in the near present by which he must come, place themselves in conflict with this word of the Lord (i.e. Mark 13:35)."¹⁰ (4) Due to the uncertainty of the time of the Second Advent, the disciples of Christ in all ages were to watch continually (Matt. 24:42).

Kellogg asserted that it was not possible for a believer who was assured that the coming of Christ was at least a thousand years away to watch for that coming in his lifetime. Since "the Lord does command His

disciples in all ages to watch for His coming, it follows irresistibly that the Lord should think of His advent as always possible, and forbids us to interpose any such fixed period of time between us and His coming as shall make it impossible for us to believe that He may come in our own day."¹¹

Among other points made in the last half of his paper was Kellogg's insistence that the New Testament uniformly portrayed the last times before the return of Christ as evil times, not good. The postmillennial optimistic expectation of a golden age of peace before the coming of the Lord was destroyed, stated Kellogg, by the ominous endtime predictions of the apostles in I Tim. 4:1, II Tim. 3:1,5, II Peter 3:2,5, I John 2:18, I Thess. 5:3, and II Thess. 2:1-8.¹²

Baptist pastor and author A.J. Gordon addressed the conference on the theme "The First Resurrection."¹³ His purpose was to refute the postmillennial view that all the dead, the righteous and the unrighteous would be raised at the same time at the end of the age. On the other hand, he proposed to establish the theory as truly Biblical that "the faithful dead only will rise at the coming of Christ, those who have died in unbelief remaining under the power of death for a thousand years longer, at the expiration of which time they in turn will be raised up and brought to judgment."¹⁴ The key passage dealt with by Gordon was Revelation 20: 4-6, which he saw as "an unmistakable statement of two distinct resurrections of the dead, with a thousand years between, in which risen saints reign with Christ." He insisted that this passage be taken literally and point by point showed the inadequacy of the spiritualizing explanation of the passage by Bishop

Wordsworth, which Gordon said was typical of "the largest and best class of anti-literal interpreters."¹⁵

As with the other speakers at the Prophetic Conference, Gordon was concerned not only about doctrine, but also about life and practice. The early Christians, he asserted, understood the first resurrection and the Parousia to be inseparably bound together. They lived in constant expectation of the personal reappearing of the Lord. Furthermore:

The first resurrection was the immediate and most glorious accompaniment of this event. Therefore, to keep the command of the absent Lord and to be always watching and waiting for His return was to be living in the constant and joyful anticipation of receiving back their sainted dead who were sleeping in Jesus. The difference between their attitude and that which generally prevails nowadays, is this: Now, men wait for death to bring them into the presence and companionship of the departed saints. Then, they waited for the resurrection to bring their blessed dead back to them.¹⁶

The postmillennial view, said Gordon, had put the resurrection into a much lower place than it held in the Scriptures. Believers were taught to look for the rewards of their labor at death and the fruition of their hope in the intermediate state. In such theology, death largely surpassed the place that rightly belonged to resurrection. And by putting the resurrection and second coming so far in the distance (after the millennium), the blessed hope was shorn of its power over the church, for "it is impossible that men should feel the power of an event which is certainly remote, as they do one that is even possibly near."¹⁷ Gordon concluded that only by a return to the premillennial understanding of the Parousia such as the primitive church held could the Second Advent doctrine have the activating and motivating effect over the church it was meant to have.

Dr. Henry Lummis, Methodist pastor and educator (professor, Lawrence University, 1886-1905), gave a mild rebuke to those who prayed for the world-wide extension of Christ's Kingdom or for its spread. This prayer was unscriptural, said the professor, for the Kingdom was an already existing unit, to be entered by some upon death, and for those still living at the time of the Second Coming to be experienced in its visible form on earth. Appropriate prayers were, "Thy Kingdom come," Matthew 6:10, or that of a simple English brother, "I mean by the grace of God to find a home in the Kingdom."¹⁸

The main thrust of the essay, however, was against the postmillennial identification of the Church and Kingdom as one continuous work of God in the Old Testament as well as the New. Dr. William Warren and Dr. Charles Hodge were cited as prominent proponents of this view. Lummis referred to numerous New Testament passages as well as the opinions of noted scholars to prove that the Church was not founded until the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after Christ's resurrection. The church (assemblies of believers or denominations, the churches - all plural) was to be contrasted with the Kingdom, singular. The apostles wrote that believers were heirs of the Kingdom (a single unit), not heirs of the Church. The Kingdom was everlasting, the Church temporary. Yet the Kingdom was not to be merely identified with heaven. The passages which spoke of the Kingdom as now present (Romans 14:17, Luke 17:21), were to be taken subjectively, not objectively - in a spiritual and not a literal sense. Indeed, "no more absolute separation of Kingdom and Church could be made, without labored effort, than is already

made in the New Testament by the terms employed in representing each."¹⁹ Lummis believed that proof that the visible Kingdom contrasted with the Church rather than identified with it, was a great step toward the removal of the claim that this Kingdom was already set up in the world. However, in differentiating between Kingdom and Church, Lummis did not intend the dispensational distinctions between Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven, and Kingdom of Christ, as some early Fundamentalists were beginning to teach.

The implications of the distinction between Kingdom and Church were very significant, particularly for Protestant ecclesiology. Under the post-millennial view, as taught by Charles Hodge, it was believed that the church would be successful in preaching the gospel worldwide. The church militant of today was becoming the church triumphant of tomorrow. According to this view, the church was the outward and visible manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth and would gradually Christianize individuals, institutions, and society, until the church age gradually merged into the millennial age and the kingdom of this world became the Kingdom of God. Thus the church had a glorious future within history and did not become a beleaguered minority rescued from the wrecked vessel of this world, as the premillennialists taught.²⁰

The pessimism of the premillennial view was apparent in Henry M. Parsons' lecture, entitled "The Present Age and Development of Anti-Christ." Again as the other speakers had done, Parsons related his theme directly to the overriding concern of the conference - the establishing of the truth of the personal, premillennial coming of Christ.²¹ Parsons demonstrated that

each successive age in the history of mankind ended in decay, judgment, and in the deliverance of a faithful remnant by an act of God. The present age would also follow this pattern. Universal corruption would prevail at the end of the age and not universal conversion and a millennium of peace.²²

The epitome of evil at the end of the present dispensation, asserted Parsons, would come in the Antichrist. The recruiting forces for this archenemy of God, already at work in the world, were infidelity, atheism, pantheism, rationalism, spiritualism, and godless socialism.²³ The spirit of Antichrist had been represented by the apostate Roman Church and in the assumptions claimed and exercised by the Pope. Yet the final Antichrist had not yet appeared, but would enter the world scene in visible form, for

in the prophetic statement of the final Antichrist, in Daniel 11:45, it is said: "He shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas in the glorious Holy Mount," and in II Thess. 2:4, he is represented as "sitting in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God." While this last feature of the reign of Antichrist finds its shadow in the pretensions of the Papacy, we still believe that a more concrete future fulfilment, springing out of present and patent channels of blasphemy and corruption, will be seen in the literal temple yet to be built in Jerusalem.²⁴

Most millenarians believed that the Jews would be restored to their own land and would in the end be converted. Bishop W.R. Nicholson of the Reformed Episcopal Church spoke to this issue in his paper entitled "The Gathering of Israel." He took such passages as Ezekiel 36:22-28, 37:15-22, and Amos 9:9-14 as well as numerous New Testament passages to show that the promises of restoration were to be taken literally - i.e. a literal Israel restored to a literal Palestine. These passages did not refer to the return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon, insisted the bishop, for Ezekiel

wrote that the restoration "takes place 'out of all countries', instead of only one, it is attended with the converting power of the Holy Spirit, giving new hearts to the restored ones, and causing them to walk in all obedience to God."²⁵

Nicholson asserted that the Bible prophesied the future restoration of national Israel in two installments. In the first phase a considerable number of Jews, in their unconverted state, would gather in Palestine just prior to Christ's Second Coming. They would rebuild their temple and re-establish temple services. After the Lord had snatched away the Church, the Jews, along with other unbelievers, would enter the Great Tribulation and endure great suffering. At the end of the seven year period of tribulation when Christ returned with His saints, a remnant of the Jews would be converted, "looking upon Him whom they had pierced." When the Millennial Kingdom would be established, there would be a second gathering of the Jews, again in an unconverted state, but in much larger numbers. Immediately upon this restoration to the land, the Jews would be converted en masse, as Paul taught in Romans 11:26. Redeemed Israel's millennial position and influence on the earth would then be great and exalted. There would be a literal fulfilment to them of all the promises of material blessing given in the Old Testament.²⁶ The spiritual blessings would be the same as accrued to the church now.

They will be sons of God (Hosea 1:10); so are all Christians now. They will be under the mediatorship-sacrifice and priesthood - of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:6); so are we. They will please God, and therefore must have been brought into living union with Christ, through the Spirit, even as we.²⁷

Another conference speaker who was active at Niagara was J.T. Cooper, Presbyterian seminary professor at Allegheny in Pittsburgh. Like Bishop Nicholson, he was a keen student of God's dealings with Israel.²⁸ His topic for the Prophetic Conference was "The Judgment, or Judgments."²⁹ Cooper saw the entire millennial dispensation as the last day, the day of the Lord, and the day of judgment. He described four judgments - that of Christians in relation to their faithfulness (II Cor. 5:10 and Rom. 14:10), of both houses of Israel (Hosea 3:4-5 and Jer. 30:7), of the nations at the time of Christ's advent prior to the millennium (Matt. 25:31-46), and of the dead at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:11-15). Premillennial distinctives were maintained throughout Cooper's exposition.

One of the prime movers of the Prophetic Conference, Niagara president James Brookes, read a lengthy paper on "The Coming of the Lord in its Relation to Christian Doctrine."³⁰ There is some justification in a reviewer's comment that Brookes' presentation of one hundred items specifying the relation of this doctrine to the teachings of the New Testament was "wearisome in the extreme."³¹ After listing all one hundred benefits coming to believers through the doctrine of the premillennial advent, each point buttressed with Scripture, Brookes added: "Very many similar texts might be quoted, but enough has been said to show that this great truth runs like a golden cord through the entire New Testament from beginning to end, touching every doctrine, binding every duty, arousing, consoling, directing, guarding, inspiring the believer at every step of his pilgrimage."³²

Brookes' conviction regarding the Calvinistic doctrine of election

came through clearly in his refutation of the postmillennial claim that premillennial doctrine disparaged the Gospel by representing it as a failure, and the work of the Holy Spirit as inadequate to the conversion of the world. To this the Niagara president replied that a moment's reflection would be sufficient to show that premillennialists exalted the Gospel by proving that it accomplished all it was designed to effect, and elevated the ministry of the Holy Spirit by demonstrating that He saved all He intended to save during the present dispensation.³³

By far the longest paper in this series (ninety-two pages in length), was that by Nathaniel West, Presbyterian pastor and scholar. His subject was a vast one - "History of Premillennial Doctrine." Wilbur M. Smith has called this essay the most important history of premillennialism that existed in the last third of the nineteenth century.³⁴ West certainly did have a broad grasp of the prophetic literature in America, Britain and the Continent. This was not only reflected in his four published books and numerous scholarly articles, but also in his forty-two page Critical Appendix at the end of Premillennial Essays. The Appendix cited excerpts from the most noted prophetic authorities in the history of doctrine. This included not only writers from the first four centuries of the history of the church and of the Middle Ages, but the major German and French theologians and exegetes of the nineteenth century, with translated excerpts from scores of their volumes, many of which could not even be found in the libraries of larger theological seminaries today. All of the extracts cited confirmed the doctrine of the premillennial advent and literal first resurrection.³⁵

West's essay traced the history of premillennialism beginning with the visions of Daniel and John, through the Apostolic Fathers, Apologists and Nicene Fathers. Premillennialism was pictured as a tenet of faith commonly held until the time of Origen (died c. 254 A.D.), who was the first to break with it, holding that matter ~~was~~ bad, the earth was to be annihilated, and that the future glory of the saints was not connected with glorification of their earthly bodies.³⁶ With Constantine's church-state synthesis in the early fourth century, Jerome (340-420 A.D.) and especially Augustine's new interpretations of eschatology (354-430 A.D.), millenarianism was dealt a death blow.

In elaborating on the demise of premillennialism in the fourth century, West cited Jamieson and Faussett: "Under Constantine, Christianity being established, Christians began looking at its existing temporal prosperity as fulfilling the prophecies, and ceased to look for Christ's promised reign on earth."³⁷ Auberlen was quoted in his poignant observation that

Chiliasm disappeared in proportion as Roman Papal Catholicism advanced. The Papacy took to itself, as a robbery that glory which is an object of hope. . . . When the church became a harlot, she ceased to be a bride who goes to meet her Bridegroom, and thus Chiliasm disappeared.³⁸

Eventually, a carnal caricature of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ was laid in the Empire, "a Millennium sunk in the gross materialism and idolatry of medieval, political and military Christianity."³⁹

The great hope of the early medieval period, asserted West, was that A.D. 1000 would mark the end of the age. When this did not occur, a new

date was set as the starting point (i.e. A.D. 312 in connection with Emperor Constantine), and another lease of three centuries ensued. The Ottoman Turks who invaded Christendom were regarded as Gog and Magog of Revelation. Men like Wyclif labelled the Pope the Antichrist. West noted that the "universal interpretation of the Reformers was only that of the purest Roman Catholics for ages previous, and that of Christ's martyrs, that the Church of Rome is the 'Babylon' of the Apocalypse, the 'Mother' of more like her, and the Papacy, the 'Antichrist' in the person of its Popes."⁴⁰ This view, insisted West, was reflected in all the doctrinal statements of the Reformation, wherever the subject was handled - i.e. the Westminster Confession, Articles of Smalcald, and others. With this period also came the preteristic view which saw the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation already fulfilled in the past.⁴¹

The Reformers, we are told, opened the door to a pure Chiliasm, but did not themselves teach it. Their work lay in another direction - i.e. articulating the great doctrines of grace, the reorganization of the church, and the repulsion of papal claims.

Not a few remained still hampered with the Augustinian reckoning. They deemed the end of the world near, and looked for the speedy Advent of Christ to destroy the Papal Antichrist and introduce the state of Eternal Glory. They thought the 1000 years were over, and Satan 'loosed a little season'.⁴²

West further pointed out that the Reformers confused the Battle of Armageddon, which according to Scripture would occur at the beginning of the one thousand years, with the expedition of Gog and Magog at the end of those years. They believed Gog and Magog to be the Ottoman Turks. Their

liturgy was "From the Pope, the Turk, and the Devil, Good Lord deliver us."⁴³ Furthermore, they had to counter the false Chiliasm of their day - as represented by men like Thomas Munzer and the Prophets of Zwickau. Calvin still dated the thousand years from Constantine and rejected the idea of a future reign of a literal one thousand years. West argued that the Reformed statement of faith only condemned the false Chiliasm of their period and left room for premillennialism. Indeed, among the English Reformers, true Chiliasm was already making its appearance. As to the Westminster divines, we are told that although they differed in several respects, they were united on the two points - i.e. the premillennial advent and literal first resurrection, and that a large number of them "among whom was the majority of the more prominent and chief" publicly confessed and preached the true Chiliastic doctrine.⁴⁴

If the seventeenth century was a time of the advance of premillennialism, West asserted that the eighteenth was one of the popularization of the postmillennial view as articulated by Daniel Whitby. The success of Whitby's "New Discovery" was attributed by West to a false exegesis of Daniel and Revelation, the use of "the interpolated text of Justin, the misapplied passage of Irenaeus, the misrepresentation of Christian Chiliasm by Origen, Dionysius, Eusebius, (and) by twisted quotations from the fathers."⁴⁵ West also saw in the events of the eighteenth century another cause for the widespread acceptance of postmillennialism. "The terrible condition of Europe, just after the French Revolution, the powerful preaching of the gospel, the earnest prayer, the 'Great Awakening' under the outpoured Spirit, . . .

the new era of missions, Bible, Tract, and other societies, the increased interest felt in the conversion of the Jews, the established concert of prayer for the 'conversion of the world' - all contributed to make the Whitbyan theory popular."⁴⁶ Furthermore, asserted West, the fact that eminent divines like Edwards, Hopkins and Bellamy "embraced it, wrote it, preached it" insured its acceptance by a large part of the Christian world.

West also pointed out that the same century which saw the rise of the Whitbyan theory also saw a vigorous protest against it. It came from poets like Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley and William Cowper who raised the premillennial theme; and from the German scholar Johann Bengel who wrote, "the time will come when a pure Chiliasm will be thought an integral part of orthodoxy."⁴⁷

West saw in the nineteenth century a galaxy of illustrious names adorning the premillennial doctrine. Exegesis had finally been emancipated from "the fetters of lingering medievalism." He concluded:

The progress of history only confirms the Protestant interpretation, without, however, limiting the development of Antichristianity to the Papacy, or spiritual Babylon to the merely Roman Church, which is the "Mother of Harlots," or nationalized Hierarchies. Enough to know that "the Antichrist" arises from illicit commerce of Church and State, and comes to his end in the very bosom of apostate Christendom.⁴⁸

The final Niagara speaker presenting a paper at the New York conference was Rufus W. Clark, pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church, Albany, New York. His topic was "Hope of Christ's Coming as a Motive to Holy Living and Active Labor."⁴⁹ Again the practical and positive effects of the premillennial hope were stressed. Indeed, so convinced were these men of the power of the

premillennial doctrine to motivate believers to Christian activity that at the close of the conference the great assembly rose to its feet in passing the resolution: "The doctrine of our Lord's premillennial advent, instead of paralyzing evangelism and missionary effort, is one of the mightiest incentives to earnestness in preaching the Gospel to every creature, until He comes."⁵⁰ A postmillennial reviewer of the conference addresses affirmed that the speakers had convincingly answered certain common objections to the premillennial doctrine. "It cannot ever be said," he wrote, "that the doctrine of the premillennial advent of Christ is unfavorable to Christian activity."⁵¹ This had been one of the great decisive arguments in the reviewer's mind against the doctrine. He asserted:

If the church is gradually to progress by the use of the present means to complete victory over sin, then we are inclined to press these means to their farthest exercise and hasten the day. But if Christ's coming in judgment can alone usher in the triumph of the church, then it would seem to be the tendency of the mind to relinquish labor, and wait for this event in inactivity. But our essayists have shown that such in fact is not the tendency of their doctrine, and have shown it conclusively.⁵²

Affirmations Amplified 1886 - 1900

The foundations of theological Fundamentalism were laid in the 1875-1885 period. However the 1886 Prophetic Conference has rightly been called the birthplace of theological Fundamentalism.⁵³ In the period beginning with 1886 "clearer positions were enunciated, more exacting exegesis was developed, and a much larger picture of God's unchanging plans for the present and future was unfolded."⁵⁴ We may trace this amplification of doctrine as it pertained to "that blessed hope" in the Bible readings and sermons of Niagara as recorded in the pages of Truth, Watchword, Watchword and

Truth, and especially in the published proceedings of the Niagara inspired Prophetic Conference of 1886.

From the pages of Truth, we see that the enemy in this period was still postmillennialism.⁵⁵ However rationalism, evolution, and higher criticism loom even larger as enemies of supernatural Christianity and the doctrine of last things seen as a bulwark against the skepticism of modern theology.⁵⁶

The regular conference sessions continued to give prominence to the doctrine of the Second Advent, but as finer points of endtime teaching were articulated, the early unanimity regarding eschatology the leaders of Niagara were so proud of began to be strained. By the 1890s, many in the Niagara group realized they had uncritically accepted certain aspects of premillennialism (like the pretribulation rapture) which they could no longer accept and the dispute which ensued eventually led to the break-up of the conference. James Brookes, in an 1892 article entitled "Kept Out of the Hour" observed:

Some excellent brethren, who thoroughly believe in the premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, also thoroughly believe that the Church, the real church, the church regenerated and saved, must pass through that dreadful tribulation, and that when He comes for His people He will instantly appear with them. They are greatly mistaken in this view, and should cease to hold and teach it, because they are misleading many, who otherwise would receive much comfort and help from "the blessed hope" of our Redeemer's speedy return. Let prayer be offered in their behalf that He may be pleased to open their understanding.⁵⁷

At the Niagara sessions the pretribulationists continued to advocate that particular version of the Second Coming, with the opposing view receiving an occasional airing in the pages of the religious periodicals. In the

1893 meetings of the Niagara Conference there were a series of lectures on the Second Advent by ardent pretribulationists. Brookes lectured on Revelation, Moorehead on Daniel, Munhall on "The Coming of the Lord," Parsons on "The Coming Antichrist" and "The Coming of the Lord," and Scofield on "The Imminence of our Lord's Return."⁵⁸

Nathaniel West, who had broken with the pretribulation position already in the 1880s attacked the theory of the secret, pretribulation rapture in a series of pamphlets and articles. West's series of articles on this topic in the Episcopal Recorder were rebutted by a series in Truth by Lutheran pastor and prophetic scholar George N.H. Peters.⁵⁹ Both Robert Cameron and William Erdman expressed their posttribulational views in the pages of Truth.⁶⁰ These differences were never settled, and as we have already noted, a split among the early Fundamentalists occurred - a split which has remained with the movement to the present time. The posttribulationists have remained a decided minority.

However, it was the Second American Bible and Prophetic Conference of November 16-21, 1886, again spearheaded by the convenors of Niagara which really set the tone for Fundamentalist prophetic study for the last part of the century. Present-day Fundamentalist historian, George Dollar, calls this conference "a Plymouth Rock in the history of Fundamentalism; a Magna Charta of its doctrinal insights; a Valley Forge in facing the onslaught of liberal theology; . . . a determined and valiant answer that the war was on and Fundamentalists would fight."⁶¹ He rightly observes that it is important for students of Fundamentalism to have a detailed knowledge of this conference.

This is because

. . . the theological positions and interests have continued in Fundamentalism, differing only because of the unusual ministries of the successors of the early giants and because the American religious scene has changed. The continuing witness of Fundamentalism will not be obvious unless the earliest affirmations and attitudes are accurately understood.⁶²

One notes in all that surrounded this second prophetic conference an increased desire for recognition by these early Fundamentalists. They wished to declare that they were willing to fight for their convictions, but they also wanted to show that theirs was a responsible and respectable movement. Needham informed readers of Prophetic Studies that the conference call was heartily endorsed by hundreds of pastors, theological professors, evangelists, missionaries, and Y.M.C.A. secretaries. Many of the postmillennial faith had also ratified the call and were present at the conference as interested listeners.⁶³ At least one Adventist spoke to the conference, several papers by posttribulationists were read, and a great deal more dispensational emphasis was evident than in the 1878 conference. This seems to indicate that the premillennialists were confident enough of their basic points of agreement that they could "go public" with some of the divergent views held by some within the camp.⁶⁴ Thirty-four millenarians either spoke at the conference or signed the call. Of these nineteen were associated with the Niagara Conference, twenty had participated in the 1878 conference and twenty-one would remain active in future conferences.⁶⁵

Editor Needham underscored the fact that these premillennialists took a sane, scholarly approach to the study of prophecy. He affirmed:

The conference gave no opportunity for modern prophets to ventilate their calculations or speculations; it was rather an occasion for students of prophecy to present the weighty matters found in the Written Word concerning "last times" and "last things." The brethren who were appointed to bring to the Conference the results of prayerful and careful Bible study are neither idle star-gazers, erratic [sic] time-setters nor theological adventurers.⁶⁶

Needham further assured the public the names of those associated with this conference as well as their ecclesiastical standing, spirituality, scholarship, and eloquence would "compel respect, disarm prejudice, dissolve doubts, and establish faith in 'the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy.'" He then praised the enterprise shown by the Inter Ocean in its swift publication of these addresses, "a marvel of modern journalism."⁶⁷

It is noteworthy that even though the Inter Ocean, the leading Republican paper of the northwest, published a Sunday edition (and these Fundamentalists openly condemned Sunday newspapers), and boasted of being in the van of progress, aiming to make the world better (the conference addresses published in that newspaper consigned such pursuits to futility), the convenors of the conference were willing to utilize its services. It is very evident that by use of the secular, as well as religious press, large public conferences, and an increased emphasis on the scholarship, eloquence, and eminence of its leaders, the premillennial movement was gradually becoming institutionalized and in danger of becoming secularized.

The conference addresses expressed an increased sense of alarm and pessimism at world conditions, along with a strong sense of certainty that the signs predicted as indicative of the end and the present fulfilment of these signs made their message irrefutable. From the first address, entitled

"The Return of the Lord, Personal and Literal" by E.P. Goodwin, to the last, called "Stimulating Effect of Premillennial Truths in the Work of Evangelization" by Bishop Maurice Baldwin, the doctrine of Christ's Second Advent was held forth to awaken Christians from slumber, inspire them for the work of world-wide evangelism, provide a bulwark against the skepticism of modern theology, and become the central rallying point of fellowship for "thousands of . . . (the) Lord's dear saints who love his appearing and kingdom."⁶⁸

A number of themes relative to the premillennial advent were amplified at this conference. We may trace these in the conference addresses given by men active at Niagara.

The most prominent note sounded was that of alarm at the acceleration of apostasy in the church and decadence in society. These were sure signs that the Lord's return was imminent.

Professor E.F. Stroeter of Wesleyan University, in his address told those assembled that the postmillennial hope of a church triumphant in this world and a society Christianized was "no more than a fancy."⁶⁹ The truth of the matter was that the "most fiendish cruelties and tortures, oppressions and persecutions . . . (had) been invented and practiced in the bosom and in the name of Christianity." Furthermore,

The most grievous and sickening moral leprosy breaks out in Christianized society. The most diabolical organizations of anarchism and nihilism are known only among so-called Christian nations and civilizations. Whatever good results have been accomplished in the world either by sanitary measures, by the industrial and political elevation of the people, by the development of religious and educational facilities — almost every progress, every attainment of any age has become and still becomes a lever of perdition.⁷⁰

The Fundamentalist depreciation of the progress of the age was further amplified by A.T. Pierson. He believed that the nineteenth century had the ripest form of worldly civilization, but it was a ripeness which bordered on rottenness. This civilization was said to be "gigantic in invention, discovery, enterprise, achievement," but also "gigantically worldly," and "sometimes and somewheres monstrously God-denying and God-defying." As evidence of this, Pierson pointed out that philosophy now bloomed "into a refined and poetic pantheism or a gross, blank materialism or a subtle rationalism or an absurd agnosticism." Science constructed its system of evolution and left out a personal God. Men such as Strauss and Renan, Hegel and Comte, Goethe and Kant, Mill and Spenser, Darwin and Huxley, Matthew Arnold and Theodore Parker were specimens of men who owed their education, refinement, and accomplishment to the very Christianity they attacked. Civilization had been turned into the stronghold of unbelief; its imaginations and inventions were high towers that exalted themselves against the knowledge of God.⁷¹

Pierson described the conformity of the church to the world as hopeless. The main symptom of the church's apostasy was said to be its participation in five institutions Satan had for centuries stamped as his own - the card table, the horse race, the dance, the stage, and the wine cup.⁷² The apostasy was further evident in the rise of the progressive orthodoxy of a new theology insinuating its "subtle serpent coils" into theological seminaries, as well as the possibility of the supremacy of ethical conscience supplanting the supremacy of the cross of Christ in the faith of many a believer.⁷³

True believers were not to be surprised or disheartened at this terrible evil in the church and in the world, asserted Pierson. They must expect evil to come to its awful ripeness. He assured his audience:

Prophecy is only finding its Champollion in history; and the obscure hieroglyphus [sic] on its monuments have an interpreter. We are persuaded only the more firmly that God rules, and is surely working out His plan.⁷⁴

The abounding iniquity in the world and coldness in the church was to serve as a means of drawing the "few holy ones into closer fellowship with each other and closer walk with God . . . as those who await translation."⁷⁵

A second prominent feature of these addresses was the effort put forth to provide greater detail on certain topics related to the Second Advent. Two such topics which stand out are the nature of the Millennium and the identity and activities of the Antichrist. These have always been matters of great fascination for many Fundamentalists.

Professor Stroeter devoted the bulk of his address to describing the Millennial Kingdom. His stated purpose was to correct the postmillennial view that, for all intents and purposes the Church was Christ's Kingdom on earth and all the demonstration of the Kingdom that would ever come to Jew or Gentile on this side of the final judgment was to come through the Church in its present "unglorified and corruptible state." Not so, asserted the professor. There would be no Millennium "before or without the return and visible presence of the glorified Jesus."⁷⁶

The Scriptural Millennium, according to Stroeter, would be characterized by the following: a fundamental change in the condition of physical nature; fundamental changes in matters of government and politics; great

and general salvation.

The changes in the condition of physical nature would come about because the curse will have been removed and the earth arrive at a glorious Sabbath rest. Stroeter asks:

Are all those ~~millennial~~ prophecies, that in that day the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid (Isa. 11:6), that the earth rejoice and blossom as a rose (Isa. 35:1), that the Lord will lay no famine upon His people any more (Ezek. 36:29), but that the land shall become like the garden of Eden - shall all these and many more receive nothing but fragmentary, mere introductory fulfillment? God forbid. For all things must be fulfilled which were written in the laws of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning Him (Luke 24:44).⁷⁷

There was no irreconcilable discrepancy between nature and spirit, asserted Stroeter, for "nature is indeed last to be reached by the life-giving spirit, but reached it will be." Christ's resurrection guaranteed this and

the resurrection of His first-born church at His return will mark the beginning of a new era in cosmic life. New potencies and forces will then be introduced on a large scale into nature and be productive of a yet unknown and to human wisdom unknowable and incalculable natural existence.⁷⁸

The speaker's second proposition that the Millennium would be characterized by fundamental changes in matters of government and politics was based on a hermeneutic affirming a literal fulfillment of the promise of the restoration of David's kingdom by Christ after His return to earth. To Christ alone, established geneologically in Matthew 1 as the Son of David, belonged the government of Israel and the ruling of the nations, according to Isaiah 2:6-8, stated Stroeter.⁷⁹

The only perfect government the earth had ever seen, asserted the

professor, was when the "perfect, holy, incorruptible and infallible King and Lawgiver . . . entered into covenant relations with an earthly people." The Jews rejected Jehovah and broke His statutes. They refused to accept Christ and "are now become the byword of the nations, and their holy city, the city of the Great King (Matt. 5:35) is to this day trodden down by the Gentiles (Luke 21:24)." Yet God did not give up His plan for Israel (Rom. 11:29).

There will be, yea there must be once a perfect, indestructible, righteous government in the earth, something "new under the sun." Israel must and is preserved to be chief among nations (Jer. 31:7). Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3). . . . Without a perfect, and imperishable theocracy of incorruptible priests and kings in the redeemed land of promise, the name of Israel will be a reproach forever among the nations.⁸⁰

Finally, we are told that the Millennium will be a period of great and general salvation. Stroeter declared that Israel as a nation would accept her once rejected Lord (Matt. 23:39, Rom. 11:26), all nations would see the salvation of God, the earth would be full of the knowledge of God (Isa. 11:9), and holiness would be the general characteristic of earthly life (Zech. 14:20).⁸¹

Nathaniel West highlighted the prominence of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom in his address "Prophecy and Israel." His basic premise was that at the end of the present age, Israel would form the historic basis of the New Testament Kingdom in its outward, visible glory.⁸² He stated that we would never see the Millennium come apart from Israel's national conversion and never would that great event occur apart from Christ's Second Advent

(Acts 3:19-21, Rom. 11:26, Rev. 12:40, 15:3-4, 19:11-21).⁸³

West rejected the spiritualizing of Old Testament prophecy concerning Israel and the substituting of the New Testament Church for Israel. Instead, he affirmed the "realistic" interpretation which "takes the predictions and promises concerning Israel in a literal sense, and not as mere metaphors, or abstract spiritual truths clothed in the perishable literary envelope of oriental imagery or Jewish drapery."⁸⁴ Taking this approach to the prophecies regarding Israel's future, West was certain that in the Millennium Israel would "shine again as the national leader and light of the world."⁸⁵

Bishop W.R. Nicholson elaborated on the millennial theme in his address entitled "Messiah's Kingly Glory." Referring to Isaiah 9:6-7, Jeremiah 30:9, and Luke 1:32-33 the bishop affirmed, along with the previous two speakers that Christ, "although 'the mighty God', 'the Son of the Highest', should succeed to David's throne precisely as a son succeeds to his father; that he should succeed to it as being as identically David's throne, that He would have as the inherited subjects of His Kingdom 'the house of Jacob', or, as elsewhere expressed, Judah and Israel - the self-same people whom David ruled; that, therefore, He should be a visible king reigning on earth; this is what these Scriptures so plainly declare."⁸⁶

The glory of the Millennial Kingdom, stated Nicholson, would "surpass our utmost imaginings." The chief glory would be Christ Himself, "the Brightness of the Father, the Lord of Creation" seated in the midst of mankind wearing the one crown of the world's monarchy. In His associate rulers

the Lord will also be glorious for the saints of the ages down to Christ's Second Coming would be "exalted in kingdom with Him." They will be kings and priests and shall reign on earth (Rev. 4:10, 5:10). The bishop exclaimed:

How splendid will be that court of the King - Enoch, Abraham, David, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, John, Peter, Paul, and all the myriads out of the ages whom we can not name, all, as Jesus says, "shining as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). Yet, like diamonds in the sunlight, the brighter they shine as suns, the more will He, the central sun, refulgent be.⁸⁴

Nicholson went into even greater detail than did the other speakers on the Millennium in describing the renovation of physical nature which would occur when Christ returned and set up His Kingdom on earth. Numerous Old Testament passages were cited proving that the land, with its vegetation, and even the animals will be under a "covenant bond of the Kingdom." As he approached the close of his address, the bishop lavished image upon image in describing the glories of the Kingdom, and in good Fundamentalist fashion he buttressed each statement with a corroborating Scripture passage. The description included the following points: health would bloom on every cheek; the government would be perfect in its unity, grand in its massiveness - divine yet human, committing no iniquity, making no mistakes, purely good; a mighty increase of population, yet no natural jealousy, no cause of war, no civil disturbance; old men and old women, every man with his staff in his hand, as well as boys and girls playing in the streets in the city where all would dwell - Jerusalem.⁸⁸ Furthermore:

Riches increased; multitudes of camels, dromedaries of Midian and Ephah, flocks of Kedar, rams of Nebaioth, gold, incense, precious woods (Isa. 9). Satan bound (Rev. 20:3). All things used as consecrated to God (Isa. 23:18; Zech. 14:20). Knowledge universally diffused (Isa. 32:4). The forfeited unity of language restored (Zeph. 3:9). Angels of God, ascending and descending, in communication with men (John 1:51).

Sorrow and sighing fled away, joy and gladness prevailing, thanksgiving and the voice of melody (Isa. 35). The image of God, reflected in the myriads of millions of mankind, overspreading the world with a moral glory, like dewdrops sparkling in the rays of the sun. And over them all Christ, the Son of God, the Son of man, the Son of David, reigning in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever (Micah 4:7).⁸⁹

The Antichrist has frequently been an intriguing topic for students of the Bible. Many futile attempts have been made, even prior to the 1875-1900 period, to identify this mysterious arch-enemy of God.⁹⁰ The basic lines of interpretation for twentieth century Fundamentalist thinking on this subject, were set forth by those associated with the Niagara Bible Conference and the American prophetic conferences of 1878 and 1886.

Henry Parsons had devoted a good portion of his 1878 Prophetic Conference address entitled "The Present Age and Development of Antichrist" to pinpointing the identity of the one Daniel calls the Little Horn and John the Revelator calls the Beast.⁹¹ The Presbyterian pastor gave a detailed description of the Antichrist in a Niagara lecture of 1893.⁹² In the same series James Brookes followed Parson's talk with one of his own on "The Revelation," and Professor W.G. Moorehead with one entitled "The Book of Revelation."⁹³ However, the 1886 Prophetic Conference was the place where the most articulate description of the Antichrist was given in the 1875 to 1900 period.

At the Chicago conference one can trace the move away from the historicist view that the Pope was the Antichrist⁹⁴ to what was soon to become the prevalent belief among Fundamentalists that the Antichrist would be a diabolical dictator who would head up a ten nation confederacy, unite the world

under his rule, force men to worship him, bring dreadful calamities upon those who refused, and finally be judged by Christ at the end of the seven year period of his career.⁹⁵ Professor W.G. Moorehead's conference address was quite definitive for the Fundamentalist understanding of the Antichrist. Although there were forerunners of this evil enemy of God, the final Antichrist was yet to appear, said Moorehead. This was clearly the futurist position. Key prophetic passages from the writings of Daniel, Paul, and John were dealt with in the address. The audience was told that the term "Antichrist" was used four times in the Bible - 1 John 2:18-22; 4:3; and 2 John 7. Antichrist was defined as being another Christ, a pretender to the name of Christ, one counterfeiting Christ, and one who opposes and fights against Christ.⁹⁶

Furthermore, Moorehead declared that the prophet Daniel pictured the Antichrist as a beast, as did John in the book of Revelation. These animal figures were a "pictorial representation of the political sovereignty of the world."⁹⁷ The little horn which emanated from the ten horns on the beast had "eyes like the eyes of a man" (Dan. 7:8) which pointed to "predominant intellect, dazzling intelligence, power to know men and to sway them."⁹⁸ Both the beast of Daniel's vision and the beast of Revelation successfully control men (Dan. 8:23-25, Rev. 13:13-14). Paul's description of the Man of Sin, the supreme blasphemer (2 Thess. 2:9-10) was similar to that of Daniel and John. Antichrist set aside all authority, human and divine, and warred against the saints (Rev. 13:7-15). The doom of this great adversary of

righteousness was the same in all three prophecies - he is consumed by the Lord at His coming.⁹⁹

As to the identity of the Antichrist, Moorehead stated that the preterist view that the Roman Emperor Nero was the Antichrist and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the Second Advent could not possibly be true. History proved that Nero died by his own hand in a villa four miles from Rome.¹⁰⁰

The prevailing Protestant view that popery was the Beast had "no little verisimilitude," according to Dr. Moorehead. However, he believed that wonderful as the parallelism between the two was, the papacy still did not "fill and complete, as yet, the titanic portrait of the great adversary which the Spirit of God has drawn for us in the word of truth."¹⁰¹

Moorehead indicated wherein the Antichrist and the papacy differed. This was in the following ways:

- (1) The Antichrist was to be atheistic. This was certainly not true of the papacy.
- (2) The Antichrist was to be the blasphemous head of civil power. The papacy's temporal sovereignty was a "petty rule."
- (3) The rule of Antichrist was to be universal. That of Rome was not.
- (4) The Antichrist would give men two frightful alternatives - worship the Beast or die (Rev. 13:15). This could not possibly relate to the papacy.
- (5) Babylon the Great, another name for Romanism, was equated with the apostate church. Yet the Bible taught that there would be some saints in Babylon the Great. However, there would not be a single saint among the Beast worshippers. Thus Babylon (Romanism) and the Beast could not possibly be identical.
- (6) The Beast would be distinct from the Harlot (Rev. 17). The Harlot was another symbol of the apostate church. She is seated on the Beast and "compels him to support her, guides, and uses him for the accomplishment of her purposes." The Beast and ten kings would, in turn, hate the Harlot and "shall make her desolate and naked; and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire (Rev. 17:16)."¹⁰²

The Scriptures described the real Antichrist, said Moorehead, in the following manner:

- (1) He is a person, an individual man and "every quality, attribute, mark, and sign which can indicate personality are ascribed to him with a precision and definiteness of language that refuses to be explained away."
- (2) He is the supreme head of the world power in its final and diabolical form.
- (3) He is of supernatural origin, coming "out of the bottomless pit." Satan gives him power.
- (4) He will not appear until "a something that 'now restraineth' be removed (2 Thess. 2:6-8). The widely accepted view that this restraining power was the Holy Spirit in the church was plausible, although a better interpretation (not antagonistic to the former) was that the moral and civil order of society which normally holds a check on the flood of lawlessness will no longer do so.¹⁰³

Moorehead stated that it was not necessary to believe that right from the beginning of his career the Antichrist would display his "devilish temper" or let out any of the God-defying spirit that is in him. Indeed, the Scriptures intimated the opposite.

He is represented as being a consummate flatterer, a brilliant diplomatist, a superb strategist, a sublime hypocrite. He will mask his ulterior designs under specious pretences; will pose as a humanitarian, the friend of man, the deliverer of the oppressed, the bringer-in of the Golden Age.¹⁰⁴

This description of the Antichrist given by Moorehead has been duplicated innumerable times by twentieth century Fundamentalist writers on prophecy. Hal Lindsey's portrait of the Antichrist in his best-seller The Late Great Planet Earth is the most popular current premillennial reproduction. In a chapter entitled "The Future Furerher," Lindsey echoes Moorehead and other prophetic speakers of the late nineteenth century Bible conference movement. For example, Lindsey describes the Antichrist as a

beast, yet insists he is a person of great authority - the world's most awesome dictator. His conquest of the world will be rapid and there will be an air about him which is self-assured and proud. We are told that he will have a magnetic personality, be supremely attractive and be able to mesmerize audiences with his oratory. During the last three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation, the Antichrist is going to be given absolute authority to act with the power of Satan. This terrible period, says Lindsey, will make the regimes of Hitler, Mao, and Stalin "look like Girl Scouts weaving a daisy chain by comparison."¹⁰⁵ The Fundamentalist interpretation of the Antichrist promulgated at Niagara and the early prophecy conferences is still alive and thriving in American pop eschatology almost a hundred years later!

Thirdly, as in the 1878 conference, but with an even greater sense of urgency, the stimulating effect of the Second Advent in evangelism and missions was stressed at the 1886 meeting. The premillennialists took great pains to clarify precisely what they believed the evangelical missionary task to be. To evangelize, stated W.E. Blackstone in his address on missions, meant to be a witness at home and abroad ("Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth," Acts 1:8). Not a word was spoken in the Bible he explained, that the disciples should remain in any one place until all were converted. Thus the postmillennialist's idea of the conversion of the world by the church was totally unscriptural. In fact, the Bible taught that only a few were to be saved. At the first apostolic council it was declared to be the express purpose of God in this dispensation to take out of the nations

a people to His name (Acts 15:13-17).¹⁰⁶

The noted apologist A.T. Pierson declared in his message that if the purpose of God was world-wide conversion, then certainly His plan had been a failure for the Gospel was not converting vast numbers of people. Along with Blackstone, Pierson saw the task of evangelism not the conversion of the world "but always the outgathering from the world of a people for God."¹⁰⁷ He approvingly quoted Anthony Grant: "The gospel is not to be in all places at all times, nor in all places at any one time, but in some places at all times and in all places at some time."¹⁰⁸ Pierson added:

God purposes that everywhere the banner of the cross shall be lifted as a witness to His grace, and that the church with all its institutions be planted as a confirmatory witness, that all who are of the truth hearing, shall be gathered into the fold. And then shall the end come.¹⁰⁹

Missionary statesman Pierson insisted that evangelical Christians ought not be discouraged. Indeed:

The remedy against discouragement and despair may be a reconstruction of our hope itself. If we have been looking for a result which the word of God does not warrant, if the Scriptures do not represent the conversion of the world as the end or the aim of the present dispensation, some of us have been working on a wrong basis, trying to achieve impossibilities, and of course we are discouraged. . . . We are responsible not for conversion, but for contact. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." There our commission begins and ends.¹¹⁰

The full title of Pierson's address was "Our Lord's Second Coming, a Motive to World Wide Evangelism." The Second Advent was depicted as a motive to missionary endeavour in that the Lord's return was inseparably associated with "the glorious compensation for all service, suffering, and sacrifice for His sake - 'Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be.'" Furthermore, the blessed hope of the

Lord's return made disciples unselfish and spiritual, and relaxed "the hold upon worldly things and carnal lusts and made all seem small and insignificant beside the magnitude of eternity," and ~~no~~ work demanded for its doing more unworldly and unselfish devotion than foreign missions.¹¹¹

The final address of the 1886 conference was given by Maurice S. Baldwin (1836-1904), bishop of Huron in the Anglican Church of Canada. Baldwin, who was first cousin of Robert Baldwin, one of the chief architects of ~~responsible~~ government in Canada, and a driving force behind the evangelical Anglican seminary Wycliffe College, was the most prominent Canadian churchman associated with the Niagara movement.¹¹² The bishop had been on the planning committee of the First American Bible and Prophetic Conference at New York and was one of the signers issuing the call for the Chicago conference. Baldwin's biographer, Canon Dyson Hague states that the bishop's heritage to his country and his age was "that of an unashamed championship of the Supernatural, and a life which, in its day and generation, was probably the foremost and strongest witness that Canada has known to the truth of the Gospel and the Bible."¹¹³ Hague believed that the secret of Baldwin's powerful ministry lay in a series of "immutable convictions." These were a profound conviction of the inspiration and authority of the Bible as the Word of God; a deep sense of the missionary vocation of the Christian and of the church; and an earnest belief in the certainty and imminence of the Second Coming of Jesus.¹¹⁴ Regarding the bishop's advent convictions, which Niagara nurtured, Hague affirms that Baldwin was "undoubtedly the foremost champion that Canada has had in its Episcopate of the pre-millennial

[sic] doctrine of the Second Advent."¹¹⁵

Bishop Baldwin closed the 1886 Prophetic Conference with a stirring address on the "Stimulating Effect of Premillennial Truths in the Work of Evangelization." He made much of Jesus' words in Matthew 24, that His Gospel was "to be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." Christ did not say that His message was to be preached until every nation was converted, declared the bishop, nor until every person was brought into direct and positive subjection to His perfect sway. The task was to bear witness and the Word plainly stated there was to be a gathering out from the nations His ecclesia (church). That out-gathering, believed Baldwin, was going on in the present day.¹¹⁶

When viewed in light of this task of bearing witness to all nations before Christ could return, the doctrine of the Second Advent had to have a powerful effect on the believer, asserted the Canadian bishop. The logic was clear: if men believed Christ was coming and if they believed that coming to be contingent upon the diffusion of the Gospel, it followed as a necessary consequence that those who were permeated with such views would want to do everything that lay in their power to advance the cause of missions.¹¹⁷

One might note that when the premillennialists spoke of the imminence of the Lord's return (He could come at any moment), yet at the same time asserted that His coming was contingent on the completion of a specific task (i.e. the bearing witness to all nations), they were in fact teaching delay, and not unconditional imminence. There was a unanimity among them that the Lord would delay His coming until Christians had carried out the work of

witness and they could actually hasten the Lord's return by quickly getting on with the task of evangelism.¹¹⁸ Some even believed the task could be accomplished in two decades and the Lord brought back if enough Christians would get involved. In his 1886 conference address William Blackstone prophesied: "Given 10,000,000 consecrated Christians, and the whole world could be easily evangelized in twenty years."¹¹⁹ At the conclusion of the Chicago conference those assembled once again adopted a resolution affirmed at the 1878 conference: "The duty of the church during the absence of the bridegroom is to watch and pray, to work and wait, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, and thus hasten the coming of the day of God; and to His last promise, 'surely I come quickly', to respond, in joyous hope, 'even so; come Lord Jesus.'"¹²⁰

Factors Contributing to the Acceptance of Premillennialism

The surprising rebirth of premillennialism in America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century had been preceded by a quiet but steady growth of interest in millenarian themes. This tradition had been carried on in the United States chiefly through periodicals like the Theological and Literary Journal edited by David N. Lord (twelve volumes, 1846-61), the Prophetic Times, edited by Joseph Seiss (twelve volumes, 1863-74), and as already noted, Waymarks in the Wilderness, edited by James Inglis (earlier version 1854-57 followed by ten volumes, 1864-72).¹²¹ The Millerite debacle of 1844 thoroughly discredited American premillennialism but with the appearance of Lord's journal in 1848 there was first of all a resurgence of interest in historicism followed by an awakening interest in futurism,

and then among many, the adoption of Darbyite dispensationalism.

Martin Marty observes that historians have greater difficulty agreeing about the reasons for the move to premillennialism than they do in noting its presence.¹²² Social factors such as the upheaval caused by the Civil War and the ordeals of transition to an industrial society undoubtedly played a significant role in the resurgence of premillennialism.¹²³ Theological and practical considerations weighed even more heavily in moving men and women to the new eschatological position.

First of all, there was a definite cause and effect relationship between a specific view of the Bible and premillennial eschatology. As already noted, with the development of strong convictions regarding the inerrancy of the Scriptures came equally strong convictions that the literal interpretation was the only correct hermeneutic. Already by mid-century the literalistic approach to the Bible was recognized as the crucial point dividing premillennialists from other Christians. In the 1853 Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review it was noted:

Millenarianism has grown out of a new "school of Scripture interpretation"; and its laws of interpretation are so different from the old, that the Bible may almost be said to wear a new visage and speak with a new tongue - a tongue not very intelligible. The central law of interpretation by which millenarians profess always to be guided, is that of giving the literal sense. They call themselves literalists, in opposition to those who entertain the other notion of the millennium (postmillennialism), whom they denominate spiritualist or allegorist.¹²⁴

James Brookes asserted that the men of Niagara took the words of Scripture in their "plain, common, obvious sense," and accepting these words as given by inspiration of God led them to become premillennialists.

Indeed, according to Brookes, the Biblical literalist could not arrive at any other conclusion than the "literal, personal coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹²⁵

In 1878 premillennialism appeared as a cardinal point in two significant doctrinal statements - the Niagara Creed and the resolutions passed at the First American Bible and Prophetic Conference.¹²⁶ In both instances the statements begin with an affirmation on the inspiration and authority of Scripture. The connection between one's view of Scripture and premillennialism is particularly clear in the first three New York resolutions:

I. We affirm our belief in the supreme and absolute authority of the written Word of God on all questions of doctrine and duty.

II. The prophetic words of the Old Testament Scriptures, concerning the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, were literally fulfilled in His birth, life, resurrection and ascension; and so the prophetic words of both the Old and the New Testaments concerning His second coming will be literally fulfilled in His visible bodily return to this earth in like manner as He went up into Heaven; and this glorious Epiphany of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is the blessed hope of the believer and of the Church during this entire dispensation.

III. This second coming of the Lord Jesus is everywhere in the Scriptures represented as imminent, and may occur at any moment; yet the precise day and hour thereof is unknown to man, and known only to God.¹²⁷

Founding their premillennial belief on a literalistic method of Biblical interpretation gave the teachers at Niagara a powerful apologetic. They could approach churchmen who said they believed in the infallibility of the Bible and challenge them to take their belief seriously enough to take the endtime prophecies literally. To those higher critics and churchmen who did not accept the infallibility of the Scriptures, the men of Niagara could point to fulfilled prophecy as one of the most important

evidences for a supernatural Bible. If the promises pertaining to Christ's first advent were fulfilled literally, so would those pointing to His Second Advent. Popular Niagara speaker, A.T. Pierson, insisted that nothing was of greater importance to a student of the Bible than a mastery of the prophetic Scriptures, for "prophecies already fulfilled put the clear broad seal of God upon the Bible."¹²⁸

Another factor accounting for the move to premillennialism by the leaders of Niagara and the prophetic conferences was their prior devotion to Calvinism. Old School Presbyterians were in the vanguard of the Bible conference movement and these men stood for doctrinal and social conservatism, priding themselves at being the most faithful representatives of Calvinism. There was a natural affinity between the cardinal tenets of Calvinism and millenarianism. Indeed, as Whalen has observed, "much of millenarian theology represented an effort to conserve what the premillennialists felt to be the fading legacies of the past, especially Calvinism."¹²⁹

This Calvinist connection was noted by observers of the 1878 Prophetic Conference held at New York. The Bibliotheca Sacra reviewer of Premillennial Essays, containing the papers and addresses of the conference noted:

It is of interest, as suggestive of the drift of theological thought, to notice the denominational representation in this conference. Among those who "united in endorsing the calling of the conference" Presbyterians of all names are exceedingly numerous (43). Next to them came the Baptists (23). The next most numerous are the Episcopalians (11), while other denominations are scarcely represented at all. The sixteen essays and addresses were delivered, with, at most, four exceptions, by Calvinists, and, with five exceptions, by Presbyterians.¹³⁰

In his analysis of the Presbyterian speakers at the New York meetings James Brookes noted the preponderance of former Old School men.¹³¹ Others

have arrived at different totals as to denominational representation at the 1878 conference, but this does not alter the fact that the vast majority were of Calvinist background. This point is particularly evident in Sandeen's listing of 1878 denominational membership alongside the denominational representation of those giving the call.¹³²

<u>1878 Conference Call</u>		<u>1878 Denominational Membership</u>	
Presbyterians	47	Methodists	3,000,000
Baptists	26	Baptists	2,000,000
Episcopalians	16	Presbyterians	900,000
Congregationalists	7	Lutherans	550,000
Methodists	6	Disciples	550,000
Adventists	5	Congregationalists	350,000
Dutch Reformed	4	Episcopalians	300,000
Lutherans	1		
Not identified	10		

The 1886 Prophetic Conference held in Chicago had a denominational representation very similar to the 1878 conference. Again those of Calvinist background were most plentiful.¹³³

Presbyterian, United Presbyterian and Cumberland Presbyterian	56
Baptist	55
Methodist and Primitive Methodist	17
Congregational	11
Reformed	6
Protestant Episcopal	5
Advent	4
Reformed Episcopal	3
Christian	3
Lutheran	1
Independent and Unknown	40

Although the number of Methodists is greater in the 1886 list, it is evident that very few Arminians were influenced by millenarianism in this early period of Fundamentalism. Many of those who were won over seemed to leave the denomination as their allegiance to millenarianism increased.

L.W. Munhall, E.F. Stroeter, Arno C. Gaebelin, and W.E. Blackstone all either formally or practically severed their connections with Methodism after becoming committed premillennialists.¹³⁴ Presbyterianism led the way in the move to premillennialism with Baptists next in millenarian leadership. The relatively small United Presbyterian church contained more millenarians in proportion to its membership than any other denomination in the United States, with the possible exception of the recently formed and very small Reformed Episcopal church.¹³⁵

The Presbyterian seminaries most heavily involved in the early stages of the millenarian movement were the United Presbyterian schools at Xenia and Allegheny in Pittsburgh. On the other hand, although at least nine Presbyterian millenarians, including James Brookes, John T. Duffield, George Bishop, and Samuel Kellogg, were trained at Princeton, they were not encouraged to embrace millenarianism at this prestigious seminary.¹³⁶ Professor James M. Stifler's millenarian influence was felt at Crozer Seminary, but other Baptist seminaries were not impressed by premillennialism. However, there was a growing informal alliance between the Princeton theologians and the millenarians when facing a common enemy - i.e. the higher critic and rationalist who mutilated the Bible and stripped Christianity of its supernatural underpinnings.

The above does not alter the fact that popular Presbyterian, Baptist and other Calvinistically oriented preachers and writers did move in large numbers to the premillennial camp. Some of these preachers, like Samuel Kellogg and Nathaniel West, were men of great scholarly ability.

In 1888 Kellogg produced a long, scholarly essay in the postmillennial Bibliotheca Sacra making a strong case for the doctrinal affinity between Calvinism and premillennialism.¹³⁷ His arguments were quite compelling. He began by stating that premillennialists were found among men of widely differing or even antagonistic beliefs, and this admission, he urged, should be born in mind in its bearing on what was to follow. Yet his thesis was that in general "it may rightly be said that the logical relations of premillennialism connect it more closely with the Augustinian than with any other theological system."¹³⁸

As others had noted, Kellogg saw the eighty-eight per cent (his calculation) signers of the 1878 Prophetic Conference call being Calvinists as strong initial proof of his thesis. The very slight Methodist representation in the call further underscored the Calvinist proclivity toward premillennial eschatology.

In the main body of his essay Kellogg stated that the "logical affinity" between premillennialism and Calvinism was evident in the following: premillennialism as a creed was vitally related to those strict views of the supreme and infallible authority of the Scriptures on which Calvinists had always insisted; premillennialism logically presupposed an anthropology essentially Augustinian applying to organic humanity what ordinary Augustinianism affirmed only of the individual; and premillennial soteriology was definitely Calvinistic in that it insisted that only a small number of the elect would be saved and history was irremediably corrupt.¹³⁹

Kellogg met the postmillennial objection that premillennialism

denied the ability of the Holy Spirit to convict all nations apart from the appearing of Christ by affirming that it was not a question of the Spirit's ability, but only of His revealed purpose.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, rather than dishonouring and depreciating the work of the Holy Spirit, as was alleged by opponents of premillennialism, the millenarian, of logical necessity, highlights the Spirit's person and work. Kellogg queries: "How could those who so insist on the total ruin of man, his absolute impotence for self-redemption, whether personal or social and governmental, and who place the doctrine of a divine election in the very foreground of their system, do otherwise than magnify to the utmost the dignity and office of the Holy Spirit in redemption?"¹⁴¹

In the matter of election Kellogg affirmed that premillennialism was actually broader in its outlook than common Calvinism. It was broader in that it insisted that the election of the saved in the present age did not exhaust the revealed purpose of God in redemption. Indeed, "the particular election from the present dispensation, is not, as other schools of theology have taught, the ultimate end of redemption, but a means to a more comprehensive end, and that universalistic; namely, a 'restoration of all things' - i.e., the human race on the earth, and therewith the material creation - to more than pristine perfection and glory."¹⁴²

There is no question but that there was an immense body of shared belief among Calvinists and millenarians. The thesis that men adopted premillennialism largely because their theology was Calvinistic seems generally true. It has further been suggested that

Increasingly the premillennialists saw an attack on Calvinist orthodoxy as an attack on millenarianism and vice versa. Thus, new developments in the theology affected the doctrine of the premillennial Advent, and had to be dealt with. . . . The necessity to defend the doctrine of the Second Advent, combined with an almost uniformly Augustinian prejudice led chiliasm to oppose movements toward theological innovation and liberalization. The result was a lasting tension between premillennialism and progressive elements of American Protestantism.¹⁴³

The appeal of premillennialism lay not only in the fact that it was compatible with Calvinist orthodoxy but that it helped establish and buttress it. Premillennialism was so eagerly grasped by so many because it was seen as an antidote to the liberal denial of basic Biblical tenets. Some premillennialists went so far as to state that if they could convert a man to premillennialism the rest of his theology would fall in line, for "if you accept the second coming you are under bonds logically to accept the doctrines with which it is so indissolubly bound up. The second coming is so woven into these basic doctrines of the faith . . . that you cannot deny one without denying the other."¹⁴⁴

A third reason for the zeal displayed in proclaiming Christ's premillennial advent was that this doctrine was regarded as a neglected truth which now was being rediscovered. The call for the 1878 Prophetic Conference stated that this doctrine had long been under neglect and misapprehension and its denial was one of the conspicuous signs of the apostasy of the last days. While this sad state of affairs was to be lamented, the conveners still believed there was cause for gratitude in that there had been within the past few years "a powerful and widespread revival of this ancient faith."¹⁴⁵ This the brethren wished to further by calling the conference.

A.J. Gordon developed a concept called "the recurrence of doctrine" which explained, at least in part, why the doctrine of the Second Advent received so much prominence. Gordon described doctrinal truth as being in the form of a circle which was constantly revolving. At one time in the history of the church one particular doctrine would be especially prominent while at another time another. While all truth at all times was binding in its force and should be presented in right proportion, yet there were certain great doctrines, which at the time of their prominence needed to be most forcefully declared.¹⁴⁶

What began as the highlighting of a neglected truth whose time had come, became, for many at Niagara an obsession. Every conference throughout its history had the Second Coming on its agenda. In some years, like the 1894 conference, almost the entire agenda was devoted to lectures on the various aspects of the Second Advent. Poems, Bible reading outlines, sermons, innumerable book advertisements - all on prophetic themes, pervaded both the Truth and the Watchword.

Robert Cameron, himself very involved in the proceedings at Niagara, noted that for some Niagara men the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ became almost a fetish and was viewed, at least in part, as the ultimate escape from man's great enemy - death. Cameron writes that at one stage at Niagara it became the fashion of every speaker to "ring the changes" on the possibility of Christ coming at any moment - "before the morning dawned, before the meeting closed, and even before the speaker had completed his address."¹⁴⁷ Some, like James Brookes, longed so intensely to escape death

and experience the Second Advent that they could hardly bear the thought that Christ might not come during their lifetime. After reading an article in which Robert Cameron showed that the apostles had been taught to look for intermediate events between the ascension and the Second Coming, James Brookes received a visit from Cameron. The latter described that 1895 summer's afternoon visit thus:

About three o'clock in the afternoon, when sitting out on the verandah, he (Brookes) suddenly turned towards me and said: "I have read over again this morning, very carefully, that article of yours on the Lord's coming, and I confess to you that it seems absolutely unanswerable. The apostles did not expect the Lord to come in their day, but can't you leave me the hope, after all these years have passed away, that I may live to see my Lord come, and escape the clutches of that awful enemy, death?"¹⁴⁸

A further reason for the widespread acceptance of premillennial eschatology was that this doctrine provided a key which explained why the world was in such a state of upheaval. This was assuring. But even more assuring was the promise of the ultimate solution - the supernatural denouement imminent in the Second Advent.

There is no doubt that the early Fundamentalists were alarmed at what they saw as the irreversible movement of society to utter decadence and ruin. Indeed, the despair produced by the Civil War undoubtedly drove many to consider and then finally accept premillennialism. The war was mentioned in the columns of the millenarian Prophetic Times. For example, in 1863 a correspondent asked, "What is going to become of us as a nation?" The anticipated swift victory for the North was not coming about and a sense of despair was growing in the nation. "We have been long expecting and predicting that the rotten and tottering dynasties of the Old World would fall," but

not "our government, so free, so just, so liberal, so enlightened, so Christian." Now, in 1863, he continued, the permanent separation of North and South seemed likely and anarchy or military rule in the North itself seemed possible. If this happened, what could "reconcile us so well to such calamities, as the belief that Christ is coming to set up his long-prayed-for kingdom upon earth."¹⁴⁹

The new eschatology made sense in view of how many interpreted events in society in post-Civil War America. Premillennial pessimism seemed more realistic than postmillennial optimism for the increase of lawlessness, departure of the mainline churches from the true faith, and the rise of false faiths and "isms" all spoke of the progressive deterioration of the age, not its improvement. The failure of reconstruction in the South, the growth of anarchy in both North and South, the unfulfilled hopes that American democracy would bring about a whole society all reflected the bankruptcy of secular man, soon to be judged. Samuel Kellogg certainly went against the grain of a cherished American belief when he wrote:

It is one of the ruling ideas of the century that man is fully capable of self-government. . . . To this confident anticipation of our democratic age premillennialism opposes the distasteful declaration that, according to Scripture, all these hopes are doomed to disappointment; and that already in the counsels of God, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin is written concerning modern democracies no less than concerning Babylon of old!¹⁵⁰

Furthermore, the growth of premillennial sentiments was part of the growing, general disillusionment of many people with the new America being spawned by industrialism. The premillennial doctrine was a judgment on an evil society, yet at the same time offered hope of deliverance from the

turmoil of troubled times. Sinful men had ruined themselves and society by selfishness and greed and had rejected God's Son. Now the Great Day of Judgment was near in which Christ would be "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" - a favorite Fundamentalist text.¹⁵¹

After graphically describing evidence of the decadence of the age, all of which signified that the end of all things was at hand, A.J. Gordon told his 1886 Prophetic Conference audience:

. . . these things cheer us rather than sadden us, for all the shadows point to the dawn. . . . (For) history is shown to answer to prophecy like deep calling unto deep; there the mysterious chronology written ages ago by God is verified point by point by the terminal periods which are running out under our own eyes. Such correspondences can not be accidental.¹⁵²

The world was in chaos, but there was a divine order. This cheered the cognoscenti. Other premillennialists spoke in terms of solace. "What is left to comfort the heart in the midst of this universal confusion and ruin?" they would ask. The answer was unequivocal. "The last words of our Lord Jesus Christ: 'Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus' Rev. 22:20."¹⁵³

Another reason why the new eschatology gained such wide acceptance was the emphasis which was placed on the practical nature of this teaching. Indeed, the pragmatic test, stressed so much by revivalist Charles Finney - i.e. a doctrine is true if it produces the desired results, was an argument

frequently used to convince people of the validity of premillennialism.

The men of Niagara often spoke of the practical value of the pre-millennial doctrine. It was a common practice at the testimony meetings of Niagara for men to tell how they became premillennialists and how the discovery of this truth revolutionized their ministry.¹⁵⁴ Brookes relates one such testimony given at an early conference:

The testimony of Dr. Rufus Clark of Albany to the power and value of preaching the coming of the Lord was particularly gratifying "to them that love His appearing." About two years ago this well known and beloved brother was led to look into the Scriptures for himself concerning the personal and pre-millennial advent, and having become thoroughly convinced that such is the "blessed hope" set before us in the Gospel, straightway as a faithful witness he began to announce it boldly to His people. The result of a series of sermons on the subject was the most remarkable revival he has ever known.¹⁵⁵

Writing in the pages of Watchword and Truth, Niagara secretary W.J. Erdman tells of how another minister shared of the revolutionizing effects the acceptance of the premillennial doctrine had in his personal life and ministry:

Rev. Mr. Ayers, from Illinois, mentioned how he had wandered through the mazes of the higher criticism until he came to disbelieve in what he held dear and finally began to consider the question of leaving the ministry. But God was very gracious to him and sent the showers of his Holy Spirit upon his dry heart. He told of the refreshment of his spirit, his acceptance of premillennial truth, the full inspiration of the Bible, the coming back of his love for the Word, and his faith in all that he had previously held dear, and how he was continually preaching the doctrine of the premillennial coming of the Lord.¹⁵⁶

The teachers at Niagara put some of their greatest efforts into showing the innumerable positive effects of premillennial belief. The common tack was to list prominent missionaries and evangelists who were zealous in Christian activity precisely because they believed Christ was coming at any moment. They longed to save as many souls as possible (or the more doctrinaire

would say they were filling out the number of the elect); in preparation for Christ's coming. Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission and evangelist D.L. Moody were favourite examples.¹⁵⁷ Moody's words were often quoted:

I have felt like working three times as hard ever since I came to understand that my Lord was coming back again. I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a life-boat, and said to me, "Moody, save all you can." . . . This world is getting darker and darker; its ruin is coming nearer and nearer. If you have any friends on this wreck unsaved, you had better lose no time in getting them off.¹⁵⁸

In demonstrating the wholesome effects of premillennial doctrine it was shown that it was not only an incentive to evangelism, but also to missions, to holy living and to participation in many practical activities. Earnest belief in this doctrine was said to be the key to all other blessings and virtues for the church. No one expressed these sentiments more clearly than did E.P. Goodwin, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Chicago in the opening address of the 1886 Prophetic Conference.

Say what men say, one thing stands well attested through all the ages, that wherever this belief in the Lord's literal return has gotten possession of men's hearts, it has invariably exalted the authority of the Word of God, emphasized all the doctrines of grace, lifted high the cross of Christ, exalted the person and work of the Spirit, intensified prayer, enlarged beneficence, separated believers from the world and set them zealously at work for the salvation of men . . . no greater blessing could come to the church of our day than a revival of the ancient faith.¹⁵⁹

In his defence of premillennialism, Samuel Kellogg called this doctrine "a missionary eschatology" and he gave an impressive catalogue of noted premillennial Bible teachers, missionaries, and evangelists who were extremely active. These included H. Grattan Guinness, whose London Missionary Training Institute was sending out hundreds of missionaries, the St. Crischora Theological Institute in Switzerland which was doing the same in Europe, and

the Mildmay Mission to the Jews in London. He also referred to the work of the China Inland Mission under Hudson Taylor, the gifts to missions by the wealthy Robert Arthington, and the interest in missions shown by Professor Delitzsch and Professor Christlieb. Evangelists from both sides of the Atlantic who were also said to be "emphatic premillennialists" included Moody, Pentecost, Whittle, Hammond, Munhall, Lord Radstock, Varley, Haslam, Aitken, and orphan philanthropist George Mueller of Bristol.¹⁶⁰ Kellogg concluded his point with the statement: "The facts of this kind are so numerous and so well known, that the common platform representation of premillennialists as a body of enthusiasts waiting for the Lord in ascension robes, hopeless pessimists with neither faith nor interest in the redemption of the nations or in that of the practical part of the work which the Lord has committed to his church in the present time, ought to be abandoned forever."¹⁶¹

Certainly the power of the premillennial vision cannot be doubted. Even though it was pessimistic about this world, its heightened supernaturalism produced a strong sense of hope and optimism anchored in the world to come. It taught people to deny this world and live in light of the world to come. Moody's words were often quoted in premillennial circles:

When this truth of the Lord's second coming really takes hold of a man the world loses its grip on him. Gas stocks and water stocks and stocks in banks and railroads are of much less consequence to him now. His heart is free when he looks for the blessed appearing and kingdom of the Lord.¹⁶²

Premillennialism's anti-world, otherworldly emphasis, which was one of the features which most strongly attracted late nineteenth century

Americans to it, became for many in the movement its greatest weakness in that it produced a narrow sense of mission and actually discouraged a broad vision of Christian responsibility to society. The teaching of the Word was clear - the world was passing away; believers must not get involved lest they perish with the world; the man who did the will of God in saving eternal souls for the Kingdom would abide forever.¹⁶³

FOOTNOTES

1. Rausch, p. 54.
2. Truth 1(1875): 398-99.
3. Ibid., 9(1883): 453.
4. Cf. James H. Brookes, "Rapture of the Saints," ibid., 5(1879): 145-51; Rufus L. Perkins, "The Millennium: What is it?" ibid., 559-63; W.J. Erdman, "No Millennium Before the Second Coming of Christ," ibid., 6(1880): 513-18; Mrs. Geo. C. Needham, "The Antichrist," ibid., 7(1881): 174-82; John F. Kendall, "The Second Coming of Christ," ibid., 8(1882): 403-04; Nathaniel West, "The Resurrection," ibid., 408-12; Henry M. Parsons, "Dispensations," ibid., 9(1885): 460-66.
5. The Second Coming of Our Lord, Being Papers Read at a Conference Held at Niagara, Ontario, July 14-17, 1885 (Toronto: S.R. Briggs, Willard Tract Depository, n.d.).
6. Dollar, p. 28.
7. As cited by Sandeen in Roots, p. 148.
8. Premillennial Essays, p. 50.
9. Ibid., pp. 54-59.
10. Ibid., p. 57.
11. Ibid., p. 59.
12. Ibid., pp. 67-69.
13. Ibid., pp. 78-107.

14. Ibid., p. 78.
15. Ibid., p. 79.
16. Ibid., p. 97.
17. Ibid., p. 105.
18. Ibid., p. 193.
19. Ibid., p. 189.
20. Millard J. Erickson, Contemporary Options in Eschatology (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 62-65; Lorraine Boettner in Robert G. Clouse, ed. The Meaning of the Millennium (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 1977), pp. 117-21.
21. Premillennial Essays, p. 204.
22. Ibid., pp. 208-12.
23. Ibid., pp. 218-19.
24. Ibid., pp. 216-17.
25. Ibid., p. 223.
26. Ibid., pp. 222-35.
27. Ibid., p. 235.
28. See J.T. Cooper, "Return of the Israelites to their own land and the Restoration of them to their Kingdom," Truth 9(1883): 455-57.

29. Premillennial Essays, pp. 241-69.
30. Ibid., pp. 270-312.
31. Bibliotheca Sacra 36(1879): 777.
32. Premillennial Essays, p. 293.
33. Ibid., p. 299.
34. Nathaniel West, The Thousand Years, with a Forward by Wilbur M. Smith (Fincastle, Va.: Scripture Truth Book Co., n.d.), p. viii.
35. Premillennial Essays, pp. 479-521.
36. Ibid., p. 345.
37. Ibid., p. 349.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., p. 352.
40. Ibid., p. 356.
41. Ibid., p. 357.
42. Ibid., p. 362.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., pp. 356-68.

45. Ibid., p. 378.
46. Ibid., p. 379.
47. Ibid., p. 385.
48. Ibid., pp. 387-88.
49. Ibid., pp. 429-55.
50. Ibid., p. 9.
51. Bibliotheca Sacra 36(1879): 777.
52. Ibid.
53. Dollar, p. 41.
54. Ibid., p. 43.
55. See, for example, James Brookes, "Postmillennialism Illogical," Truth 12(1886): 262-65.
56. Prophetic Studies, p. 216.
57. Truth 18(1892): 631.
58. Ibid., 19(1893); 486-99; 510-16; 448-51; 479-85; 451-55; 475-79.
59. West's series began in the November 3, 1892 issue of Episcopal Recorder, the longest article being reprinted in pamphlet form under the title The Apostle Paul and the "Any-Moment" Theory (Philadelphia: James M. Armstrong, 1893). Peters replied in Truth 21(1895): 45-51, 93-101, 148-54, 206-13, 275-81, 338-41. See also West's contribution in Watchword and Truth 19(1897): 30-32.

60. Truth 21(1895): 166-71, 180. Erdman's "Queries" were immediately responded to at considerable length by C.I. Scofield, ibid.; 297-300.

61. Dollar, p. 43.

62. Ibid., p. 44.

63. Prophetic Studies, Preface.

64. J.M. Orrock, editor of the Adventist Messiah's Herald spoke, and papers by posttribulationists Nathaniel West, A.J. Gordon, and John Duffield were read.

65. Sandeen, Roots, p. 157.

66. Prophetic Studies, Preface.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid. p. 216.

69. Ibid., p. 18.

70. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

71. Ibid., p. 33. Pierson was not against culture per se, but only when it was "God-denying" and "God-defying."

72. Ibid., p. 32.

73. Ibid., p. 36.

74. Ibid. Pierson is here referring to Jean Francois Champollion, the French scholar who translated and interpreted the hitherto mysterious language of ancient Egypt as inscribed in hieroglyphics on the famous Rosetta Stone. In a similar way, history is said to unfold and interpret prophecy. Twentieth century Fundamentalists have often exhorted believers to read the daily newspaper and then look to the Bible. They will then see how current events unlock the secrets of the prophetic Word.

75. Ibid. Two other addresses which particularly dwell on accelerating apostasy and evil are those of A.J. Gordon, entitled "Modern Delusions" and W.E. Blackstone, entitled "Modern Missions" - *ibid.*, pp. 62-71 and pp. 194-204.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 16 and p. 18.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

84. *Ibid.*

85. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

87. Ibid., p. 148.
88. Ibid., p. 150.
89. Ibid.
90. For an overview of some of the attempts to identify the Antichrist see Walter K. Price, The Coming Antichrist (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), pp. 15-43, and Dreams, Visions and Oracles, pp. 27-39.
91. Premillennial Essays, pp. 204-21.
92. Truth 19(1893): 479-85.
93. Ibid.
94. In chapter three of this work we noted A.J. Gordon's minority historicist interpretation of prophecy. Gordon's views were not consistent with that of Brookes, Scofield, Gaebelien and the Darbyite way of understanding the Second Advent. Besides being a historicist, which was essential to the opinion that the Pope was Antichrist, Gordon held to the year-day theory, and to a single, posttribulational return of Christ after the fall of the papacy (Antichrist) - see A.J. Gordon, Ecce Venit (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1889), p. vi, pp. 110-11, pp. 204-205, and 246.
95. The books of Hal Lindsey have popularized this view in the past decade, particularly his The Late Great Planet Earth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), which according to the New York Times sold more copies than any other non-fiction book in the seventies. Neither Lindsey's scenerio nor his implicit prediction that Christ would return in the early 1980s is new. The final page of Prophetic Studies advertised a book of 600 pages length entitled Forty Coming Wonders. The table of contents reads like that of Lindsey's Late Great Planet or his Terminal Generation or his There's a New World Coming. The advertisement states Forty Coming Wonders was all "about the final dozen years (probably 1888 to 1900) preceding the end of this age, in fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation." Topics included - Coming Great Conflicts and Confederacy of Ten Nations; Covenant Between a Syrian Napoleon and the Jews for Seven Years; Great Religious Revivals and Ascension of Christians; the Latter-Day Wars, Famines,

Pestilences and Earthquakes; Fiery Ordeal of Britain and America; the Great Tribulation and Antichristian Persecution for Three and a Half Years; the Closing Struggle of Armageddon; the Second Advent of Christ and His Personal Reign Over the Nations of the Earth for a Thousand Years." Like modern-day Fundamentalist books of prophecy, this work is said to have fifty illustrations and six appendices on "the ending of this age about the end of this 19th century."

96. Prophetic Studies, p. 98.
97. Ibid., p. 99.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid., pp. 99-100.
100. Ibid., p. 100.
101. Ibid., p. 101.
102. Ibid., pp. 101-105.
103. Ibid., pp. 102-106.
104. Ibid., p. 104.
105. Lindsey, Late Great Planet Earth, pp. 104-110. Hollywood turned Lindsey's book into a movie in the late 1970s and large audiences viewed the "Omen" trilogy - films giving sensational accounts of the boyhood, youth, and in The Final Conflict, the manhood of Damien Thorn, the Satan-possessed Antichrist. The producers of these films have undoubtedly become wealthy by frightening millions of people with their shocking portrayal of endtime events. Hal Lindsey has been described as the richest latter-day prophet in history.
106. Prophetic Studies, p. 196.

107. Ibid., p. 37.

108. Ibid. Anthony Grant gave the Bampton lectures of 1843.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

111. Ibid., p. 29.

112. Other prominent Canadians participating in the Niagara conferences were Dr. Thomas Wardrope, one-time moderator of the Canadian Presbyterian Church; Rev. Robert Cameron, at first Baptist pastor in Brampton, Ontario and then in the late 1890s editor of The Watchword and The Watchword and Truth; and Dr. Elmore Harris and Dr. William Stewart. Canada's first Bible school, the Toronto Bible Training School (now Ontario Bible College) was established in 1894 by a group of Christian workers who met regularly for prayer and fellowship in the Walmer Road Baptist Church. Harris became the first president of the school and Stewart the first principal. Harris was one of the consulting editors of the Scotfield Reference Bible and was on the planning committee for the twelve volume series The Fundamentals. American-born clergymen associated with Niagara, who served Presbyterian churches in Canada for a time include Henry M. Parsons (Knox in Toronto), Samuel Kellogg (St. James Presbyterian in Toronto), and W.J. Erdman (stated supply in St. Catharines, Ontario). Jonathan Goforth (1859-1936) longtime Canadian Presbyterian missionary to China had a brief association with Niagara, having addressed the 1885 conference. Captain R. Moreton, former director of the English Mildmay Conference and for a time pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ontario presided over the 1890, 1891, and 1892 sessions of Niagara.

113. Rev. Canon Dyson Hague, "Maurice Scollard Baldwin," in Leaders of the Canadian Church, ed. William Bertal Heeney (Toronto: The Musson Book Co., 1918), p. 263.

114. Ibid., pp. 259-61.

115. Ibid., p. 261.

116. Prophetic Studies, p. 210.
117. Ibid., pp. 211-12.
118. Ibid., p. 37-38, p. 165, p. 214.
119. Ibid., pp. 201-202.
120. Ibid., p. 165.
121. Sandeen traces the millenarian tradition in the United States 1800 to 1878 in Roots, pp. 42-58 and pp. 90-102. See also Robert Kieran Whalen, "Millenarianism and Millennialism in America, 1790-1880" (Ph. D. dissertation, State University of New York, 1971).
122. Martin M. Marty, Righteous Empire (New York: The Dial Press, 1970), p. 180.
123. Marty writes regarding the social factors: "The shattering effects of the war, the trauma of strikes and financial panics in the 1870s and 1800s, the formation of an urban world with its apparently intractable problems - perhaps all these together led many men of good will to give up on the idea of preparing for the Kingdom or transforming the world" - ibid.
124. As cited by Whalen, p. 219.
125. Truth 13(1887): 208.
126. Ibid., 4(1878): 458.
127. Premillennial Essays, p. 8.
128. Pierson, Many Infallible Proofs, p. 26. See also W.J. Erdman, "The Supernatural The Safe Standpoint in the Study of the Sacred Scriptures," Truth 19(1893): 473-75.

129. Whalen, p. 252.

130. Bibliotheca Sacra 36(1879): 775. At least two Canadian church periodicals reviewed proceedings at the 1878 Prophetic Conference. The Evangelical Churchman (Anglican) in its November 14, 1878 issue listed names of participants connected with the Protestant Episcopal Church and expressed regret that the New York discussions were confined to those of premillennial persuasion and the brethren were not open to hear addresses from men who held opposing opinions. In three subsequent issues, the periodical carried Episcopalian Stephen Tyng's New York address - "Christ's Coming: Personal and Visible," *ibid.*, November 28, December 5, and December 12. A July 9, 1885 editorial was devoted to "Conventions at Niagara." The same issue announced the July 14-17, 1885 special Niagara Conference on the Second Coming as well as the regular Believers' Meeting for Bible Study to follow on July 23-30. A June 10, 1886 advertisement by the Queen's Royal Hotel of Niagara mentions the pavilion in which the Believers' Meetings for Bible Study were held. The Presbyterian Record of December, 1878 under its "Ecclesiastical News" section reviewed the New York conference.

131. George M. Marsden, The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 247, n.5. Canadian Presbyterians were rather slow in embracing premillennialism. The Presbyterian Record reviewed the five point declaration made at the prophetic conference of New York and stated that the meetings attracted a large number of ministers, chiefly Episcopalian and Presbyterian. The Record resumed that these premillennial ministers spoke in a private capacity and not as representatives of their churches. The article rather cynically comments: "The difficulty is to discover wherein consists the practical benefit of attacking special importance to this speculative article of belief" - The Presbyterian Record, December, 1878, p. 320. Premillennialism did catch on among a number of leading Canadian Presbyterians and no less a dignitary than Dr. Thomas Wardrope, one-time moderator of the Canadian Presbyterian Church participated in the Niagara meetings in the 1890s - for example, Truth 18(1892): 637 reports that Dr. Wardrope "gave a striking testimony in behalf of 'that blessed hope.'" Summaries of Wardrope's Niagara addresses appear regularly in Truth - see 19(1893): 502-09; 20(1894): 448-58; 21(1895): 371-77 and 395-400; 22(1896): 445-56 and 456-65. Henry M. Parsons undoubtedly influenced some Presbyterians to accept premillennialism during his ministry at Knox Presbyterian Church during the 1880s, as did Samuel Kellogg as pastor of St. James Presbyterian Church in Toronto from 1886 to 1892.

132. Sandeen, Roots, p. 152.

133. Wilt, pp. 122-23.
134. Sandeen, Roots, p. 163.
135. Ibid., p. 167.
136. Ibid. Sandeen points out that a survey of the book reviews in the Presbyterian and Reformed Review at the end of the nineteenth century shows that Princeton criticism of the millenarians was frequently tempered with appreciation when the authors under review fell in line with the Princeton theology, particularly the doctrine of verbal inspiration.
137. S.H. Kellogg, "Premillennialism: Its Relations to Doctrine and Practice," Bibliotheca Sacra 45(1888): 234-274.
138. Ibid., 253. Certainly James Brookes believed that the premillennialists were the true Calvinists. On one occasion he turned the tables on his Presbyterian brethren, whom he presumed were Calvinists and yet were castigating premillennialists. He wrote: "Surely a postmillennial Calvinist is a queer anomaly and a most illogical absurdity" - Truth 14(1888): 339.
139. Kellogg, "Premillennialism," 254-59.
140. Kellogg, "Premillennialism," 261. E.R. Craven's address "The Coming of the Lord in Relation to Christian Doctrine" in Premillennial Essays pp. 262-69 deals precisely with the question. A reviewer of this address, writing in Bibliotheca Sacra 36(1879): 776 observed: "In like manner our essayists have put at rest the objection that their doctrine is dishonouring to the Divine Spirit. They do not teach that the Spirit cannot bring the cause of Christ to a triumphant issue, but only that, in the plan of God, he will not do it."
141. Kellogg, "Premillennialism," 260.
142. Ibid., 265. Cf. C.K. Imbrie's paper "The Regeneration" (or "The Restitution of All Things"), in Premillennial Essays, pp. 108-73.

143. Whalen, p. 260. James Brookes saw his fellow Presbyterians' attack on premillennialism as a sign of their declension from true Calvinism - see his articles "Blind Leaders of the Blind" and "Decline of Presbyterianism" in Truth 14(1888): 337-40 and 345-46.

144. Prophetic conference speaker I.M. Haldeman, as cited by Weber, pp. 27-28.

145. Truth 4(1878): 505-06.

146. J. Wilbur Chapman, Another Mile and Other Addresses (New York: F.H. Revell, 1908), p. 9.

147. Robert Cameron, Scriptural Truth About the Lord's Return (New York: F.H. Revell, 1922), pp. 144-45.

148. Watchword and Truth 24(1902): 302. On a number of occasions James Brookes had to refute the criticism that the Second Coming was the only topic discussed at Niagara and that the brethren at the conference had fixed the day, or at least the year of the Lord's return - Truth 4(1878): 404 and 20(1894): 338.

149. As cited by Sandeen in Roots, p. 97.

150. Kellogg, "Premillennialism," 273-74.

151. II Thessalonians 1:7-9 (King James Version). Premillennialists (Fundamentalists and sectarians like the Jehovah's Witnesses) have frequently emphasized the judgment aspect of the Second Advent to such an extent that they appear to be vengeful. Jehovah's Witnesses' spokesman Robbie Robinson reflecting on the sect's 1981 district convention in Vancouver spoke of the judgment which would end society within the present generation. He said: "It will be like wiping off the top of a dirty table. All the filth and dirt will be removed and replaced with something wholesome" - The Vancouver Sun, July 11, 1981, p. 15.

152. Prophetic Studies, pp. 70-71.

153. Truth 21(1895): 318.

154. For example, in Truth 18(1892): 637 James Brookes relates: "In the evening a large number briefly stated how they had been led into the truth of our Lord's Pre-Millennial Advent, and among these Dr. Wardrop, [sic] Moderator of the Canadian Presbyterian Assembly, gave a striking testimony in behalf of 'that blessed hope.'" For Brookes' account of how he became a premillennialist, see Appendix B of this work.

155. Truth 4(1878): 403-04.

156. Watchword and Truth 20(1898): 283.

157. See, for example, Leander W. Munhall, The Lord's Return and Kindred Truth (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1888), pp. 52-54.

158. Dwight L. Moody, New Sermons, Addresses and Prayers (Chicago: J.W. Goodspeed, Publisher, 1877), p. 528.

159. Prophetic Studies, p. 14.

160. Kellogg, "Premillennialism," 270-72.

161. *Ibid.*, 272.

162. As cited by A.T. Pierson in Prophetic Studies, p. 31.

163. I John 2:17, paraphrased.

CHAPTER V

"THE WORLD PASSETH AWAY"

But was the Lord a social reformer? He refused to turn aside from His great work to interfere with the political or social questions of the day. He did not believe in saving the world by reforming it; He did believe in reforming it by saving it. Lead men to say, "Our citizenship is in heaven," Phil. 3:20, and "Good Citizenship" will take care of itself.

James H. Brookes, Truth 21(1895): 638.

I do not understand why we may not do our utmost for those who are in distress; why we may not study most carefully the economic conditions and present a cure for the ills which confront us today and menace our future so sorely; why we may not have all that is suggested by the writers on Social Topics, and yet at the same time hold to all that has made the Evangelical Church strong in the past, and for myself, I do. I would not sacrifice in the least the evangelical doctrines which have been the inspiration of my ministry and the joy of my life for twenty-five years, and I will allow no one to go beyond me in seeking to ameliorate the condition of the suffering and present a cure which may help to solve the problems which are on every side to be settled.

J. Wilbur Chapmen, Another Mile and Other Addresses (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), p. 16.

The above cited words of two leaders of the Niagara Bible Conference reflect two attitudes regarding Christian responsibility in an age of great social change. The one could be called a withdrawal stance characterized by fear and separation; the other a selective involvement stance, characterized by compassion and co-operation in activities of social uplift. Neither camp believed human efforts would finally solve all of man's problems; both believed the world system was doomed to pass away and that individual regeneration was of ultimate importance. Although both were pessimistic about the direction society was heading, the one group did not allow the sad state

of the world to paralyze efforts at reaching out to rescue and rehabilitate men in both body and soul.¹

The turbulent decades after the Civil War corroborated the premillennialists' pessimism regarding a world which was in the final stages of its death throes. These embattled believers found themselves reacting on two fronts. On the one hand they were fighting the new theological views which were stripping away the supernatural foundations of the old evangelical orthodoxy. They were also reacting to immense societal changes. Rapid urbanization brought a multitude of problems with it. The immigration of millions of foreigners (especially Roman Catholics), created suspicion and fear that traditional American values would be undermined. Frequent depressions and violent labor conflicts appeared to be leading the country into anarchy. All of these ordeals signalled only one thing - the old order was passing.

People at every level of society were affected by the rapid changes overtaking America, changes which brought with them an enormous sense of dislocation and bewilderment. Fundamentalists were not alone, nor unique in their fears and alarmist response to the ominous turn of events. Attempts were made by many groups to maintain some kind of security, order, and personal meaning during these trying times.²

In 1883 Henry George described the malaise of his time thus:

That the rapid changes now going on are bringing up problems that demand the most earnest attention may be seen on every hand. Symptoms of danger, premonitions of violence, are appearing all over the civilized world. Creeds are dying, beliefs are changing; the old forces of conservatism are melting away. Political institutions are failing, as clearly in democratic America as in monarchical Europe. There is a growing unrest and bitterness among the masses, whatever be the form of government, a blind groping for escape from conditions becoming unbearable.³

The Ordeals of Transition

The ecumenical Evangelical Alliance surveyed the conditions in America in the mid 1880s and listed the perils facing the nation. Problems associated with urbanization headed the list. Other perils included immigration, Romanism, Mormonism, the changing status of religion in the schools, socialism, and accumulated wealth.⁴

During the forty year period, 1860-1900, cities and towns in America grew at a phenomenal rate. The number of cities of eight thousand or more inhabitants increased from 141 to 547 and the proportion of town dwellers grew from a sixth of the nation's population to nearly a third. During this time span the population of Detroit and Kansas City increased fourfold, Memphis and San Francisco fivefold, and Cleveland sixfold. New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, although already large urban centres in 1860, had more than doubled in size by 1900. Fort Dearborn, incorporated as the village of Chicago in 1833 as a frontier outpost of seventeen houses was the fifth largest city in the world by the turn of the century with a population of nearly 1.7 million.⁵

1860 to 1900 was also the period of American history during which the United States was transformed from a predominantly agricultural to a manufacturing nation. Factories, with their long working hours, child labor, and frequently unsafe working conditions swallowed up large segments of the urban population. Urban ghettos with their deplorable housing conditions, unsafe food and water, and increasing crime rates made life nigh unbearable for millions of blue collar workers. Escape from the grim realities of the

workingman's day-to-day existence often took the form of drink, frequenting houses of prostitution, and engaging in other diversions which only tended to worsen his condition.

When strikes came, as they did in increasing measure in the last two decades of the century, clerical and often even social analysts saw the workingman's problem primarily as a moral one, rather than an economic one. There was little doubt about the character of the migrants. In a February 27, 1878 issue of the Congregationalist it was said of the wandering unemployed:

. . . they are profane, licentious, filthy, vermin-swarming thieves, petty robbers, and sometimes murderers, social pests and perambulatory nuisances; which require the immediate and stringent attention of the community. . . . We confess a strong feeling in favor toward the idea . . . that it might be well to revive for use in this connection the long obsolete whipping-post.⁶

Needless to say, the workingman, employed or not, was almost completely untouched by the Protestant church. "By the middle eighties," observes the historian of the period, "only a few Protestants were suggesting an explanation that later seemed obvious: that workingmen stayed away from church because the churches were indifferent or hostile to labor's most pressing demands."⁷ Indeed, although many churchmen were concerned about the lack of spiritual nurture among the working class, another viewpoint, expressed in the pages of the theological journal Andover Review considered it

. . . by no means a result of evil that the churches stand for what is respectable and even refined, nor within proper limits, that certain lines of social cleavage appear in the group of people in denominations and in the several churches. . . . Let the fact be recognized, then that as the church includes the better classes of society, it will be disliked by the worse classes who are yet outside.⁸

Many blamed the problem of the cities on the immigrant masses who settled

there. Between 1860 and 1900 about 14 million people arrived in America. In the large industrial centers of the country foreigners by birth or parentage comprised over two thirds of the population. After the 1880s most of the immigrants came from eastern or southern Europe and were Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, or simply had no religious affiliation at all. The immigrants congregated in the ghettos, maintained their own traditions and culture, refused to keep the Sabbath according to evangelical standards, sent their children to parochial schools and seemed to resist Americanization.

Fears of what this onslaught of immigrants might do to the country were expressed by spokesmen for a "pure" America - spokesmen like Social Gospel reformer Josiah Strong who felt that renegade Catholics, beset by poverty, made the best recruits to socialism and revolution.⁹ S.L. Loomis, in his 1887 city exposé entitled Modern Cities shared Strong's virulent suspicion of the foreign born and especially of the Catholic workingmen:

With some important exceptions, those who come from foreign lands, both Catholics and Protestants, bring with them most crude and imperfect notions of religious truth. No Christian culture lies behind them. They have never breathed a Christian atmosphere. Ideas with which all Americans, whether of pious parentage or not, have been familiar from childhood, are strange to them. . . . The whole method of our services, adapted to the cultured elements of our society, is so far above them that it fails to secure their interest and attention. When one of them strays into a church, the chances are that he finds nothing there for him.¹⁰

Labor conflicts, violent strikes, and depression hit urban America like three great earthquakes - one in each of the last three decades of the century. With the failure of the financial empire of Jay Cooke in 1873,

panic followed, violence broke out in the Pennsylvania coal mines, and unemployment spread across the country. Labor unions were growing desperate as a result of a series of defeats and Marxian socialism was beginning to win its first converts in the United States. By 1877 a nationwide railroad strike involved battles between workers and police, militia and federal troops. The year 1877 became a symbol of shock and of the possible crumbling of society.

There was a decrease of strife in the early 1880s, but by the middle of the decade an economic depression returned. Early in 1886 a series of large-scale strikes precipitated the infamous Haymarket affair. Police and strikers had been clashing at the McCormick harvester plant in Chicago. On May 4 a meeting of workers was held at the Haymarket Square. When police converged on the gathering, a bomb was thrown at them. In the resulting riot, eight Chicago policemen were killed and twenty-seven persons injured. A mood of hysteria swept religious and lay circles alike and the whole labor movement was labelled as being anarchistic.¹¹

The third crisis started in the spring of 1892 in the conflict between the new, enormous Carnegie Steel Corporation and its employees at the Homestead Mills near Pittsburgh. On July 5, 300 Pinkerton detectives battled with strikers. The state militia was called in to reassert control for the steel corporation and the mills were reopened with nonunion labor doing the work. In 1893 a serious panic again hit the nation, followed by unemployment and depression.

The strikes of 1894 were the most widespread of the previous two decades.

Of greatest repercussion was the Pullman strike. The Pullman employees were backed by the American Railway Union which declared a nationwide boycott on the company. Pullman cars were cut out of trains all over the country. The strike was finally thwarted by a sweeping injunction which sent its leaders to jail and federal troops to Chicago to put down any further resistance. The middle-class public was appalled. Much of the friendly attitude toward organized labor was lost in a blanket condemnation of the movement's "brutal selfishness." There was a deep-seated feeling among Americans that somehow the nation was being besieged by subversive forces from abroad and beset by perversity and greed from within. A qualitative change in outlook occurred within a short period of time.

Emotions that had come and gone in earlier times now stayed to dominate men's thoughts. Once roused, the sense of emergency was self-generating. Matters that previously would have been considered separate incidents, or even ignored, were seized and fit into the framework of jeopardy, each reinforcing the others as further proof of an imminent danger. By the logic of anxiety, worries became fears, mounting until they had reached a climax in 1896.¹²

Furthermore, the crises of these decades had forced clerical observers to seriously question their pat theories of earlier times.

Despite free government and free religion, class gulfs had somehow grown up, and in a period of intermittent labor warfare it was increasingly difficult to believe in the automatic, benevolent operation of Divine or Cosmic laws. First shocked out of their complacency into frenzied denunciation of labor uprisings, ministers were gradually beginning to search for solutions of new problems.¹³

Response of the Early Fundamentalists of Niagara

The Rhetoric of the Gospel Hymn

The rhetoric of the early Fundamentalist sermons, lectures, and periodic literature reveals a great deal about their hopes, aspirations, anxieties,

and fears. Additional insight into their attitudes can be gained by studying their hymnology. Many of the leaders of the Niagara movement - men like P.P. Bliss, D.W. Whittle, A.J. Gordon, and J. Wilbur Chapman wrote lyrics to some of the most widely sung gospel hymns of the late nineteenth century, hymns still sung in evangelical circles today.

Sandra S. Sizer, who has done an intensive study of the rhetoric of gospel hymns in the second half of the nineteenth century rightly observes that the lyrics of these songs represent the religious language of the period and a close analysis of them affords us a point of entry into the world of early Fundamentalism. Gospel hymns helped create a "social religion," a community based on likeness of feeling. Hymns became symbols of unity against evil and offered the comfort of heaven for personal sorrow and the hope of the New Jerusalem as the final solution to the dilemmas of a disintegrating, doomed world.¹⁴

The most popular and widely admired composer of gospel hymns associated with the early Bible conference days was Phillip P. Bliss. Bliss was one of the founding fathers of the Believers' Meeting for Bible Study, having helped initiate the first private meeting held near Chicago in 1875. This prolific writer of gospel hymns and tunes has been rated as next to Fanny Crosby in significance for American hymnody.¹⁵ The gifted musician met an untimely death in a train accident on December 29, 1876 when the bridge on which the Chicago bound "Pacific Express" on which Bliss and his wife were travelling collapsed. The train dropped to a stream seventy feet below, was demolished and caught fire. Bliss is said to have escaped through a

window, but returned to rescue his wife. Both perished in the flames.¹⁶

Ira D. Sankey, Moody's famous singing assistant, edited many hymnals during his long career as a musician (mid 1850s until his death in 1908). Sankey's renowned Sacred Songs and Solos, which in its numerous editions in the two decades at the end of the nineteenth century reportedly sold eighty million copies around the world,¹⁷ contains some ninety of Bliss's songs, many for which he not only wrote the lyrics, but also composed the music. The very first song in the hymnal is "Hold the Fort," with lyrics and music by Bliss.¹⁸ This hymn was inspired by a story told by Bliss's evangelist associate, Major D.W. Whittle (also a leader at Niagara), about Sherman's march to the sea. Thus a Civil War legend was transformed by a creative writer into one of the most popular evangelical hymns of the last quarter of the century.¹⁹

"Hold the Fort," together with Bliss's still popular "Dare to be a Daniel" graphically illustrate the fortress mentality, the "holding operation" stance, and the "stiff-upper-lip" attitude of many of the early Fundamentalists in the midst of troubled times. "Hold the Fort," as the title suggests, depicts the Christian forces on the defensive, waiting to be saved by the action of Jesus. The verse cited just beneath the title of the hymn is from the Book of Revelation, the words of Jesus to His church, "That which ye have hold fast till I come." The lyrics of the hymn are as follows:

Ho, my comrades! see the signal
 Waving in the sky!
 Reinforcements now appearing,
 Victory is nigh!

See the mighty host advancing,
 Satan leading on:
 Mighty men around us falling,
 Courage almost gone!

See the glorious banner waving!
 Hear the trumpet blow!
 In our Leader's name we'll triumph
 Over every foe!

Fierce and long the battle rages,
 But our help is near:
 Onward comes our great Commander,
 Cheer, my comrades cheer!

CHORUS:
 "Hold the fort, for I am coming,"
 Jesus signals still;
 Wave the answer back to heaven,
 "By Thy grace we will."²⁰

The "mighty host advancing" takes on the guise of "many giants great and tall" in the hymn "Daniel's Band," better known as "Dare to be a Daniel." The hosts of wickedness bring havoc upon those who do not dare to stand up for their evangelical convictions. Although the imagery of this hymn, like that of "Hold the Fort" is still mainly passive - i.e. the faithful are called on to "stand alone," to "have a purpose firm," and "hold the gospel banner high," there is also in the last two verses of the song a suggestion of aggressiveness, of going out to meet the enemy, and the promise of victory:

Many giants, great and tall,
 Stalking through the land,
 Headlong to the earth would fall,
 If met by Daniel's band!

Hold the gospel banner high!
 On to victory grand!
 Satan and his host defy,
 And shout for Daniel's Band!²¹

Undoubtedly the early Fundamentalists identified with songs which spoke of the beleaguered minority about to be overwhelmed by the host of theological, ethical, and social aberrations emerging in late nineteenth century America. Indeed, the rhetoric of the songs may well have fuelled many of the anxieties they sought to allay, for the believer was pictured as a victim beset by sinister forces seeking to destroy him. Sizer observes that the first important strategic move of the gospel hymn rhetoric of this period was to portray the human condition as that of a passive victim:

The solution to the difficulty is equally passive: to rest in some safe place. Those who are saved hide "in the hollow of God's hand," in the bosom of Jesus, or in the cleft of the Rock of Ages; they find safety in a lifeboat which lands at a quiet shore or harbor; the journey ends at "home."²²

A number of Bliss's hymns aptly illustrate passivity. "Let the Lower Lights be Burning" portrays people tossed about by the forces of chaos being rescued and brought into the circle of salvation by another passive force, the "lights along the shore."²³ However, the image of the lifeboat, as seen in Bliss's hymn of the same title, is a little more of an active one, speaking of an actual rescue operation of sinners, taking them off the sinking vessel of this world. The passivity here is in relation to the vessel - nothing is done for it; indeed nothing can be done, for it is beyond repair.

Evangelist D.L. Moody popularized what has become known as the "lifeboat ethic" in the description of his calling - "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a life-boat, and said to me, 'Moody,

save all you can."²⁴ In the Sankey hymnal, Bliss's "Life-Boat" song is prefaced by the following anecdote, presumably told by Bliss as an introduction to his song:

We watched the wreck with great anxiety. The life-boat had been out some hours, but could not reach the vessel through the great breakers that raged and foamed on the sandbank. The boat appeared to be leaving the crew to perish. But in a few minutes the captain and sixteen sailors were taken off and the vessel went down.

"When the life-boat came to you, did you expect it had brought some tools to repair your old ship?" I said.

"Oh no! she was a total wreck. Two of her masts were gone; and if we had only stayed a few minutes mending her, we must have gone down, sir."

"When once off the old wreck and safe in the life-boat, what remained for you to do?"

"Nothing sir, but just to pull for the shore."²⁵

The lyrics of "Life-Boat" are as follows:

Light in the darkness, sailor, day is at hand!
See o'er the foaming billows fair Haven's land.
Dear was the voyage, sailor, now almost o'er;
Safe within the life-boat, sailor, pull for the shore.

Trust in the life-boat, sailor; all else will fail:
Stronger the surges dash and fiercer the gale.
Heed not the stormy winds, though loudly they roar;
Watch the "Bright and Morning Star," and pull for the shore.

Bright gleams the morning, sailor, uplift the eye;
Clouds and darkness disappearing, glory is nigh!
Safe in the life-boat, sailor, sing evermore, -
"Glory, glory, hallelujah!" Pull for the shore.

CHORUS:

Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore!
Heed not the rolling waves, but bend to the oar;
Safe in the life-boat, sailor, cling to self no more!
Leave the poor old stranded wreck and pull for the shore.²⁶

In evangelical hymnody the shore symbolized journey's end - heaven, or if one were fortunate, the bliss of the Second Advent. Many of the gospel

hymns of the nineteenth century focused on the theme of Christ as the believer's refuge or haven from the storms of life.²⁷ However the new feature in the latter part of the century was that not only did the authors of the gospel hymns use such language more extensively, but they also developed a genre of hymns which described the final, ultimate refuge - premillennial hymns speaking of the Second Advent, heaven, and eternity with God in "the land that is fairer than day."²⁸ Out of 750 selections in Sankey's Sacred Songs and Solos, 159 (in excess of twenty per cent) deal with death, the Second Advent, heaven, and the eternal state.²⁹

Many of Bliss's songs in Sankey's hymnal deal with eschatological themes. Some representative titles are "When Jesus Comes," "That Will be Heaven For Me," "There's a Light in the Valley," "The Golden City," "To Die is Gain," and "Only a Few More Years."³⁰

The early Fundamentalists of Niagara and all Bible and prophecy conference attenders of that era, along with most other American evangelicals sang the same songs - the gospel hymns discussed in this chapter and others similar to them. As we have noted, these songs emphasized unity against evil and the hope of heaven. They were also modes of address emphasizing prayers of supplication, testimony, and exhortation. An upswing of interest in prayer, testimony, and exhortation occurred in the Finney era of revivals in upstate New York in the mid-1820s, although such practices were common in the earlier camp meetings, as well as in Pietism and Methodism. The net result of this widespread singing of hymns about heaven and sharing in songs of prayer, testimony, and exhortation, was the creation of a "community of

intense feeling, in which individuals underwent similar experiences (centering on conversion) and would henceforth unite with others in matters of moral decision and social behavior."³¹ Thus late nineteenth century Fundamentalists were "bound together by their common inner experience, an experience which would provide strength in all worldly trials and eventually victory by nonworldly, apolitical means, coming Home together."³²

Through the gradual shift to freewill Arminian theology, the spiritual experience evangelical Christians sang about was open to all. The troubled unbeliever, weighed down by the chaotic, changing conditions surrounding him and looking for a fixed point of reference, for light amidst the gathering gloom, needed only to look to Jesus. The message was simple and clear, and at least at a personal level, it offered a great measure of security and hope for anxious souls living in troubled times. The believers joyously sang, "The Light of the world is Jesus."

No darkness have we who in Jesus abide,
The Light of the world is Jesus.
We walk in the Light when we follow our Guide,
The Light of the world is Jesus.

Ye dwellers in darkness, with sin-blinded eyes,
The Light of the world is Jesus.
Go, wash at His bidding, and light will arise,
The Light of the world is Jesus.

No need of the sunlight in heaven, we're told,
The Light of the world is Jesus.
The Lamb is the Light in the City of Gold,
The Light of the world is Jesus.

CHORUS:

Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me.
Once I was blind, but now I can see;
The Light of the world is Jesus.³³

Much of the music we have considered has pictured the world as a hopelessly wrecked vessel and believers are told not to waste their time trying to repair it. The Christian's main concern is not repair, but rescue - rescue of souls, getting individuals off the sinking vessel and into the life-boat. When the individual is safe in the life-boat, he is urged, in the words of Bliss's hymn to "leave the poor old stranded wreck and pull for the shore." The Christian's primary task in this world is not to mend the vessel, but in the words of Fanny Crosby's still-popular hymn, to "rescue the perishing."

The imagery of the gospel hymns notwithstanding, the early Fundamentalists did not follow an entirely uniform pattern of response to the social problems and needs of society. In actual practice, the men associated with Niagara and the prophecy conference movement varied from a position of fear, separation, and passivity to one of concern, compassion and involvement vis-à-vis the wrecked vessel of this world. Their response is seen in two opposite positions - one almost totally negative (like many of the hymns suggest), and the other positive.

Fear and Separation

As was noted in the previous chapter there was a vocal group of men associated with the Niagara Bible Conference and the early prophetic conference movement who pushed the cultural pessimism of premillennialism to its logical extreme. Their pessimism and fear was born out of a belief that the worst was coming just as the prophetic Scriptures foretold. This belief drove them to be separate from the world, for it was soon to pass

away; on the other hand, souls were eternal, and soul saving was of paramount importance to them. This group, as represented by James Brookes, William Blackstone, Arno Gaebelin, and C.I. Scofield took an extremely negative stance toward culture (it was ungodly), politics (all human government was doomed to failure), and efforts at social reform (individual regeneration was the only thing that really mattered).

James Brookes had an extremely low view of politics. He insisted that political issues never be mentioned from the pulpit. He discouraged Christians from becoming involved in politics, even going so far as to suggest that those who were dead to the world and alive to Christ should avoid the polling booth because "dead men do not vote."³⁴

Very early in his ministerial career, Brookes articulated his views on the pulpit politician. In an 1856 lecture entitled "The Life of Dr. Nettleton" the young pastor stated of the noted evangelist:

He did not then present to the world, as is the case in all portions of our country, the sad and shocking spectacle of the sacred pulpit turned into a political rostrum, from which savage denunciations and fierce harangues are uttered to stir up strife, and lead men's thoughts away from the contemplation of heavenly and Divine themes. He felt that the Bible presented subjects enough to occupy his time and challenge the mightiest efforts of his intellect, and that the one business of ministers as ministers is simply to present the message of God to a perishing world.

He saw, as doubtless you have seen, as certainly I have seen, that when preachers lose the spirit of their station and descend to dabble in the mud-pool of politics, they invariably get dirtier than any other men.³⁵

Brookes' views on the mixing of politics and religion were severely tested by his difficulties in the Second Presbyterian Church of St. Louis during the Civil War. He was a Southerner (born in Pulaski, Tennessee)

living in a Southern border state (Missouri) and his sympathies were with his friends in the South, even though he was opposed to their secession.³⁶

Yet Brookes refused to take sides during the war and refused to pray in public for the success of one army as over against another. He only prayed that the war might cease. The "pillars of the church" were extremely displeased at their pastor's neglect to pray more specifically. As soon as Brookes heard of their disapproval, he immediately resigned from the church. His biographer notes: "Before the war, during the war, and ever after the war - from his first sermon to his last - Dr. Brookes held firmly that the affairs of God and the affairs of Caesar should be unalterably separated."³⁷

Two other incidents from Brookes' early ministry reveal his apolitical stance. His church (Sixteenth and Walnut Street Church) was cut off from the Northern Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and, along with others, formed the Independent Synod of Missouri. The issue causing separation was the political action of the five Assemblies, from 1861 to 1865 inclusive, in which Christian patriotism was called for in supporting the Federal Government and the Constitution. Dr. Charles Hodge and fifty seven others entered their protest stating:

. . . we deny the right of the General Assembly to decide the political question, to what Government the allegiance of Presbyterians, as citizens, is due, and its right to make that decision a condition of membership in our church. That the paper adopted by the Assembly does decide the political question just stated, in our judgment, is undeniable.³⁸

The Declaration and Testimony of September 2, 1865, of which Brookes was one of the signers, was a pledge by the dissidents to use their best endeavor to bring back the church of their fathers to her ancient purity and integrity.³⁹

Later, Brookes wrote a paper, unanimously adopted by the session of his own church in which it was affirmed "(we are) determined to know neither North nor South in the Church of God; refusing to consult our natural inclinations in seeking to promote the interests of His Kingdom; and anxious to avoid even the appearance of being controlled by political prejudices or sectional sympathies in our association with other Christians."⁴⁰

Another incident in which Brookes freely spoke his conviction occurred shortly after the General Assembly of 1864 condemned slavery and the Louisville Presbytery dissented. Brookes defended the presbytery. He protested against the use of the words "evil," "guilt," and "sin" in connection with slavery and designation of slavery as a source of "rebellion, bloodshed and all manner of crimes."⁴¹ Brookes did not defend slavery; in fact, he protested against it. However he felt that the action of the General Assembly went too far and was contrary to Scripture. The church was to avoid politics and not make pronouncements of a political nature. The one business of the church and its ministers, as Dr. Nettleton so clearly had shown, was simply to present the message of God to a perishing world.

James Brookes maintained this attitude to the end of his life and was very free in sharing his views on this matter with others, particularly in the pages of his periodical, The Truth. For example, in 1880 the editor expressed sorrow at seeing another Christian "engage actively in politics, for the result is nearly always disastrous to the interests of the soul, and in so far, to the cause of Christ." It would be best if children of God would keep aloof from "the whole defiling scene."⁴² In his 1885 "Conference Notes"

Brookes declared the wreck of all human empire and the utter failure of all human government.⁴³

In an 1890 article entitled "Preachers and Politics" Brookes scoffed at the Reform League organized by the ministers of New York to purify politics. In his opinion, preachers who "crawl into the sewer of politics to purify the polls" would probably come out as impure as those they sought to purge.⁴⁴ Writing in 1894, in a book which was to see many editions - "God Spake All These Words," Brookes observed:

There is no such thing as patriotism enjoined in the New Testament. With the exception of love for his "kinsman according to the flesh," expressed by the apostle Paul, there is nothing said of the special love, which Christians are to cherish for their own country, nor is there any rule to direct them how they are to discharge the duties of political office, nor how to vote. Submission to rulers is all that is required.⁴⁵

Brookes did not practice what he preached, for he did not really remain uninvolved politically. Although comments on social, economic and political questions were not the main thrust of The Truth, ~~the~~ editor (and other contributors) made more than just an occasional reference to them. The tone of these references was usually alarmist and the observations almost always negative in character.

The main theme of Brookes' social comment was that the world was getting worse and worse. Soaring statistics of crime, divorce, prostitution, and alcohol consumption were given in The Truth. Articles describing the increasingly appalling conditions in society began to appear quite regularly beginning in the 1880s.⁴⁶ Growing alarm at how the decadent world was affecting the church can be traced in numerous articles. For example in one entitled "What is the Church?" the editor warns against believing the devil's lie that

the world is growing better. Brookes urges believers to separate themselves from rationalism, worldly partnerships, reading the Sunday newspapers, and other like sins, citing the words of Dr. Howard Crosby in his conclusion.

Crosby states:

We may not cure this dreadful (aforementioned) evil, but we may ourselves avoid it and its doom. We may look to ourselves and to our families, that we go not with the multitude of Christians to do evil and perish in the hour when Christ shall come as a thief to their dismay.⁴⁷

This sense of futility reached a point of despair by the early 1890s.

In an 1893 article entitled "Where is the Church?" Brookes lamented:

. . . it is useless to attempt an arrest of the descending torrent; it is madness to talk of the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline to stay the evil. . . . The church has not at all succeeded in converting the world, but the world has almost accomplished its work of converting the church. . . . But so it is, and so it will be unto the end of the age, for "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." The description of the last days given in the inspired Word, is a vivid picture of our own passing days.⁴⁸

"Notes by the Way," a rather lengthy column of editorial comment on a variety of topics was added to Brookes' periodical in 1893. In it, the editor frequently referred to the decadent conditions in church and society, although the main recurring theme was the damnation of the higher critics. The May, 1894 "Notes by the Way" is representative of the mood and tone of this wing of early Fundamentalism. Editorial comments are made under the following headings: "Is the World Growing Better?" in which Brookes reports on the number of prostitutes in St. Louis - 3,300 i.e. "one vile woman to 150 of the inhabitants." "A Leak in the Methodist Boat" and "Primitive Methodists Are Sinking" bemoans the inroads of higher criticism in these two denominations. "Man's Fall a Fable" reports on the Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott's

having become "a run-mad Evolutionist of the Drummond School." "Higher Criticism's Change in the Bible" and "Those Who Help Higher Criticism" derides the propositions of "the Higher Critical or Destructionist School." "Growth of Socialism" reflects on "the astonishing increase of Socialism in Germany," in which we may see "portents of anarchy, lawlessness, violence, the overthrow of government and society, and the triumph of infidelity."⁴⁹

The vehemence with which Brookes wrote and spoke sometimes revealed a deep-seated hatred of those who denied the faith as he taught it and especially of the higher critics. Speaking at the first student conference at Northfield, Massachusetts in 1886, Brookes solemnly warned the young men present about the wiles of professors who would deny the inspiration of the Scriptures. His feelings of animosity peaked when he said:

If I could see you young men permeated with this thought of the verbal inspiration of the scriptures, I should have more hope of the future. . . . (The words of the Bible) are the words of Jesus. If you can't believe them as such, young men, give up your faith! Give up your faith, I say, and pass on to judgment and hell! I'm tired to death at hearing these poor worms of the dust sit in judgment on their Lord and Master Jesus Christ!⁵⁰

A vengeful spirit shone through other statements made by the president of Niagara. For example, he urged Protestants to "cease from the supreme folly of higher criticism, and evolution, and feeble negations, and . . . speak with authority as the Master did." They should determine like Paul not to know anything, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified for if they do not, "they must perish, and they ought to perish."⁵¹

A study of some of the major articles and summaries of addresses given at Niagara reveals once again a mood of suspicion, fear, separation, and

condemnation when societal issues are discussed. Republican interests could only be furthered when Rev. Joshua Denovan told the Niagara Conference that the American system was "very much in the grasp of millionaires and rings of monopoly, of Rome and Rum."⁵² Denovan spoke further of "the utter failure of all human government" reported Brookes in the "Conference Notes" of 1885. "Of course the optimists will savagely attack his argument," concluded the editor, "but the worst thing about it is that it is true."⁵³

When political opinions were expressed by these early Fundamentalists, they seemed to reflect the conventional slogans of the day. Mormons practiced polygamy and exploited human passions. The Catholics and the Democrats were seen as agents of the Pope. The demon rum, the producers of which were buying off the legislators of the nation, was destroying the nation. Labor leaders and the striking masses were greedy revolutionaries. Socialists were anarchists. Much of what they said "was highly stylized and could have been summarized under such headings as 'Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion', which played a notorious role in the election of 1884, when a supporter of the Republican James G. Blaine attributed these interests to the Democrats."⁵⁴

That there was need of the reform of politics was readily admitted by Brookes and his associates, but they were not about to stoop down and attempt it, or as a later Fundamentalist said, they were "not to clean out the stables, but to redeem the individual man and woman."⁵⁵ In 1890, Brookes observed: "That the primary elections in our principal cities is in the hands of rum sellers and their victims, the hoodlums, dead beats, and party tools, is admitted by all."⁵⁶ How could one in any sense be

optimistic (Carlyle's true definition of optimism "as a fool's way of looking at things" being approved by Brookes), when such deplorable conditions existed? Indeed, exclaimed the editor

. . . it is notorious that an arrogant Plutocracy governs the country, that public office from that of President down to that of constable is the purchase of bribery, that the unprincipled wretches, bought and sold like hogs, who control the primaries, have the nominating power of Congressmen, Mayors, and even of Judges, and that corruption runs riot, while the Government is called to face Anarchism in the North and the Negro problem in the South. Apart from what God may choose to do, the outlook is far from hopeful to any man of brains.⁵⁷

Brookes had a low view of the great numbers of working people and lower class citizens of the nation whom he called "the debased masses."⁵⁸ His view regarding the labor conflicts hitting America in the 1800s and 90s was plainly set forth in 1891.

. . . let those who whistle against the wind of the gathering tempest go down among the labouring classes, as they are called, or consult any intelligent builder or contractor he may chance to meet, and he will soon learn how vindictive is the feeling of the working men against the "aristocrats," and especially against the church. The great mass of them belong to "Unions" that rule them with a rod of iron, and they quit work at a moment's notice from the tyrant that controls them, like unthinking machines. They demand and receive ten hours of pay for eight hours service, the extra two hours are not spent with their families, or in self-improvement, as many believe, but in groggeries to drink and gamble, and blurt out their obscenity, and profanity, and hatred of the rich. There is no occasion for an uprising now, but let a time of real financial distress come upon the land, and no man's life or property will be safe, except under the protection of soldiers, and not even then in a Republican government.⁵⁹

It is clear that Brookes sided with capital and not with labor in the labor disputes of that era. In an 1895 article on socialism (a term synonymous in Brookes' mind with lawlessness, anarchy, and infidelity), the editor exclaimed that the employer, so often envied and hated, probably

endured ten times the amount of toil and anxious care known to the common laborer. How can the Socialist suppose that nobody works, except those engaged in manual labor or that the land belongs to the people as a whole, "however lazy, vicious and worthless"? Furthermore, he asks:

Does brain work count for nothing, and are we to leave out of the question the economy, frugality, industry, self-denial, strict attention to business, not for eight hours, but for twelve hours, for sixteen hours a day, that were necessary to acquire a competence? . . . it is nonsense to speak of such as these (laborers) as the only "working men," or of the wealth "which they alone produce."⁶⁰

Nineteenth century evangelicals held high the values of individualism, industry, and practicality. The Christian life began with the conversion of the individual sinner, was expressed in acts of personal piety, and exemplified by diligence in business - i.e. the Lord's business of winning souls. It was only natural for evangelical churchmen to identify with those groups in American society which embodied most fully in the secular world the same ideals of individualism, activism, and practicality. Thus in the immediate post-Civil War era, the connections between the evangelical church and the business community were most obvious.⁶¹ Evangelical churches tended to be situated in sections of the city inhabited by wealthy and middle-class citizens who provided most of the membership. The newfound wealth of the numerous church members engaged in business, under a proper sense of stewardship, could be channeled to evangelical institutions and church programs aimed at the conversion of the heathen at missionary outposts in foreign lands and in mission halls and rescue missions in slum areas at home. James Findlay observes that "businessmen and the evangelicals saw eye to eye not only because they thought alike but also because their economic interests

coincided." He adds: "While much that they did together was constructive, economic dependency made it difficult for evangelical leaders to criticize the business community, even if they so desired, in any terms other than through judgments on personal morality and individual actions taken in the business world."⁶² Evangelicals tended to ignore or were unable to come to grips with the deep-seated institutional problems associated with urbanization, industrialization, and business-labor relations.

Not only did Brookes and likeminded leaders of Niagara refrain from becoming involved in practical measures to improve the lot of the socially underprivileged, they were very critical of those who were involved. All such efforts were seen as substitutes for the message of salvation, which was really all people needed. There seemed to be no concern for a man's temporal welfare - only his eternal one. With heaven secured, the poor and disenfranchized could endure their earthly woes. The president of Niagara affirmed:

Well would it be if our ministers could be persuaded to stand aloof from this poor (socialistic) substitute for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The true way of helping the "working man," as he is called, is to help him to the cross, for then is his condition really improved, and the ills he is called to bear, with the whole race, he can endure in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection and a happy immortality.⁶³

Brookes had negative words to say about public education as well. It had dismally failed to make men good and reform society. Schools abounded in America, but crime and wickedness abounded the more. Indeed, education only "gives the scoundrel greater facilities for the accomplishment of his nefarious purposes, and this is all it does for the unregenerate."⁶⁴ Knowledge may be power, but it was not redemption and surely it must grieve God

"to see His own people so often turning from His own ordained means for the salvation of a ruined world, and resorting to the useless contrivances of human invention."⁶⁵

Brookes had no sympathy with the Social Gospel movement which he called the "latest fad" to have descended from the pulpit. He feared that the Social Gospel and such novelties as "Good Citizenship Day" which the movement was advocating would take the place of the "old fashioned gospel of God's grace."⁶⁶

In one of the last articles Brookes wrote for The Truth before his death, the editor once again reviewed the problems of the age. The article was basically a summary of another under the same title written by Canon Farrar, Dean of Canterbury. Seven problems of the age were discussed. There was the enormous growth of wealth among the few alongside the abject poverty of the many; the abnormal growth of great cities and the accompanying horrid conditions this created, particularly in the slums; there was the unparalleled growth of population, with most of the increase coming from among the slum dwellers. Strikes could at any time unleash thousands of unemployed workers upon society with devastating effects. The fourth problem was the increase of the dangerous elements in society such as paupers, with the growing trend toward crime. Another bad omen of the day was the deficiency of adequate charity, with less and less money being given by the citizenry for works of charity to the sick and the poor. Furthermore, the growth of democracy, the power of the working man, the demands of the Socialists and of the independent labor party were "ominous signs of the times." Lastly, the worst

omen of all (in the Dean's estimate), was the decay of faith and growth of agnosticism.⁶⁷

One would think that using this platform of Farrar's perceptive analysis of the condition and needs of society, the Niagara president would provide some in-depth editorial comment on these matters. Indeed, at the beginning of the article Brookes states that the Dean's discussion of the problems and perils of the ages was "worthy of serious attention." We look in vain for this serious attention. Instead, brushing away the first six grave social problems mentioned and picking up on Farrar's last point on the decay of faith, Brookes concludes his article by criticizing the Dean. We learn that this apparently good, concerned Christian leader has "gone over to the infidel host of the Higher Critics" and because of this, states Brookes, there is "no man living, who has done more to bring about this decay of faith than the Dean of Canterbury himself."⁶⁸ Later in the year, writing in his "Notes by the Way" column concerning social reforms, the editor again judges everything by the touchstone of his own theological interpretations and we learn that:

All benevolent and philanthropic and ecclesiastical plans and schemes, that sit in judgment upon the decisions of the Lord Jesus Christ, and rise above, or beyond, or contrary to the inerrant word of God, must fail and ought to fail. The condition of man can not be improved except by the truth, and the truth is contained in the Scriptures.⁶⁹

Other men from the Niagara guard followed Brookes in this extremely negative, pessimistic view of society and culture. William Blackstone contended that "the triumphs of art and science, the progress in inventions, discoveries, etc., by no means argue an increase in godliness."⁷⁰ The

world by wisdom or philosophy or science falsely so called can never find out God, for no matter "how refined and polished is their garb or the delicacy with which they may be set forth, still they are only the poisonous deceptions of him who can appear as 'an angel of light.'"⁷¹

The growing social discontent of the day was proof to these premillennialists that their eschatology was right. In a chapter entitled "Signs of Christ's Speedy Coming" Blackstone listed as fulfilment of Scriptural prophecy numerous signs of Christ's imminent return. The first sign was the prevalence of travel and knowledge. Railways and steamers fulfilled Daniel 12:4 - "Many shall run to and fro," and the unprecedented educational facilities and endless flow of information via newspapers and books fulfilled the other part of Daniel's prophecy - "and knowledge shall be increased." The perilous times in which they were then living was another sign of the end - pestilence, famine, earthquakes and other natural disasters; political and social upheavals like those caused by nihilism, socialism, communism, and anarchy; and the distress of nations as seen in the widespread arming for war. Other signs were the growth of Spiritualism, Christian Science, and Theosophy; apostasy in the churches; world-wide evangelism (in fulfilment of Matthew 24:14); the vast accumulation of riches in the hands of a few rich men (cf. James 5:1 and 8); and the Zionist movement of Jews back to the land of their fathers.⁷²

Blackstone spoke at the International Prophetic Conference of 1886 and like other speakers before him informed the large audience of a host of ills then rampant in society - i.e. the spread of the ruinous liquor trade, the

growth of communism, socialism, and nihilism all of which were evils dreaded not only by the proto-Fundamentalists, but by virtually all conservative, middle-class Americans. While others feared these developments and didn't know what to make of them, Blackstone and his Fundamentalist friends knew the reason for them - Jesus had painted precisely such a picture for the endtime. He said that only a few would be saved and the rest of mankind would go to ruin. We must dispell the illusion that the world was getting better, insisted Blackstone. No, "the whole world lieth in the wicked one" (I John 5:19).⁷³

The influential C.I. Scofield also imbibed Brookes' negativism regarding this world, "which passeth away." We receive an insight into his thinking from the compilation of answers Scofield gave to questions sent over the years to Moody Bible Institute's Record of Christian Work as well as to Scofield's Bible Correspondence course. In answer to a general question on the relation of the believer to the present world system and politics the noted Bible expositor states that Christians had to make a distinction between the world of men i.e. humanity for which Christ died, and the world system "organized under Satan in its forms social, political and commercial." To Scofield it seemed clear that the Christian could take little part, if any, in schemes for the improvement of the unregenerate world, for the whole scene was one awaiting judgment. Jesus did works of mercy and so the believer today, motivated by love might do such deeds as save his neighbors from the open bar room. But love was the key factor. "It is this relation of love, rather than of citizenship or participation in the ambitions and

rewards of political movements and reform movements that governs the conduct of believers."⁷⁴

In answer to the question, "Is not part of the mission of the church to correct the social evils of our day?" Scofield was entirely negative. Christ's only response to the terrible social problems of His day - slavery, intemperence, prostitution, unequal distribution of wealth, and oppression of the weak by the strong was to preach regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Thus Scofield concludes: "The best help a pastor can bring to the social problems of his community is to humble himself before God, forsake his sins, receive filling with the Holy Spirit, and preach a pure gospel in tender love."⁷⁵

Arno Gæbelein had an even more negative view. He saw social reform as one of the wiles of the Devil. Writing in his Our Hope periodical he informed believers: "The world, to which we do not belong, can do its own reforming without our help. Satan, I doubt not, wants to reform his world a little, to help on the deception that men do not need to be born again. Our business is regeneration and that is better than reformation. That is for eternity as well as for time."⁷⁶ Another premillennialist expressed the same sentiments even more boldly:

Satan would have a reformed world, a beautiful world, a moral world, a world of great achievement. . . . He would have a universal brotherhood of man; he would eliminate by scientific method every human ill, and expel by human effort every unkindness; he would make all men good by law, education and social uplift; he would have a world without war. . . . But a premillennialist cannot cooperate with the plans of modern social service for these contemplate many years with graduate improvement through education as its main avenue for cooperation, rather than the second coming of Christ.⁷⁷

Thus the Fundamentalist rhetoric "became persuasive for dealing at a cosmic

level with what seemed an impossible set of social, political, and economic circumstances."⁷⁸

In the midst of all of the immense social problems besetting late nineteenth century America the early Fundamentalists of the Brookes, Blackstone, Scofield, and Gaebelein school felt no responsibility to apply Christianity in any other than in a personal, individualistic, soul-saving sense. Their real concerns in the sphere of ethics were for individual purity and separateness from the ~~very~~ culture which needed the infusion of moral values. What they saw to be the really significant social issues as far as believers were concerned were questions like "Should Christians Attend the Theatre?"⁷⁹ "What Christians Read" was another great concern to Brookes and his friends in the Bible conference movement.⁸⁰ We are struck by the deep concern expressed in a letter sent to The Truth on behalf of the pastors and members of a large number of churches. According to this submission, the great enemies of which the church had to beware were "Card-Playing, Dancing, Theatre-Going."⁸¹ One is struck by the singular lack of ability to discriminate between the comparatively harmless and the absolutely heinous in some of James Brookes' editorial observations in "Notes by the Way." For example, not only in the same column, but in the same paragraph the editor writes of three women being brutally murdered, a state senator being "instantly murdered in bed by a coarse, ugly and drunken harlot" and there are "more young men and women on bicycles, on horseback and in carriages, hurrying out to the Parks on the Lord's Day, than can be found in all the churches put together." The column concludes:

The theatres are in full blast every Lord's Day evening, and attended by vast crowds of respectable members of society. The Sunday newspapers, greatly enlarged, have by far the biggest circulation of the week; and in every conceivable way the overwhelming majority, certainly ten to one, express their undisguised contempt for God and His Word. So it is elsewhere throughout the whole country; and "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: Shall not by soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Jer. 5:29.

"God's mills grind slow,
But they grind woe."⁸²

Daniel Stevick, noting Fundamentalism's primary concern with its own purity, sees these inflamed attacks on the theatre, John Barleycorn, tobacco, dancing, cardplaying, "and other sinful indulgences" as a long heritage of fiddling while Rome burns. He asks:

One cannot but wonder if such preoccupations are not escapist, irresponsible, out of touch with the great elemental realities of our time. Does not the Fundamentalist move to define itself by prohibitions have the net effect of isolating the group from the world where it ought to be ministering?⁸³

Compassion and Involvement

Not all the members of the Niagara guard could be accused of fiddling while Rome burnt. A goodly number of these men felt they ought to be ministering to a needy world and not isolating themselves from it. This wing of the early Fundamentalist movement was represented by men like Stephen H. Tyng, Jr., A.T. Pierson, A.J. Gordon, and J. Wilbur Chapman. Although these leaders believed in the primacy of individual regeneration, they did not see this conviction as absolving them from working toward social righteousness.

James Gray confessed in The Watchword, shortly after the death of that periodical's editor, A.J. Gordon, that there was a sense of self-righteousness among his brothers and sisters which showed itself in the indisposition

to transmute spiritual knowledge into holy and benevolent deeds. He suggests: "It would seem in some cases as if our growth in the word of God were a sort of encasement of selfishness in which we shut ourselves in to the contemplation and enjoyment of our own blessings, oblivious to the woe and sorrow that are round about us."⁸⁴ He then refers to an "estimable" Christian woman who laid so much stress on doing good to the "household of faith" that she was deterred from distributing of her abundance except to those who were professing Christians - but only professing Christians of her stripe. Gray observes: "How different from the feeling of the former beloved editor of this periodical who once said to me that he was tired of hearing people talk about aiding the 'worthy' poor, and thought it was now time that we should aid some of the unworthy ones."⁸⁵

Contrary to the Brookes' school of thinking, the article affirms the great opportunities believers had in their capacity as citizens to do good to those around them in the exercise of the right of franchise. Gray refers to Pericles' statement that in a democracy there should be not only an equal distribution of political rights among all classes, but also an equalization of the means and opportunities of exercising those rights, as well as an equal participation by all in social and intellectual enjoyments. He concludes:

We boast of civic advancement in these days of Christian enlightenment, and much indeed is being done for the poor and lowly that never was done before, and yet in some respects we are still behind in the privileges granted by pagan Athens. Oh, that we earnest evangelicals might become thoroughly appreciative of our own opportunities for God and our fellow men in the primary meeting, at the ballot-box, and in our halls of legislation.⁸⁶

An outstanding example of ministering to "the poor and lowly" was the work of Stephen H. Tyng, Jr., pastor of New York's Holy Trinity Church, a large congregation identified with the evangelical wing of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. Tyng was the host pastor of the Niagara initiated First American Bible and Prophetic Conference held in the fall of 1878. He played a prominent role in planning the prophecy conference and presented the first major paper at that auspicious meeting.⁸⁷ One year earlier he had published He Will Come articulating his premillennial, pretribulational view of the Second Advent.⁸⁸ Tyng's premillennial convictions were certainly no deterrent to his deep concern for and involvement in the needs of the urban poor.

This ardent premillennialist pleaded for churches to return to the ideals of primitive Christianity. In the sixteen years during which Tyng was pastor at Holy Trinity he steadily adjusted his church's ministry to the needs of a changing society. Already in 1864 the church organized a Pastoral Aid Society and two additional organizations, one each for men and women.⁸⁹

In 1876 Tyng wrote a series of letters to his congregation describing the various facets of the church's ministry, a ministry which made it one of the outstanding churches in New York.⁹⁰ Temperance meetings were held every Sunday at Holy Trinity. Workers from the church went out to visit the poor and distribute alms. Bread provided by local bakers was given to the poor. Coal was given to those needing it. A Dorcas Society gave employment to poor women. A Dispensary was set up in which six physicians ministered

to the medical needs of the poor. The doctors took turns staffing the Dispensary one and a half hours every day and also took turns in making house calls. The doctors contributed their services free of charge and medicine was secured at wholesale prices. The church also had an Arbitration Committee made up of lawyers who assisted the needy with legal problems. A burial society was formed to provide for the interment of those who needed it.

Church members at Holy Trinity were valued for their ability to assist the indifferent, the destitute, and the outcast. The pastor always entrusted these volunteer workers with full responsibility and removed those who proved inefficient. Since he assigned men in accordance with their secular vocations - i.e. doctors to care for the sick and lawyers to protect the rights of the poor, Tyng seldom experienced difficulty with his workers.

The training program at Holy Trinity included three Sunday Schools at the home church and a Sunday School in each of various missions they had established - in all involving more than two thousand teachers and pupils. It also included Sunday morning preaching services, weekday Bible readings, classes for young converts and many similar activities. The House of Evangelists was a lay training program for work among the poor and neglected. The church also ran an orphanage with twenty children in it, a rehabilitation program at Sing Sing, the Peabody Home for Aged and Indigent Women, the Lay Preacher's Association, the Industrial Sewing School, and the Gospel Tent. The latter was set up during the summer and could accommodate nearly three thousand people.

Tyng sought earnestly to combine the Word and the deed of the Gospel. In so doing, he "perfected one of the great mission churches of America" and Holy Trinity became a significant pioneer leader in the institutional church movement.⁹¹ The ministry of Holy Trinity appealed to all lovers of humanity, and when in 1878 it ran into financial difficulties, New York philanthropists endowed it with an annual stipend for the "support of undenominational, evangelistic and humanitarian work among the poor of New York City."⁹²

Bethany Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, founded as a Sunday school in 1859 by millionaire John Wanamaker was another leader in the institutional church movement of combining evangelism with social work and community service. Greatest progress in this direction was made during the ministry of Bethany's two leading pastors during the 1880s and 1890s - A.T. Pierson and J. Wilbur Chapman, both staunch Niagara men. A.T. (for Arthur Tappan) Pierson's father had been in the employ of Tappan, the famed philanthropist and antislavery leader. The spirit of reform penetrated all three men.

Serving as pastor at Bethany from 1883 to 1889 Pierson increased the lay force, perfected evangelistic and social agencies and lifted a heavy debt which had burdened the church. This evangelistic and social work was continued by Chapman, who pastored Bethany from 1890 to 1892 and 1895 to 1899. In addition to the preaching services, numerous Bible classes (Wanamaker's drew two thousand), children's meetings, brotherhood meetings, ladies' missionary society endeavours, and a host of other similar activities, the church provided a day nursery, kindergartens, diet kitchens, an employment bureau, a workingman's club, a dispensary, and a college. An Evangelists'

Band sought to save souls while a number of other agencies ministered to physical needs. The White Ribbon Army, organized on December 7, 1884 soon had five hundred in church and Sunday School pledged to temperance. This organization spread to practically every state in the country and enrolled thousands of members.⁹³

Pierson lifted a prophetic voice against undemocratic churches. He told his aristocratic Detroit congregation which he pastored from 1869 to 1876 that when churches were ornate and had rented pews, poor people would not come to be guests of the rich.

When Christian people are not willing to sacrifice their tastes for art, architecture, music and oratory in the house of God they do not reach the masses. A kid glove is often a non-conductor between man and man.⁹⁴

A fire destroyed the stately Fort Street Church in Detroit but pastor Pierson's objections notwithstanding, the rebuilt structure was more beautiful than ever. By way of compromise the pews were made free for the evening services. The church was not able to reach non-churchgoers, as Pierson had predicted.⁹⁵

In 1887 Pierson read a paper before the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in Washington, D.C.⁹⁶ After demonstrating that the masses were estranged from the church, he described the reason for their separation as primarily social, brought about by the type of work they did, the location of their homes and their mental and moral habits of life. The solution, he suggested, was sympathetic contact and cordiality. He again spoke out on what was his lifelong concern - the abolition of pew rentals and the need for democracy in church procedures and activities. He urged a total ministry by

the church to all - a place for worship, a place for work, a school for instruction and "a home for every sin-sick soul."⁹⁷

Starting in 1888 Pierson edited one of the outstanding missionary journals of the time, Missionary Review of the World in which he wrote forcefully about the need of the poor and the neglect of the church to reach them.⁹⁸ He stated unequivocally that church edifices were built and conducted in the interest of social caste, wealth, and aristocracy.⁹⁹ Speaking again at the Evangelical Alliance Conference in 1893 the editor saw it as axiomatic that the church had a social mission and had to be committed to reform. However that reform had to begin in the house of God or reconstruction of society would be infinitely delayed. "To accomplish her social mission," wrote Pierson, "the reforming power needs to reform. Salt without saltiness can neither savor nor save."¹⁰⁰

The present desperate conflict between "capital and labor" - more properly between employers and employed - is, perhaps, the most serious complication known to history. . . . To-day the world awaits to crown, as its greatest statesman, the man who shall teach society how to adjust the relations of working men and capitalists; and the church will canonize as her greatest practical reformer whoever solves the double problem: how to promote unity among disciples upon the essentials of truth, so as to secure co-operation among them in the social mission of the church; and how to bring all the available forces of Christendom shoulder to shoulder, in actual combined sympathetic movement for social redemption!¹⁰¹

Pierson complained to the brethren of the Alliance that while church leaders wrote essays and made earnest appeals in behalf of the "evangelization of the masses," at the same time they moved their churches to aristocratic sites, hired costly preachers and singers, encumbered them with heavy debts and if they did approach the poor at all, did it through a missionary, a "ragged

school," or a mission chapel.¹⁰²

Pierson urged upon the Alliance co-operative efforts by churches and para-church organizations in behalf of helping the poor. The social mission of the Church had a threefold aspect, he said - evangelization, organization, and co-operation - "to make disciples, to gather them into churches, and then to unite the churches in great world-wide movements." The primacy of preaching the Gospel was ever to be maintained. The Church was called out from the world for separation from it, then had to go back into the world for service in it. "Its mission specific, salt, to savor and save; light to witness and illuminate; to displace ignorance and idleness - those handmaids of vice - by intelligence and industry - those handmaids of virtue; but to do it by, first of all, giving men the Gospel."¹⁰³

Noted pastor, author and conference speaker A.J. Gordon believed that the Second Advent was the only permanent answer to earthly woes, but this did not stop him from turning his famed Boston Clarendon Street Church into a center of moral reform.¹⁰⁴ Gordon had been deeply influenced by Moody's 1877 evangelistic campaign in Boston to undertake work among alcoholics. Ernest B. Gordon, in his biography of his father credits the entrance of reformed alcoholics and "all types of publicans and sinners" into membership as opening the way for a progressive democratization at Clarendon Street Church culminating in the free-church system.¹⁰⁵

In an attempt to rehabilitate converts from alcoholism Gordon established an Industrial Temporary Home to provide a place of refuge and food for the men, as well as locate jobs for them. The cause of temperance was especially

dear to Gordon. The Boston pastor favoured national prohibition, and in 1884 he joined the Prohibition Party. He spoke and wrote for this cause with great enthusiasm. He strongly supported the work of the Y.M.C.A. and the cause of rescue missions. He was a missionary statesman in his own denomination, and besides editing his own periodical, The Watchword, he was the Associate Editor of the prestigious Missionary Review of the World. Clarendon Street Church established a shelter for girls, a Chinese Sunday School, and a missionwork among the Jewish People and another among the Negroes of Boston. In 1889 Gordon established the Boston Missionary Training School whose aim was not only to furnish men and women with a thoroughly Biblical training, but also to engage them in practical religious work in the neglected parts of the city. A liberal arts college and seminary eventually developed out of these early humble beginnings. In the 1890s Gordon spoke out against the Chinese Exclusion Act. Other causes he actively advocated were the unrestrained freedom of speech, state-controlled versus Catholic parochial schools and the emancipation of women.¹⁰⁶

Gordon's progressive views regarding freedom for women in church and society did not sit well with some of his conservative colleagues. His advocacy of their complete enfranchisement and entrance into every political and social privilege enjoyed by men included opening up new opportunities for women in the church. In an article in the December, 1894 Missionary Review of the World Gordon argued that "in every great spiritual awakening in the history of Protestantism the impulse for Christian women to pray and witness for Christ in the public assembly has been found irrepressible."

He considered Pentecost to have opened up a new status for women in the church, allowing them to preach. Particular weight was given to a quotation from Joel: "In the last days, said God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy."¹⁰⁷

Gordon also advocated divine healing, a doctrine denied by most early Fundamentalists. The traditional Protestant position, dominant since the eighteenth century, was that miracles of all sorts largely ceased in the church after the apostolic age. The modern American Pentecostal movement did not begin until the early twentieth century, but it emerged out of the nineteenth century holiness movement, with which Gordon was also closely connected. The most distinctive expression of Pentecostalism was speaking in tongues, but the earliest sign of the new departure was not tongues but "healing by faith."¹⁰⁸

In 1882 Gordon published The Ministry of Healing which remained the standard apologia for the healing movement until 1889 when R. L. Marsh's "Faith Healing": A Defense appeared.¹⁰⁹ Gordon considered healing, along with baptism and communion to be among "the great ordinances of christianity."¹¹⁰ With Biblical Criticism and natural science already making inroads into Protestantism seeking to strip away its supernatural dogmas and practices, the Boston pastor felt that the rejection of healing miracles by the church would lend support to the "mythical theory of miracles, which has been so strongly pushed in this generation."

The question of God's supernatural working to-day and to-morrow is the one where havoc is being wrought. Unbelief shading off from rationalism to liberal evangelicalism is doing its utmost to give away our most precious heritage. With how many is regeneration merely

a repairing of the old nature by culture, instead of a miraculous communication of the divine life!¹¹¹

Gordon was open to associating with men of good will of various backgrounds. In his temperance work the Boston pastor had an able ally in the old-time anti-slavery reformer Wendell Phillips. Phillips had been a friend of Issac Hale, Gordon's father-in-law and not only supported Gordon's Industrial Temporary Home financially, but also assisted in bringing men to the home for help. In some reminiscences of Phillips, published by Gordon shortly after the great reformer's death, the Boston pastor wrote:

In temperance work I saw more of Wendell Phillip's heart than anywhere else. He struck hard blows against the drink iniquity. But here he was not merely an iconoclast, bringing down his hammer upon license laws, which, next to fugitive-slave laws, he hated most intensely; he was a healer as well as a smiter. He used to come into the Home for reforming inebriates, which we started at the time of the Moody and Sankey meetings, to inquire after the enterprise and give it his encouragement. He sometimes brought in poor, broken-down drunkards, to ask the help of our Christian workers on their behalf. . . . Once, with one of our Christian women, the question came up as to the possibility of reclaiming the confirmed drunkard, when she, with all the ardor of her conviction, declared that there was certainly one way, viz., by the grace of God brought to bear in a renewed heart. And I cannot describe the sympathetic tenderness with which he assented to the remark, nor the spirit of humble self-distrust with which he alluded, in a single sentence, to his own experience.¹¹²

Apparently Gordon and Phillips had the same spirit when it came to matters of reform, even though the latter was not an evangelical.

In December, 1887 Gordon addressed the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in Washington on "The Responsibility Growing out of our Perils and Opportunities." He saw special dangers in the rise of communism among the laboring classes, agnosticism among the upper and educated classes, and strong drink among the lower and criminal classes. Not merely remaining with the problems,

Gordon prescribed some remedies. For example, in response to the "impatient murmurings of communism," Gordon recommended a return to the "divine" communism of the primitive church where "all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." The church, said Gordon, according to its primitive ideal was the one institution in which every man's wealth was under mortgage to every man's want and every man's success to every man's service.

No laborer in any part of the field should lack the means for prosecuting his work so long as any fellow-disciple elsewhere has the ability to supply his lack. This, I believe, was the divine communism on which the church was founded, and by which it was intended to be perpetuated. And if we could present to the discontented working-classes today this fresh, unsullied ideal in active operation, it would be the most powerful answer possible to their bitter complaint of the selfishness and unsympathy of men.¹¹³

As to the churches retreat before the "incoming tide of poverty and illiteracy," as Gordon put it, the Boston pastor went on record as protesting against this trend. Throwing up a picket-line of mission stations was merely a cover, he said. Indeed, nothing so tended to disaffect the common people regarding the Gospel as to move the church away from them on the ground that it must follow wealth and fashion. Gordon testified that he had met many non-church people who complained: "The church left me, and so I left the church; they cared nothing for me, and I care nothing for them."¹¹⁴

Gordon saw the need for reformation to begin within the church for as surely as darkness followed sunset would alienation of the masses follow "sanctimonious selfishness in the church." He waxed bold and eloquent in addressing his Alliance brethren:

The church millionaire stands at exact antipodes to the church millennial, and in proportion as the former flourishes the latter will be hopelessly deferred. It is not an orthodox creed that repels the masses, but an orthodox greed. Let a Christian in any community stand forth conspicuously as honest as the law of Moses, yet building up an immense fortune by grinding the faces of the poor, compelling them all the while to turn the grindstone, and he will wean a whole generation from the gospel. . . . As fast as the church became a coffer for hoarding coveted wealth she became a coffin for enshrining a dead Christianity.¹¹⁵

In Gordon's Clarendon Street Church, many of the ideals the pastor espoused were put into concrete form, as we have seen, by means of many forms of social action.

Among the many facets of A.J. Gordon's life and work for which the famous pastor was eulogized at his funeral, his activities and involvements as a reformer stood out. President Andrews of Brown University (Gordon's alma mater) stated that "as a reformer . . . some of us look to Dr. Gordon, as one who could not be spared." Andrews testified: "If I were commencing a career of advocacy of moral or social, industrial or even political reforms, I do not know where I could find one who would be a more judicious guide than he would have been who was a warrior in his best days for many a noble reform, and who now lies dead on his shield on the field of battle."¹¹⁶

The renowned pastor's premillennial convictions notwithstanding, one could not charge A.J. Gordon with being a pessimist. In fact he faulted those premillennialists who "exaggerate the present triumphs of evil, magnifying every shade into sorrow, and every shadow into a sign of the son of perdition, and so predict the speedy triumph of the Man of Sin." He added that "if we watch the present progress of evil from worse to worse let us not forget to look at the obverse side of the picture and rejoice, as we may,

that the good is growing better and better."¹¹⁷

Gordon belonged to that group of premillennialists who could be called "mediately pessimistic," for ultimately they were optimists in firmly believing that Christ would return to earth and establish His righteous rule.¹¹⁸

Gordon would have agreed with his good friend Dwight L. Moody:

If I should live ten thousand years I couldn't be a pessimist. I haven't any more doubt about the final outcome of things than I have of my existence. I believe that Jesus is going to sway His sceptre to the ends of the earth, that the time is coming when God's will is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven, and when man's voice will only be the echo of God's. . . . We are on the winning side.¹¹⁹

The socially progressive wing of Bible conference men saw no conflict between their view that the world was passing away and therefore souls were of ultimate importance and their involvement in man's physical and material needs. To the contrary, these acts were seen as part of the responsibility of preaching the Gospel, part of the Christian obligation given by Christ to "occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). J. Wilbur Chapman expressed the feelings of this group when he noted that it was not a question of either-or i.e. social service or evangelical proclamation, but a matter of both-and. He saw in turn-of-the century America a great opportunity for an aggressive movement on the part of the church. He insisted: "This is not the day for the preaching of a selfish salvation, and he who simply tries to keep men out of hell or to win them for heaven and stops with this has missed the truth that would make the world better."¹²⁰ Conservative that he was, Chapman could still quote at length from Francis Greenwood Peabody's Jesus Christ and the Social Question, which he considered as representing "the position

of the best advocates of Social Reform."¹²¹ This is an amazing endorsement for a Fundamentalist to give to a work deeply influenced by liberal German scholarship and abounding in references to German higher critics. In an effort to solve contemporary problems this progressive wing of first generation Fundamentalists worked with and adopted some of the methods of those who did not share their theological views. As time went on, however, the Fundamentalists became increasingly distrustful of what became known as the Social Gospel, not because they were less interested than formerly in social uplift, but because the Social Gospel advocates began to rely more and more on sociological and economic theories rather than on personal salvation. As this occurred there was a gradual erosion of social concern and involvement in social reform among the second generation Fundamentalists (1900-1930). Paul Clifford Wilt, in his study of American premillennialism 1865 to 1918, concluded: "As the Social Gospel movement moved to the left, the premillennialists, along with other theologically conservative groups, moved to the right."¹²²

In summation: although all of the early Fundamentalists of Niagara believed in the primacy of individual regeneration and in the ultimate doom of the world system, their responses to social problems varied considerably. One cannot generalize on the attitude of the Niagara guard as a group. Although they all sang the lifeboat songs, not all of them practiced the lifeboat ethic so graphically portrayed in these songs. As we have seen, some of these men were significantly involved, not only in soul saving but also in social reform, at least in some spheres such as the establishment of

institutional churches, missions of various kinds, orphanages, rehabilitation homes, and other agencies which were designed to ameliorate and correct some of the problems of urban America. They were not as socially involved in most cases as were the proponents of the Social Gospel, but this is because they placed greater confidence in the merits of individual conversion.

We may fault the Niagara group for being too preoccupied with maintaining its own purity and not going far enough to bring about change at the larger institutional levels of society. However the more outward looking wing headed by men like A.T. Pierson and A.J. Gordon honestly believed that the first and most important step in social reconstruction was the democratizing of public worship. This duty of the church of breaking down class distinctions and making its services available to working men was seen as so pressing that participation in industrial and political reform was of secondary importance. They believed that "the church would make its unique and most appropriate contribution to the solution of social problems by insisting that all classes acknowledge spiritual allegiance to Jesus Christ."¹²³ A young theologian writing in 1898 noted that "the solution to this ecclesiastical problem (i.e. how to mold all classes into the church) must precede the solution of the industrial problem and prepare for it."¹²⁴

The early Fundamentalists of this era never got beyond the "ecclesiastical problem." The furthest the socially progressive wing of Niagara got was to "superimpose philanthropic, educational and recreational features upon the fundamentally spiritual functions of churches and missions."¹²⁵

All problems were basically seen to be of spiritual origin and thus

ultimately needed a spiritual cure. Men needed to be inwardly renewed and renewed individuals, they believed, would bring about a renewed society.

As A.J. Gordon put it, the mystery of the new birth - regeneration by Spirit and Word, was the key to the problem of social reformation.

The Word of God is the seed-corn of social morality, of material prosperity, and of human civilization. Let that Word be received in the heart and all the rest will come inevitably. . . . God trusts in the seed, knowing that it contains in embryo the schoolmaster and reformer and statesman, who will certainly be brought forth as they shall be needed.¹²⁶

Whatever they did or did not do in relation to the age in which they lived, the early Fundamentalists maintained this belief in the primacy of regeneration and all other activities were subordinate to the preaching of this message. This perspective is still the basic one of Fundamentalism today. Although modern-day Fundamentalists may get more involved in efforts for racial, economic, and social justice than did the conservative wing of their founding fathers as represented by Brookes, Blackstone, Gaebelein and Scofield, it is unlikely they will ever be at the forefront of such movements.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Magnuson's Salvation in the Slums for a description of a wide range of evangelical social programs like the Volunteers of America, urban rescue missions, homes for "fallen" women, the Salvation Army, the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the concerns of the Christian Herald. Most of these groups were staunchly premillennial and there was significant interaction between them and Bible Conference leaders like A.J. Gordon, J. Wilbur Chapman, A.C. Dixon, and William Blackstone. When Dr. Louis Klopsch, the philanthropist-editor of the Christian Herald rescued and re-organized the Bowery Mission in 1895, prominent Niagara participants Chapman and Dixon served as incorporators. See also Wilt's Premillennialism in America, especially ch. 4 "The Premillennialists and the Problems of Society," and ch. 5 "The Impact of the Premillennialists."
2. Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), pp. 12, 44-45, 51-52.
3. As cited by Ahlstrom in A Religious History, p. 732.
4. Weber, p. 84 and p. 148 n. 3.
5. Aaron I. Abell, The Urban Impact on American Protestantism 1865-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943; reprint ed., Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1962), p. 3; Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 735; Weber, p. 84.
6. As cited by Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America, Torchbook edition (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 96.
7. May, p. 121.
8. As cited by *ibid.*, pp. 120-21.
9. May, p. 114. Josiah Strong (1847-1916) has been called "the most irrepressible spirit" of the Social Gospel movement - Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 798. In many ways the Congregational minister was the spokes-

man for the "Protestant Establishment." His fervor in Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis published in 1885 reached jingoistic proportions and contained more than a few traces of Anglo-Saxon racism. The Social Gospel, all of its humanitarian idealism notwithstanding, was a middle class creed. Progressive social Christianity in the 1880s and 90s failed in general either to convert political conservatives or to attract labor support. However the movement's "considerable importance in the development of American thought came from its influence on another group, a group of crucial importance at the end of the century. On the ideas of the progressive middle class the Social Gospel made its deepest impression" (May, p. 224). To trace the impact one needs to examine the contributions of social scientists like Richard Ely and Albion W. Small, as well as liberal clergymen like Francis Peabody, Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbush.

10. As cited by May, p. 116.
11. May, pp. 92-101.
12. Wiebe, p. 45.
13. May, pp. 110-11.
14. Sandra S. Sizer, Gospel Hymns and Social Religion (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), pp. 8-9 and 18-19.
15. Elgin S. Moyer, ed., Who Was Who in Church History revised ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), p. 47. Moyer gives John Julian, likely writing in the 1908 Dictionary of Hymnology, as his source for the judgment on Bliss.
16. Ibid., pp. 46-47; Sizer, p. 5.
17. Sizer, p. 4. This figure is taken from the Ira D. Sankey Centenary (New Castle, Pa.: n.p., 1941), p. 35 and Sizer observes that it "may be an exaggeration; but with no publishers' accounts available, it is difficult to judge" (p. 176 n.6).

18. Ira D. Sankey, compiler, Sacred Songs and Solos (London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.), No. 1. Bliss's songs are chosen for analysis because of his close association with Niagara and the immense popularity his music enjoyed among the early Fundamentalists of the Bible conference and prophecy movement. Many of Bliss's songs are still regularly sung in evangelical circles today. His music was generally representative of the theology and attitudes of the proto-Fundamentalists of Niagara. All quotations of lyrics are from the British edition of Sacred Songs, a rather tattered family heirloom in the writer's possession.

19. Sizer, p. 40.

20. Sacred Songs, No. 1. Another hymn in this collection for which Bliss wrote the music expresses the same sentiment. It is entitled "Hold Fast Till I Come" (No. 171). Verses one and three are as follows:

O spirit, overwhelmed by thy failures and fears,
 Look up to the Lord, tho' with trembling and tears:
 Weak faith, to thy call seem the heavens only dumb?
 To thee is the message, "Hold fast till I come."

Thy Saviour is coming in tenderest love,
 To make up His jewels and bear them above:
 Oh, child, in thine anguish, despairing or dumb,
 Remember the message, - "Hold fast till I come."

CHORUS:

"Hold fast till I come,"
 "Hold fast till I come;"
 A bright crown awaits thee;
 "Hold fast till I come."

21. Ibid., No. 7.

22. Sizer, p. 30.

23. Sizer, p. 44. She gives the lyrics to the entire song. For music and lyrics see Sacred Songs, No. 29.

24. Dwight L. Moody, New Sermons, Addresses and Prayers (Chicago: J.W. Goodspeed, Publisher, 1877), p. 523.

25. Sacred Songs, No. 99.

26. Ibid.

27. Bliss's "Rock of my Refuge" (Sacred Songs, No. 570), is an excellent example of a hymn developing this theme. The lyrics of stanza one and stanza three are as follows:

Jesus, Saviour, to Thy side
From th' avenger, I would flee;
Let me safely there abide,
Let Thy grace my refuge be.

To Thy loving side each hour
Close and closer would I cling;
Shielded by Thy mighty power,
Trustful ever, may I sing:

CHORUS:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!"

Another "shelter and refuge" song, still sung a great deal in evangelical circles today is "A Shelter in the Time of Storm," the music of which was composed by Sankey (see Sacred Songs, No. 512). The first two stanzas affirm:

The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide:
A shelter in the time of storm!
Secure whatever ill betide:
A shelter in the time of storm!

A shade by day, defence by night:
A shelter in the time of storm!
No fears alarm, no foes affright:
A shelter in the time of storm!

CHORUS:

Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land!
A weary land, a weary land;
Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,
A shelter in the time of storm!

28. Sizer, p. 31. "The land that is fairer than day" is a phrase from the song "Sweet By and By" (Sacred Songs, No. 9). Beneath the title, I Corinthians 2:9 is cited: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." To use this verse as a proof-text to describe the glories of heaven is a complete misexegesis, for the context of I Corinthians 2:1-10 clearly indicates that the theme of the passage is the wisdom of God. Gospel hymn writers frequently took great liberties with Scriptural texts.
29. This total is arrived at by counting the number of selections listed under each subject in the Index to Subjects at the end pages of Sacred Songs.
30. Sacred Songs, No. 22, 23, 26, 251, 271, and 540.
31. Ibid., p. 52.
32. Ibid., pp. 158-59. For a perceptive analysis of the nineteenth century changing image (both self-image and public image) of the evangelical clergy, as well as the shift in the theme and style of theology, preaching, and music, see Donald M. Scott, From Office to Profession (Camden, N.J.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978). In chapter six, "From Reform to Refuge: The Devotional Transformation," Scott notes the mid-century shift in theology (metaphors stressing God's love rather than His government), preaching on the feminine aspects of virtue (with wives and mothers especially extolled), and new forms of sentimental gospel music, such as we have discussed. Another work dealing with the same themes is Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Avon Books, 1978); see especially Part One "The Sentimentalization of Status" and Part Two "The Sentimentalization of Creed and Culture."
33. Stanzas two, three and four and chorus of P.P. Bliss's "The Light of the World," Sacred Songs, No. 123.
34. Truth 6(1880): 536.
35. As cited by Williams, pp. 136-37.
36. Williams, p. 97.

37. Ibid., p. 96.
38. As cited by Williams, p. 100.
39. Williams, p. 102.
40. As cited by Williams, p. 105.
41. Wilt, p. 27.
42. Truth 6(1880): 536. This attitude is a reflection of Old School Presbyterianism thinking in the South that emerged out of the failure to be vocal in the slavery struggle. This failure to exert ecclesiastical pressure against the immorality of slavery was described as 'the spirituality of the church' - i.e. the church had no business in anything but spiritual matters. In 1868 a character in Harriet Beecher Stowe's book The Chimney Corner observed that "the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church refused to testify against slavery, because of political diffidence, but made up for it by ordering a more stringent crusade against dancing" - as cited by Carter, p. 5.
43. Truth 11(1885): 413.
44. Ibid., 16(1890): 491.
45. Brookes, "God Spake," pp. 18-19.
46. See, for example, the pessimism in Truth 11(1885): 529-30; 14(1888): 341, 45,78; 17(1891); 491-95.
47. Ibid., 10(1884): 156.
48. Ibid., 19(1893): 559-61.
49. Ibid., 21(1895): 241-47.

50. As cited by Findlay, pp. 406-07, n. 34. Findlay's source is the Springfield (Mass.) Republican, July 14, 1886.

51. Truth 19(1893): 619. This vengeful spirit of the Fundamentalist probably reached its most blatant expression in Billy Sunday who had absolutely no use for the "bastard theory of evolution" nor for any minister who tried to reconcile it with the Bible. The Rev. Dr. Wallace, a modernist who co-operated with Sunday's Toledo revival in 1911, remonstrated with the evangelist in private for being so intolerant on this subject. The next day at the revival meeting, Sunday went up to where Wallace sat on the platform, shook his fist in the minister's face, and yelled so the audience could hear, "Stand up there, you bastard evolutionist! Stand up with the atheists and the infidels and the whoremongers and the adulterers and go to hell"(as cited by McLoughlin in Modern Revivalism, p. 411). McLoughlin's source is Washington Gladden in "The Trouble with Billy Sunday: Some Grounds for Opposition," Congregationalist, May 29, 1913, p. 728. A later, even more dramatic example of violent Fundamentalism was J. Frank Norris, who in the midst of his long ministry was indicted and tried for arson, perjury and murder. The latter indictment arose out of Norris' attack on Fort Worth's Roman Catholic mayor, N.C. Meacham, who among other things was accused of misappropriating city funds for the benefit of Roman Catholic institutions. When D.E. Chipps, a friend of Meacham entered Norris' church study to dispute these accusations, sharp words were exchanged and the unarmed Chipps was shot by the pastor. The jury readily ruled the incident self-defense, but the image of Norris and Fundamentalism was tarnished as never before. The editor of the Atlanta Constitution declared on one occasion that "The Rev. J. Frank Norris, and others like him, is one good, sound reason why there are 50,000,000 Americans who do not belong to any church at all." This account of Norris is based on C. Allyn Russell, Voices of American Fundamentalism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), pp. 20-46. See also Dollar, pp. 122-134.

52. As cited by Marsden in Fundamentalism and American Culture, pp. 66-67. The supposedly apolitical are almost always very conservative in political and social matters.

53. Truth 11(1885): 413.

54. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 53. Regarding the fear of Romanism, Brookes in an article called "Growth of Romanism," Truth 19(1893): 618-19 speaks of the rapid growth and immense influence of the Catholic Church in America's political affairs. He asserts that "the Roman Catholic church has its hand upon the throat of nearly every senator, congressmen sic, and municipal government in the country." Brookes suggests the distinct possibility of Rome not only dominating the United States, but the entire English speaking world.

55. J. Frank Norris, as cited by Russell, p. 27.
56. Truth 21(1890): 489.
57. Ibid., 490.
58. Ibid., 489.
59. Brookes, I Am Coming, p. 169.
60. Truth 21(1895): 77.
61. Findlay, p. 81.
62. Ibid., pp. 85-86.
63. Truth 21 (1895): 78.
64. Ibid., 19(1893): 621.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid. 21(1895): 638. Immediately following observations on the futility of social reform, Brookes placed his own five page sermon on "Our Lord's Coming Practical"(639-43). Not one of the seven practical values of teaching the Second Advent, as outlined in this article, is in any way even remotely related to social concerns or the amelioration of social evil. The seven "practical" applications are: it is linked with conversion, it is a stimulus to service (saving souls), it is a challenge to greater holiness and separation from the world, it is a comfort in bereavement, it is a call to watchfulness, it is a reminder of judgment, and it is the event which will destroy the Antichrist. It is obvious that Brookes did not believe Christianity had the tools to repair the battered vessel of this world, which was the clear implication of Bliss's "lifeboat" story mentioned earlier in this chapter. "When the life-boat came to you, did you expect it had brought some tools to repair your old ship?" "Oh, no!" was the reply. To these early Fundamentalists, Jesus provided only a personal ethic, not a social one, an unfortunate theological legacy they left to twentieth century Fundamentalism.

67. Ibid., 22(1896): 22-25.
68. Ibid., 25.
69. Ibid., 302.
70. Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, p. 147.
71. Ibid., p. 148. In his I Am Coming James Brookes wrote: "Who exhibit the most bitter and unrelenting hostility to God and to His Truth? Men of eloquence, and genius, and learning, like Darwin, and Huxley, and Herbert Spenser, and Ingersoll, and the great mass of philosophers and scientists. If culture is causing the world to grow better, how is it that the most godless and wicked cities on earth are Paris and Berlin, the source and centre of the noblest intellectual progress and prowess?" (p. 167).
72. Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, pp. 228-41.
73. Prophetic Studies, pp. 198-99.
74. Ella E. Pohle, compiler, Dr. C.I. Scofield's Question Box (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1917), pp. 35-36.
75. Ibid., p. 36.
76. Our Hope 15(1909): 643.
77. Weber, pp. 93-94. Weber's source is Eli Reece, How Far Can a Pre-millennialist Pastor Cooperate with Social Service Programs? (privately printed, n.d.).
78. Sizer, p. 156.
79. See the three part article on this question in Truth 9(1883): 109-12, 161-67, 209-12.

80. Ibid., 11(1885): 341-44. In this article a stern warning is issued against reading the popular books commended by the magazines and secular press "that are almost wholly in the hands of the devil." The early Fundamentalists were also deeply concerned about the growing number of Christians who were reading the Sunday newspapers, spending the first waking hours of the Sabbath day engrossed in secular concerns when they should be reading their Bibles and praying in preparation for church.
81. Ibid., 12(1886): 53-56.
82. Ibid., 21(1895): 307-08.
83. Stevick, p. 59.
84. James M. Gray, "Social Righteousness," Watchword 19(1897): 97.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid. For other examples of Gray's progressive views, see Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 89, who points out that later, when Gray served as president of Moody Bible Institute, his political views became rigidly conservative.
87. Premillennial Essays, pp. 22-46.
88. Stephen H. Tyng, Jr., He Will Come (New York: Mucklow and Simon, 1877).
89. Abell, p. 28.
90. Stephen H. Tyng, Jr., "Our Church Work," Nov. 8, 15, 27, 1876 as summarized by Abell, p. 28 and a letter dated Dec. 9, 1876 in The Mission Work of the Parish Church of the Holy Trinity summarized by Wilt, pp. 29-31. Descriptions of the ministries of Holy Trinity are based on these two sources.

91. Abell, p. 28. This author points out that the adjective "institutional" was commonly employed to describe the numerous churches and missions which were expanding their functions to cover the entire life of man. See ch. 6 of Abell's Urban Impact.

92. Ibid., pp. 28-29, citing the New York Tribune, Feb. 25, 1878, p. 2.

93. Devalan Pierson, Arthur T. Pierson (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1912), p. 175; Abell, p. 156. For a description of Wanamaker's work in founding Bethany Church see Missionary Review of the World 12(1899): 413-15, hereafter abbreviated M.R.W.

94. As cited by Devalan Pierson, pp. 136-37. Pierson was not against education and culture. He read widely and frequently quoted men of culture and learning in his many articles and books. It was when poets, philosophers and novelists produced works which were not supportive, or even worse, were destructive of the Christian world and life view that the early Fundamentalists condemned them. In an 1893 speech Pierson said: "Modern notions of culture endanger not only our mission, but our faith. Ethics and aesthetics, politics and athletics cannot take the place of regeneration. And the fastidiousness of refined taste, that is too easily shocked and cannot stand 'poor smell' may make a disciple too nice for service" (M.R.W. 7(1894): 166. Pierson affirmed the value of reading books which were intellectually stimulating. He felt that reading history and biography formed the basis of mental acquisition; then one should read simpler poetry, then "the triumphs of oratory" as seen in Cicero and "the best specimens of the drama," as in Shakespeare. Fiction was to be "scrupulously selected," while scientific and philosophic works came last because they required the greatest mental maturity to grasp - see A.T. Pierson, Godly Self-Control (Barkingside, Eng.: G.F. Vallance, n.d.), p. 68. Pierson's Philadelphia church established Bethany College concerning which the pastor said: "It is a great mistake to undervalue culture. One with the grace of God in his heart and an educated mind can do more than one without a trained intellect. Culture elevates the whole sphere of our employments and amusements" - as cited by Devalan Pierson, p. 176.

95. Devalan Pierson, p. 177.

96. The Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1846 after Christian leaders felt the need to present a more united front in face of new political and social problems. It was a Protestant ecumenical movement ostensibly devoted to joint efforts in missionary and practical endeavours. Horace

Bushnell had worked for its formation chiefly on anti-Catholic grounds and was displeased when it adopted more positively evangelical aims. A definite anti-Catholic spirit remained in the movement in the nineteenth century. Regarding the international meeting of the Alliance in 1873 held in New York, the New York Herald spoke negatively of the vulgar fight between Protestantism and Catholicism for which the group could call forth every man on its roll of members. The Chicago Tribune said of the meeting: "The Alliance has hitherto been composed of those bodies of Christians . . . who, if they held one thing in greater disesteem than another, it was the Roman Catholic Church" (Carter, p. 182). As late as 1884 the Alliance was still expending its main energies fighting free thought and Roman Catholicism, "the traditional bogies of the evangelical mind" (Abell, p. 90). An editorial in the Chicago Tribune declared: "We suppose that not one third of the men or women brought up in evangelical churches in this country ever heard a kind word said in their youth concerning the Catholic faith, though they have all heard this church denounced as the 'Scarlet Woman'" (Carter, p. 182). Many Niagara men shared this derogatory view of Catholicism - cf. A.J. Gordon in Prophetic Studies p. 46 where the Pope is seen as the Antichrist and Roman apostasy as a Satan-inspired career of blood and blasphemy unrivalled in human history.

97. Wilt, p. 93 drawing from the summary of Alliance addresses in National Perils and Opportunities, pp. 112-123.

98. See Pierson's articles "The Crisis in Cities," M.R.W. 2(1889): 831-36, "Christian Co-operation and the Social Mission of the Church," M.R.W. 7(1894): 161-72, and "The Problem of City Evangelization," M.R.W. 12(1899): 408-15 for representative statements.

99. Ibid., 2(1889): 832. Pierson here antedates by forty years H. Richard Niebuhr in his Social Sources of Denominationalism in which the noted theologian attacks the church's accommodation to middle class values and its neglect of the classes beneath it. Pierson is saying essentially what Niebuhr and sociologists have observed - churches "rise in the economic scale under the influence of religious discipline, and . . . in the midst of a freshly acquired cultural respectability, neglect the new poor succeeding them on the lower plane" - The Social Sources of Denominationalism (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1965 [1929]), p. 28. A dominant feature of the middle-class evangelicalism of the Guilded Age was its intense individualism. Applied to economic life, this emphasis meant that individual hard work and discipline would lift a man from the plight of poverty, and if a man remained poor, it was a moral failing to be condemned not a misfortune to be pitied and relieved. Many post-bellum evangelicals

withdrew more and more into emphasizing the personal aspects of Christianity - the saving of souls and the eradicating of personal vices, while at the same time challenging the poor to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, regardless of the circumstances or larger institutional forces which caused their plight. Of those evangelical ministers who spoke out on larger social issues, most endorsed capitalism and took the side of management. They opposed government interference and public welfare programs. Niebuhr points out that this kind of middle class Protestant morality "is incapable of developing a hopeful passion for social justice" - *ibid.*, p. 87. See also Donald W. Dayton, Discovering An Evangelical Heritage (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1976), especially ch. 10 where the author endeavors to answer the question, "What happened to the reforming spirit of Evangelicalism?"

100. M.R.W. 7(1894): 163. With the appointment of Josiah Strong as general secretary of the Alliance in 1886, the movement concentrated more of its efforts on urban social needs. Strong's advanced social views forced him out of the Alliance in 1898.

101. *Ibid.*, 164.

102. *Ibid.*, 165.

103. *Ibid.*, 170

104. A.J. Gordon, "The Second Coming of Jesus as the Working Man's Hope," Watchword 1(1878): 19-20.

105. Ernest B. Gordon, Adoniran Judson Gordon (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1896), p. 73.

106. The best source for details on the various social involvements of Gordon and his church is Ernest B. Gordon, ch. 8 "Reform for Individual and State." For an account of the work of the Boston Missionary Training School see ch. 20 "Drilling the Recruits." For the first five years Gordon's periodical Watchword (begun in October of 1878) had a department called "Temperance Testimonies." Mrs. Gordon was president for many years of the Massachusetts W.C.T.U.. A series of articles on rescue missions appeared in the 1894 and 1895 editions of Watchword. Gordon stated his strong opposition to the Chinese Exclusion Act in a Watchword editorial of August 1892.

107. Ernest B. Gordon, p. 116; Dayton, p. 93. A.T. Pierson carried an article on the role of women in the same issue of M.R.W. agreeing with Gordon in opening up the ministry to women. A.C. Dixon, another Niagara man also advocated a more significant role for women in the church (Wilt, p. 113). Niagara president James Brookes strongly opposed this departure from what he considered to be the Biblical norm i.e. only men preaching. In an article entitled "Ministry of Women," Truth 21(1895): 87-92 Brookes countered the arguments of his dear friends Gordon and Pierson, observing that it was "not pleasant to disagree with good and wise men" yet it was expedient "to suggest a few thoughts to those who desire to know the mind of God."

108. Raymond J. Cunningham, "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America 1872-1892," Church History 43(1974): 499. The rise of Pentecostalism was accompanied by aggressive attacks against it by men who had been nurtured at Niagara. For example, C.I. Scofield, in an obvious reference to the striking outbreak of Pentecostal phenomena at a church located on Azusa Street in Los Angeles in April of 1906 (usually considered as the fountainhead of the movement) wrote: "The so-called gift of tongues in Los Angeles and other places where it has sporadically broken out is a mere gibberish. . . . The whole thing is another instance and illustration of which there are so many, in the history of the church, of Satan's way of pushing earnest and spiritual Christians over the brink of sobriety into fanaticism. Our only safety is to abide by the Bible and to give no value whatever to so-called experiences which are not strictly biblical" - Dr. Scofield's Question Box, pp. 153-54. Arno C. Gaebelein wrote in his autobiography: I have borne for many years an unflinching testimony against all unscriptural and fanatical cults and teaching," after which he lists, among others, the cults of Pentecostalism, McPhersonism, and Faith Healing - see Half a Century, p. 228.

109. Cunningham, 504.

110. A.J. Gordon, The Ministry of Healing (Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., n.d. [1882]), p. 30. Gordon cites Edward Irving to support his argument for divine healing (p. 51). Brookes also quotes from Irving's writings in lamenting the apostasy of the church. These early Fundamentalists could, when the occasion called for it, overlook Edward Irving's aberrations (see Appendix C), and select strands of his thought which buttressed their own positions. Brookes opposed divine healing and wrote a book to prove it was unscriptural - cf. James H. Brookes, The Mystery of Suffering (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, n.d.). See also the anti-healing Niagara lecture, L.W. Munhall, "Divine or Faith Healing," Truth 15(1889): 462-66.

111. Gordon, Ministry of Healing, p. 205.
112. As cited by Ernest B. Gordon, pp. 109-110. The last sentence in this citation is not explained by Gordon but it does not seem that he is claiming Phillips as a believer.
113. As cited in *ibid.*, p. 167.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
115. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-68.
116. *Ibid.*, pp. 380-81.
117. Prophetic Studies, p. 62. Evidence of the good "growing better and better," as cited by Gordon was the enlarged work of world evangelism then in progress (1886) with six thousand missionaries preaching the Gospel, the increased number of tongues into which the Bible had been translated, the world-wide study of the Scriptures, the earnest work of home evangelism, and "the marked works of healing and help among God's people."
118. Gundry, p. 182.
119. As cited by Gundry, pp. 191-92. Alexander Patterson, writing in Watchword and Truth 21(1899): 178-80, on "pre-Millennialism and Pessimism" reiterated that ultimately premillennialists were optimists. The Gospel had been a great influence on the world for good - people were better clothed, housed, educated and governed than before the Gospel was so widespread. Evil in society in terms of crime and violence was not as prevalent at that present time, relative to what it had been like at other periods in history. It was mainly in the church that men were to see that sad state which was to mark the near approach of the end. Nevertheless, he stated, it was not a healthy sign when believers rejoiced in the discovery of evil in the world or in the church, even though this signified the nearness of Christ's Second Advent. "The hope of the latter," he concluded, "is the relief we have from the dark view and to cheer us in what is otherwise a saddening state."

120. From the Foreword of J. Wilbur Chapman, Another Mile and Other Addresses (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), p. 10.

121. Ibid., p. 16. For Chapman's extended quotation of Peabody, see pp. 10-15. Peabody's book, published in 1900, was reprinted five times by 1903 and remains one of the best expressions of the Social Gospel movement ever produced - cf. Hopkins, p. 207.

122. Wilt, p. 120.

123. Abell, p. 86.

124. As cited by Abell, *ibid.*

125. Abell, *ibid.*

126. Gordon, The Holy Spirit in Missions, pp. 142-44.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The importance of this occasion exceeds the understanding of its originators. The future will look back to the World Conference on Christian Fundamentals . . . as an event of more historical moment than the nailing up, at Wittenberg, of Martin Luther's ninety-five theses. The hour has struck for the rise of a new Protestantism.

William Bell Riley in the convening address of the charter assembly of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association, May 25, 1919 as cited by C. Allyn Russell in Voices of American Fundamentalism, p. 97.

(We brethren of the W.C.F.A.) were among the natural and recognized successors, both in doctrinal views and educational endeavors of Moody, Moorehead, Brookes, Gordon and that whole generation of believing Bible students and teachers who had given birth to the conferences at Niagara and Northfield, and to the Bible Institutions at Boston and Chicago.

William Bell Riley, 1922 as cited by Ernest R. Sandeen in The Roots of Fundamentalism, p. 246.

The links in the Fundamentalist chain back to the Niagara guard (Brookes, Moorehead, Gordon) are clearly evident in the World's Christian Fundamental Association as noted in Riley's words cited above. The same attitude of seeing themselves as the new saviors of Christianity was continued in the second generation of Fundamentalists, only it was more pronounced.

Not every aspect of Niagara had a direct relationship to the Fundamentalist movement of the twentieth century. However the theological foundation stones of twentieth century Fundamentalism were exactly those of their Niagara forebears. The only thing that changed was the emphasis, particularly in the second and third decades of the twentieth century.

The Philadelphia Prophetic Conference of May 28-30, 1918 and the New York Prophetic Conference of November 25-28, 1918 were the last two of the great series of such conferences initiated by Niagara leaders in 1878 with the first prophetic conference at New York. The Philadelphia conference appropriately opened by invoking the memory of Niagara's president, James H. Brookes.¹ During the Philadelphia meetings plans had already been made to meet again the following year, centering the conference on the theme of prophecy. However in the summer of 1918 a number of millenarian leaders met and discussed the need for a world-wide fellowship of conservative Christians to lead the battle against destructive liberal theology. They changed the program of the 1919 conference from an emphasis on prophecy to an emphasis on the fundamentals of the faith. The 1919 conference founded the World's Christian Fundamentals Association with a nine-point creed very similar to the Niagara Creed of 1878. The proceedings of those meetings indicate a note of deep alarm that "The Great Apostasy" (liberalism) was spreading like a plague throughout Christendom. Six thousand persons listened to what must have sounded like a repeat of the theological apologetic of the recently published twelve volume series The Fundamentals.

As a result of this shift in emphasis from prophecy (although not minimizing prophetic truth in the least) to a preoccupation and with what soon became an obsession with reaffirming and defending a definite package of fundamental doctrines, the name "Fundamentalist" was formally placed on a movement which began in the 1875-1900 period.² It was precisely the holding fast and perpetuating of a basic non-negotiable core of fundamental

doctrines which were to be the test of orthodoxy for individuals and denominations that the leaders of Niagara had hoped for. Niagara's testimony on the "great doctrines once for all delivered to the saints" had been "clear and positive" testified James Brookes in 1891, to which he added the following urgent note in 1893: "There is no obligation more pressing in these last and evil days than to hold fast the very form, . . . or precise representation, of sound words, and to hold them fast over against higher criticism, evolution, and every device of Satan."³

Niagara and the Niagara sponsored prophetic conferences became the birthplace of theological Fundamentalism as well as provided a model of organizations, leadership, literature and structure which twentieth century followers utilized to preserve and expand the movement. The die for militant twentieth century Fundamentalism was cast at the meetings of Niagara and the 1878 and 1886 prophetic conferences.

The growth of the theological formulations of Fundamentalism was most significant in the 1878 and 1886 prophetic conferences. The early 1880s had not yet seen a full-fledged Fundamentalism emerge but it was fast taking form. In the opinion of one historian of the movement the prophetic conference of 1886 was "a Plymouth Rock in the history of Fundamentalism; a Magna Charta of its doctrinal insights; a Valley Forge in facing the onslaught of liberal theology."⁴

Of almost equal importance was the fourteen point Niagara Creed which left its lasting imprint on Fundamentalism. This creed was used as a point of reference for theological orthodoxy over and over again. As late as 1933

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the Niagara Creed was adopted in toto as the statement of faith of the newly organized Lancaster (Pa.) School of the Bible.⁵

The number fourteen for points in a creed does not have any particular significance. The proclivity to articulate a dogma-oriented definition of Christianity is what is significant in the early history of Fundamentalism. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (Northern) affirmed five points of orthodox doctrine in 1910; the World's Christian Fundamentals Association listed nine points in its statement.⁶ Creed making had a long tradition in the history of Christianity. However the theological dilution of the late nineteenth century made dogmatic theological confessions unpopular.

The theological perspective of Niagara powerfully affected Lyman Stewart, one of the financiers behind the issuing of the twelve volume series The Fundamentals (1910-1915). Stewart seems to have been a regular attendee at Niagara and attributed his rescue from higher criticism to Brookes.⁷ Furthermore, Louis Meyer, one of the editors of The Fundamentals stated that the idea for the series first occurred to Stewart while attending the Niagara Conference.⁸ A.C. Dixon, a Niagara man, was chosen as editor-in-chief of the project and James M. Gray, another early Fundamentalist associated with the conference took over from Dixon after 1912. Sixty-four authors contributed to the series and a large number of them were men who had been associated with Niagara and had been nurtured in the theology articulated in the fourteen point creed.⁹ Such considerations have led students of Fundamentalism to suggest that the men of Niagara should be considered as precursors of what is today called evangelical theology and that "the Niagara group and their many

followers might well be credited with keeping before American Protestantism some of the great evangelical and prophetic teachings of the Bible."¹⁰

The Lasting Impact of Dispensational Premillennialism

Premillennialism was not a new doctrine to nineteenth century American evangelicals. The modest revival of this view in the early part of the century was brought to what appeared to be a permanent end by the Millerite debacle of the 1840s. Yet by 1875 a new kind of premillennialism called "dispensationalism" began receiving wide acceptance. The new approach used the "futurist" interpretation of prophecy and rejected the historicists' "year-day theory" for dating prophetic events and labelling the papacy as the Antichrist. This freed the movement from the discredited practice of setting dates for the Second Coming as the fanatical Millerites had done. Furthermore, the new premillennialists convinced the evangelical world that they were in the mainstream of Protestant orthodoxy regarding all the great fundamentals of the faith. Indeed, they showed that not only was their approach compatible with orthodox doctrine, it helped establish it and provide a bulwark against liberalism. Thus the dispensational premillennialism of Niagara and the prophecy conferences became a major source of energy for the emerging Fundamentalist movement. The premillennial impulse has remained strong within Fundamentalism until the present time. The Scotfield Reference Bible, published in 1909, was the most influential tool for the spread of this theology and is still widely used and its footnotes highly revered.

C.I. Scotfield, who provided the Fundamentalist movement with its strongest intellectual apologia, learned his dispensational theology from James

Brookes. Upon hearing of his mentor's death, Scofield testified:

My own personal obligations to him are beyond words. He sought me in the first days of my Christian life, and was my first and best teacher in the oracles of God.¹¹

More than a decade later, after his famous Reference Bible had been published, Scofield wrote: "During the last twenty years of his life Dr. Brookes was perhaps my most intimate friend, and to him I am indebted more than to all other men in the world for the establishment of my faith."¹² The scheme for the Reference Bible was shared by Scofield with prophetic-minded brethren during the days of the Niagara Conferences and they approved of it. Of the eight consulting editors in the project, five were strong Niagara leaders.¹³

The significance of the Scofield Reference Bible for twentieth century Fundamentalism was enormous. Sandeen observes that it is "perhaps the most influential single publication in millenarian and Fundamentalist historiography" and that "in the calendar of Fundamentalist saints no name is better known or more revered."¹⁴ Total publication of this Bible exceeds three million copies and the New Scofield Reference Edition of the Bible has sold over one million copies since it appeared in 1967.¹⁵

Another Niagara disciple of James Brookes, William Blackstone wrote the immensely influential dispensational book Jesus is Coming. The original edition of this work came out in 1878 as a ninety-five page handbook to the study of prophecy. The second edition of 1886 has been hailed as "probably the most widely distributed and influential American millenarian tract of the nineteenth century."¹⁶ The book was enlarged in 1898 and then rose in popularity in the first four decades of the twentieth century, going through

several editions and many printings. By November, 1916, 386,000 copies had been translated into twenty-five languages. By 1927 it had been printed in thirty-six different languages and dialects and 843,102 copies distributed. By the time of Blackstone's death in 1935, over a million copies had been published.¹⁷ The book still has appeal, an inexpensive paperback reprint having recently been published.

The dispensational approach to the Bible which Blackstone and Scofield popularized had immense appeal. Evangelicals had a great concern for the exact meaning of the printed word, and this is what the new approach promised to deliver. It was anchored in a literalistic hermeneutic and presupposed the plenary-verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. It drew from the Baconian ideal of using the objective empirical method, yet still projected a heightened sense of supernaturalism. Here was a scientific approach characterized by careful analysis and classification - a thoroughgoing inductive study and statement of Biblical truth. The skill with which Scofield synthesized the entire system was amazing. He was able to satisfy readers from a vast number of divergent theological traditions because he latched on to commonly held intellectual ~~assumptions~~. Indeed, "the intellectual predispositions associated with dispensationalism gave fundamentalism its characteristic hue."¹⁸

Because these early Fundamentalists resisted the new thought of the latter part of the nineteenth century, they were considered by many to be anti-intellectual and obscurantist. The anti-intellectualism of some of the evangelists in the movement gave credence to this charge. However the

position of the best representatives of the movement was a type of intellectualism which reflected the assumptions of American Christian scholarship of the earlier part of the nineteenth century - a "supernatural positivism." These men did not stress the irrational but presented their faith as being the exact representation of Biblically revealed matters of fact for which could be claimed the highest positive standards of scientific objectivity.

Scofield disclaimed originality in the expositional notes he put into his Reference Bible. Other men had labored and he had entered into their labors, he noted in the 1909 introduction to his Bible. Furthermore, he observed:

The last fifty years have witnessed an intensity and breadth of interest in Bible study unprecedented in the history of the Christian Church. . . . The winnowed and attested results of this half-century of Bible study are embodied in the notes, summaries, and definitions of this edition. Expository novelties, and merely personal views and interpretations, have been rejected.¹⁹

Such affirmations gave the multitude of readers of Scofield's expositional footnotes a sense of continuity with traditional theology and a sense of security that although the editor was providing some new keys to the understanding of the message of the Bible, particularly its unity, it still was the old, unchanged message, and not a new, heretical one. Kraus notes:

Scofield, the lawyer, is at work building the case from the mass of evidence. He is not working out solutions to vital problems. Rather, he is arranging the solutions which were already worked out into a cogent, forceful argument.²⁰

Correct belief was extremely important to early Fundamentalism, not only for theological reasons, but also for social reasons, even though the dynamics of the latter were probably unconscious in the responses of these

staunch believers to their culture. The widespread defection from traditional Christianity had an important effect that tied Fundamentalists' social experience to their intellectual and theological concerns. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century culture was less and less dominated by evangelical views and evangelical religion was losing its social base. It was less and less supported by community sanction and the reward of respectability, especially in urban centers. With this social base seriously eroded, something else had to give cohesion to the movement and thus greater emphasis was placed on commitment to precise doctrine as the basis for solidarity. Key beliefs like inerrancy, anti-evolution, and premillennialism "gained special importance as touchstones to ascertain whether a person belonged to the movement. Exactly correct belief then became proportionately more important to the movement as its social basis for cohesiveness decreased."²¹

Perhaps the most significant factor in the appeal and lasting impact of dispensational premillennialism was that it was seen as an enduring bulwark against liberalism. The Fundamentalists would ask: Who ever heard of a dispensational, premillennial liberal? The obvious answer was: No one! The conclusion drawn was that if an individual or a school or a denomination adhered closely to a dispensational and premillennial theology, this would provide the strongest possible defense against the dilution of orthodox theology or defection to liberal theology.

Tensions Inherent in Premillennialism

Although the dispensational premillennialism taught at Niagara and popularized in twentieth century Fundamentalism had immense appeal, it also

produced some tensions for those who wanted to be consistent with this theology and yet minister to social and broader world needs (as did J. Wilbur Chapman, A.T. Pierson, A.J. Gordon and others). The dilemma which faced these men and their twentieth century followers was how to hold a Gospel of hope which was coupled with prophetic despair. Premillennial theology taught that no matter what the social scientist or the Fundamentalist believer did to uplift society, no human effort could bring in an improved social order - that would only be inaugurated supernaturally in the Second Advent. All human efforts at social reconstruction were foredoomed to failure. This cut the nerve of the inherited evangelical commitment to social involvement and left twentieth century Fundamentalists with a narrower, more truncated Gospel. The church's mission became more stringently defined - it was basically to win souls for Christ. Yes, there was hope for the individual, but not for corporate society. It was the failure of the majority of these early Fundamentalists to work out a positive social message within the framework of their own theology and the tendency instead to take refuge in a despairing view of world history that cut off the relevance of their brand of Christianity to the social and cultural crises of their time. For many Fundamentalists, dogma became more important than deeds and the movement became peripheral to the wider issues and flow of American society in the twentieth century.

Out of the rift that developed in American Protestantism as a result of the Fundamentalist-liberal debate, "the most fundamental controversy to wrack the churches since the age of the Reformation,"²² two distinct parties emerged. The Fundamentalists represented what Martin Marty calls "Private"

Protestantism accentuating individual salvation out of the world, personal morality, and "fulfilment or its absence in the rewards and punishments in another world in a life to come." A second group, which by and large became identified with liberal theology, represented "Public" Protestantism, "public insofar as it was more exposed to the social order and the social destinies of men."²³

The well documented controversy between these two groups reached its tragic-comic climax in the Scopes' Trial of 1925. This debacle dramatized the worst features of what started out as a respected movement - respected at least by most fellow conservatives who might differ with certain points of early Fundamentalist theology, and respected, as Sandeen observes, for the central and not eccentric role it played in nineteenth-century intellectual life, very frequently epitomizing its strongest convictions. Indeed, the Niagara generation of Fundamentalists were "meeting the challenge of the late nineteenth-century in the way that seemed most effective and meaningful to many if not most of the evangelical Protestants of that day" and won "grudging respect from conservatives within their own denominations because they advocated their position with skill and fervor."²⁴

Although William Jennings Bryan officially won the trial at Dayton and the teaching of evolution was outlawed in Tennessee, he lost the contest for the hearts and minds of the American people. The press and radio went out of their way to cast Bryan in the role of an ignorant fanatic and bigot. Fundamentalism itself was associated with bigotry, ignorance, and intolerance. Thus efforts in the wider sphere ended in a self-fulfilling prophecy of

failure - forays into political and social activism were a dead-end. "Fundamentalism" became a term of derision and many conservatives could no longer identify with the movement.²⁵ Defeats in the ecclesiastical battles with the denominations added to the odium of losses in endeavors to be guardians of public morality. "The fundamentalist mind," observes Richard Hofstadter, "has had the bitter experience of being routed in the field of morals and censorship, on evolution and prohibition, and it finds itself increasingly submerged in a world in which the great and respectable media of mass communication violate its sensibilities and otherwise ignore it." He concludes: "In a modern, experimental and sophisticated society, it has been elbowed aside and made a figure of fun."²⁶

Another area of tension and embarrassment in premillennialism has been the seemingly irrepressible impulse toward prophetic extravagance. This has frequently made Fundamentalism look ridiculous and has thrown the whole field of prophetic study into disrepute. Although technically the futurist interpretation of prophecy and the rejection of the year-day theory for dating prophetic events ought to have spared the Fundamentalist movement from the dangerous business of date-setting, a great deal of energy was still spent on identifying the "signs of the times," and this inevitably led to date-setting.

The columns of Truth, Watchword, Watchword and Truth, Our Hope, and the plethora of similar periodicals appearing in the early part of the twentieth century indicate that the Fundamentalist editors and contributors spent a great deal of time in the newspapers of the day. From these popular

secular sources issues like Zionism and other movements among the Jewish people, wars among the nations (particularly the First World War), and various developments in international politics were interpreted as "signs of the time" and as certain indicators that Christ's return was very, very near at hand.

The founding of the Zionist movement drew a great deal of comment from the Niagara and prophecy conference leaders. James Blackstone was involved politically in preparing the way for the Zionist movement, beginning already in 1888 to focus his attention on the land of the Bible and the Jewish people. In 1890, Blackstone initiated the first conference between Christians and Jews. The Blackstone Petition of 1891 was presented to President Benjamin Harrison urging him to influence European governments "to secure the holding, at an early date, of an international conference to consider the condition of the Israelites and their claims to Palestine as their ancient home, and to promote in all other just and proper ways the alleviation of their suffering condition."²⁷ Blackstone's efforts elicited a grateful response from Elisha M. Friedman, Secretary of the University Zionist Society of New York. The 1918 acknowledgment stated: "A well known Christian layman, William E. Blackstone, antedated Theodor Herzl by five years in his advocacy of the re-establishment of a Jewish state."²⁸

E.F. Stroeter attended the second Zionist Conference in 1898 and wrote about the Zionist movement: "The coming of the Lord Jesus is back of it. They shall receive Him who they have pierced."²⁹ Robert Cameron in an article entitled "Signs of His Coming" affirmed that "all who believe in the Advent are constant observers of the 'signs' of its nearness," to which

he added that never before had there been as many indications of the rapid approach of the blessed hope "as are seen on every hand today."³⁰ Arno Gaebelin writing in his Our Hope magazine, reflected on the progress of plans to allow European Jews to their homeland: "Our heart beats faster as we write this important news." He then felt compelled to clarify:

"We rejoice not that Zionism has success, but our joy is in the fact that such an event proves only too well what hour it is in the ending of this age. 'Our Lord comes.'"³¹

The breaking out of the First World War called forth an immense flurry of prophetic excitement and prediction. Even C.I. Scofield was tempted to prophesy. In the Sunday School Times issue of October 17, 1914 the by then famous Bible scholar wrote: "If, then, Turkey and the Balkan states shall be drawn into the war now raging - then we may confidently answer that the war which is now drenching France, Poland, Belgium, and Germany with torrents of human blood, on a scale and with a remorselessness never before equaled in human history, does indeed mark the beginning of the end of this age."³²

The Balfour Declaration in which the British government stated it viewed "with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" brought a sense of euphoria to premillennialists. Events connected with the Second World War, Russia, China, and the crises in the Middle East, particularly Israel's five major wars since independence all provided fertile soil for prophetic speculation.³³ The impulse to make events, rather than Scripture rule has dogged Fundamentalism to this very day. The most recent example is Hal Lindsey's The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon which suggests

the early 1980s for the rapture.³⁴

This history of Fundamentalist prophetic extravagance is a legacy of the Niagara Bible Conference and the prophetic conferences it spawned. In 1947 Carl F.H. Henry called his Fundamentalist brethren to a frank confession of this excess, especially because it accentuated their withdrawal from involvement in the social, economic, and political spheres of American life. He charged that the early Fundamentalist teachers had "substituted a familiarity with the prophetic teaching of the Bible for an aggressive effort to proclaim Christ as the potent answer to the dissolution of world culture. As a consequence, they trained enlightened spectators."³⁵ Niagara, as well as the Fundamentalism it spawned, was a mosaic of divergent and sometimes contradictory tendencies which could never be fully integrated. The paradox in early Fundamentalism has been described thus:

Sometimes its advocates were backward looking and reactionary, at other times they were imaginative innovators. On some occasions they appeared militant and divisive; on others they were warm and irenic. At times they seemed ready to forsake the whole world over a point of doctrine; at other times they appeared heedless of tradition in their zeal to win converts. Sometimes they were optimistic patriots; sometimes they were prophets shaking from their feet the dust of a doomed civilization.³⁶

Although these men wanted so much to stand on no uncertain ground and so often spoke about the "sure word of prophecy," there remained a basic ambivalence in many aspects of their systems of thought as well as their attitudes and actions.

The Institutionalization of Fundamentalism

Probably the most important way the early Fundamentalists counteracted the modernist invasion was by forming various institutions to maintain

and propagate their distinctive doctrines and practices. Thus the Fundamentalism rooted in Niagara was perpetuated in numerous interdenominational and nondenominational organizations which gave the movement permanence as well as places of entrenchment.³⁷ A number of these organizations owe their existence, directly or indirectly to Niagara.

Of foremost importance was the immensely influential American prophecy and Bible conference movement itself which was born in the minds and strategies of the founders of the Niagara Bible Conference. Virtually everyone of any significance in the history of American millenarianism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century attended the Niagara Conference and the names of over 120 leaders and speakers are known from the published proceedings. After the 1878 Believers' Meeting invitations were received from different parts of the United States and Canada for the Niagara men to conduct similar conferences. The invitations asked the Niagara men to control and manage these new conferences.³⁸ The two most significant conferences set up by these men in response to these requests were the first and second American Bible and Prophetic Conferences of 1878 and 1886.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the significance of these conferences to early Fundamentalism. Already in the 1880s Niagara was hailed in some circles as "the greatest gathering of the saints of God on the continent."³⁹ The Niagara sponsored conferences were crucial to the advance and entrenchment of Fundamentalist distinctives, especially dispensational premillennialism but also other fundamentals of the faith. Conferences organized by the Niagara nucleus could be found all over America in the

years following 1886. Two of the most significant were the Bible Inspiration Conference held in Philadelphia November 15-18, 1887, and the Bible Conference on the Holy Spirit held in Baltimore, October 29 - November 1, 1890. Sandeen notes:

In the two conferences of 1887 and 1890 the millenarian movement almost belied its name, wearing in public view the more comprehensive theological dress that we have examined already in its private manifestation at the Niagara conferences. As will be remembered, the doctrines of inspiration and the role of the Holy Spirit had been given prominent place at Niagara, both on the platform and in the creed drawn up by Brookes. The millenarian was becoming the complete Christian.⁴⁰

The Third American Bible and Prophetic Conference was conducted at Allegheny, Pa. in 1895, the fourth in Boston in 1901, the fifth in Chicago in 1914 and the final two in Philadelphia and New York in 1918. The Bible conference became the chief method of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association for reinforcing the fundamentals of the faith in the 1920s. Innumerable smaller conferences patterned after Niagara were spawned at the turn of the century. In fact one of the reasons given for the discontinuance of Niagara was the proliferation of so many similar conferences in so many places. At about the same time the demise of Niagara was being announced Arno Gaebelein announced in his Our Hope periodical that a new summer conference at Sea Cliff, Long Island would become the successor to Niagara. He noted: "We know that many of our readers who used to attend the Bible Conferences . . . at Niagara-on-the-Lake, will be very much interested in this move, insomuch as the conference we propose to hold is on the very same line as the conference held there; that is, the verbal inspiration of the Word, the assurance of salvation and the imminency of the coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ."⁴¹

Bible institutes, begun in the 1880s, rapidly multiplied in the early part of the twentieth century and became the strongholds of Fundamentalism. When in the late 1920s and early thirties Fundamentalists lost the battle for control over the larger denominations, nondenominational Bible schools became denominational surrogates. A combination of dissatisfaction with denominational seminaries which were considered to be contaminated by liberalism, and the conviction that zealous laymen with a few years of Bible instruction and some training in practical Christian service could function effectively in a local pastorate or on the foreign field caused the Bible institute movement to flourish.

We have noted the interest in turning Niagara into a Bible school and although that plan never materialized, a number of Niagara men worked toward the establishment of two of the leading Bible schools of the 1880s - Moody Bible Institute and Boston Missionary Training School. W.J. Erdman and W.G. Moorehead cooperated with Emma Dryer⁴² in some of the first sessions of what eventually became Moody Bible Institute. Other Niagara men who helped teach at Moody were J.M. Stifler, Robert Cameron, and A.J. Gordon. Gordon's Bible school utilized conference men such as Stifler, Cameron, and James M. Gray.⁴³ The first Bible school in Canada, established in 1894, the Toronto Bible Training School (later Toronto Bible College and now Ontario Bible College) had as its first administrators Elmore Harris and William Stewart, both staunch Niagara men.⁴⁴ Northwestern Bible Training School in Minneapolis was begun in 1902 by A.J. Frost, who had spoken at the 1886 International

Prophetic Conference and by William Bell Riley, a founding father of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association. Although not a Niagara man, Riley identified squarely with the conference and built upon the "doctrinal views and educational endeavors" as he put it, of the Niagara men.⁴⁵

So rapid was the spread of the Bible institute movement that by the 1930s there was one Bible school in every large American city and several in some of the very large cities. As Fundamentalism's alienation toward the old-line denominations reached new heights and split-offs from these denominations occurred, the Bible institutes became the major co-ordinating agencies of the Fundamentalist movement. These schools now faced in an unprecedented way demands for educating Christian workers that the major seminaries had formerly provided. The new schools rose to the challenge. Indeed, "Fundamentalism owed its survival to the Bible institutes."⁴⁶ Moody Bible Institute became the national leader of institutional Fundamentalism and Gordon College of Theology and Missions (formerly Boston Missionary Training School) was not far behind. By the mid 1930s Gordon had supplied 100 pastors in greater Boston and 48 out of the total 96 Baptist pastors in New Hampshire. At one time in the 1930s every Baptist pastor in Boston was either a Gordon alumnus, professor or trustee.⁴⁷

Working in close association with Bible institutes were interdenominational faith missions. We have noted the strong emphasis on missions at Niagara, with men like A.T. Pierson and J. Hudson Taylor making strong appeals for worldwide evangelization. The North American branch of the China Inland Mission was founded almost entirely by individuals associated with Niagara. Numerous

Niagara speakers participated in the Northfield conferences launching the Student Volunteer Movement, whose motto was "the evangelization of the world in this generation."⁴⁸ After the controversies of the twenties, in order to bypass the policies of denominations who sent out missionaries of liberal theological convictions, independent or faith missions societies multiplied. At the peak of their success these faith missions and voluntary societies provided approximately 75 percent of the missions personnel of the world.⁴⁹ Next to "defending the faith," evangelism and missions have become the primary passion of Fundamentalists in America. The Niagara Bible Conference contributed immensely to this impulse.

"Weighed in the Balances"⁵⁰

The role of the Niagara Bible Conference in the emergence of American Fundamentalism was immense. Niagara provided the doctrinal shape of Fundamentalism, casting the die for its main theological distinctives. The Niagara Creed and later Fundamentalist creeds like it were not merely a conservative restatement of doctrines traditionally accepted by orthodox Christians. These creeds were fashioned with a special object in view - they were apologetic weapons to "earnestly contend for the faith." They reflected the stress being put upon Christian belief at certain critical points and reaffirmed in no uncertain terms the doctrines being questioned or denied by liberal theologians.

The chief new feature emerging out of the Niagara theology, an emphasis which became so vital a force in twentieth century American Fundamentalism, was dispensational premillennialism. Approaching the Scriptures dispensation-

ally became characteristic of most Fundamentalists after the appearance of the Scofield Reference Bible. Inherent in this approach was a premillennialism which insisted on imminency, and a secret, pretribulation rapture, doctrines which are still characteristic of most current Fundamentalist theology. The key to understanding these and other Biblical truths was to "rightly divide the word of truth," i.e. make careful distinctions between Israel and the church, law and gospel, Christ's coming for His saints and with them - all of which was bequeathed to Fundamentalism by some of the leading men of Niagara.

Niagara gave American Fundamentalism a new love for Bible study, but also a new zeal and militancy for defending the Bible's inerrancy. A great zeal for evangelism and missions emanated out of Niagara and was inherited by twentieth century Fundamentalism. But certain strong leaders of Niagara also set the stage for the twentieth century Fundamentalist enclave mentality which considered personal regeneration and separation from the world infinitely more important than societal reformation and practical ministry to the world. Their eschatology deferred the dealing with the vexing social, political, and economic problems of life to the supernatural denouement to take place at the Second Advent - a solution totally in the hands of God. Niagara contributed an ecclesiology which laid the basis for interdenominational and nondenominational cooperation in institutions such as Bible and prophecy conferences, Bible schools, and faith missions societies. These institutions gave Fundamentalist doctrine and practice permanence as well as became agencies for the defense as well as the propagation of the faith.

As a postscript it should be noted that in the 1940s a self-conscious

new evangelicalism emerged out of the original Fundamentalist tradition.⁵¹ The Fundamentalist tradition now divided into two major movements. One was evangelicalism, which retained many of the doctrines of Fundamentalism but turned from the schismatic and defensive aspects of the movement and sought to redirect the fundamental faith of evangelicalism toward positive contemporary objectives. These objectives were clearly articulated by Harold Ockenga, founder and first president of the National Association of Evangelicals in Christianity Today, an evangelical periodical founded in 1956 as part of the new thrust to intellectual and theological respectability. Ockenga wrote:

The evangelical wishes to retrieve Christianity from a mere eddy of the main stream into the full current of modern life. He desires to win a new respectability for orthodoxy in the academic circles by producing scholars who can defend the faith on intellectual ground. He hopes to recapture denominational leadership from within the denominations rather than abandoning those denominations to modernism. He intends to restate his position carefully and cogently so that it must be considered in theological dialogue. He intends that Christianity will be the mainspring in many of the reforms of the societal order. It is wrong to abdicate responsibility for society under the impetus of a theology which overemphasizes the eschatological.⁵²

Fundamentalists hurled heated retorts at leaders of the new evangelicalism, calling them mind-worshippers and subversives who were seeking to surrender Fundamentalism to modernism. "Neo-evangelical" (a term originally coined by Harold Ockenga to distinguish the new movement from Fundamentalism, liberalism and neo-orthodoxy) became a libel as well as a label in Fundamentalist thinking and the libel was put on various evangelical leaders and institutions.⁵³

The distancing of the evangelical movement from hard-line Fundamentalism

continued throughout the 1960s. The militancy, narrowness and extreme separatism of the Fundamentalist heritage was moderated by the evangelicals and broader interests were taken up. This paved the way for a larger evangelical coalition by the 1970s. George Marsden succinctly places current evangelicalism in its historical context by noting that "in the shorter perspective of its fundamentalist past, evangelicalism today appears to be the somewhat moderate outgrowth of an essentially eccentric and separatist religious subculture." He adds: ". . . viewed in the perspective of a century ago, contemporary evangelicalism can be seen as embodying some of the most deeply rooted traditions and characteristic attitudes in American culture. At times it appears as a beleaguered sect; at other times it still poses as the religious establishment."⁵⁴

Within the current evangelical coalition many Fundamentalist tendencies are still discernable. Approximately five million of an estimated forty-four million evangelicals in 1980 would refer to themselves as Fundamentalists.⁵⁵ However this five million includes only those who line up in doctrine and practice with historic Fundamentalism as defined by current Fundamentalists - i.e. those standing for "the literal exposition of all the affirmations and attitudes of the Bible and the militant exposure of all non-Biblical affirmations and attitudes."⁵⁶ This Fundamentalist self-concept sees itself in direct continuity with the Niagara Bible Conference and the prophecy conference movement as well as with the fighters and separatists of the second generation of the movement who established a network of independent Fundamentalist churches and associations. By this

definition only those groups which are members of the "Fellowships of Fundamentalists" (organizations like the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the Independent Fundamental Churches of America), and which take a militant, separatistic stance against Liberalism, New Evangelicalism, and other forms of compromise are true Fundamentalists. George Dollar writes: "Of all the defining characteristics of historic Fundamentalism, the one most useful in distinguishing genuine modern Fundamentalism from the partial and spurious brands is militancy in the Biblical exposure of error and of all compromises with error." He does mention professing Fundamentalists which are really not worthy of the name - "moderates" who are indifferent to hardline Biblical separation, and "modified" Fundamentalists who have surrendered to New Evangelicalism.⁵⁷

The five million figure would be enlarged considerably if one would include those who accept virtually all of the essential doctrines of Fundamentalism (Biblical inerrancy being the chief one), yet have not chosen to exclude themselves from mainline American denominations. For example the Southern Baptists, America's largest Protestant denomination with 13.4 million members certainly have at least several million believers in their ranks who could well be classified as Fundamentalists. At the 1981 convention the incumbent president Bailey Smith, pastor of the 15,000-member First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Oklahoma, was reelected, gaining 60 percent of the 13,000 delegate votes. Smith was the "fundamentalists!" candidate. He upholds Biblical inerrancy and in his first term replaced many moderates on Baptist governing boards with officials who also held the

inerrancy doctrine.⁵⁸ A strong fundamentalist strain is also prominent in both the northern and southern wing of the large Presbyterian Church, U.S.A..⁵⁹

The closest modern-day, hard-line Fundamentalist exemplification of the Niagara heritage is perhaps best expressed by George Dollar in the concluding chapter of his History of Fundamentalism in America. In words that echo Niagara president James Brookes, Dollar writes:

America faces a black hour, perhaps her last, as world crises mount and signs point to the imminent return of the Lord Jesus to rapture His Church, judge, make war, and pour out the thunderbolts of God's wrath on the entire earth. . . .

In the midst of this terrible tragedy stands American Fundamentalism. It has spoken for the Lord and will continue to speak for Him and His truth. Its message alone - of all messages being given to Americans - has been one of conformity to the Word, convictions based on the Word, and conflict because of the attacks on the Word. . . .

Fundamentalism has lost the denominations, the old-line centers of learning, and the grand institutions of honor and religious accolade, which have been the pride and achievement of our long history. These were lost in the great battles, but the Faith has been preserved; the keeping of the Faith has been the one sure heritage of Fundamentalists for the past one hundred years in spite of the confusion, controversy, conflict, and corruption.⁶⁰

Dollar wrote in 1973; by the end of the decade, although the premillennial hope was still strong, more and more conservative Christians (along with many non-Christians) decided to do something to arrest America's slide down the pathway of moral and social decadence. There were shifts in thinking among even some of the most strict Fundamentalists allowing them to join with evangelicals and other political conservatives to save the nation by opposing abortion, sex education, the Equal Rights Amendment, homosexual rights laws, compulsory school busing, and pornography, and by favoring

stronger United States defense, security for Israel, and voluntary prayer in public schools.

Evidence of the current Fundamentalist influence on American life and culture is not difficult to trace. Major electronic evangelists like Jerry Falwell, Rex Humbard, and Oral Roberts influence not only the religious but also the economic and political views of millions of Americans. Fundamentalist-initiated political action groups like the Moral Majority have brought evangelical Christians, Catholics, Jews and Mormons under their umbrella.⁶¹ There is still a strong emphasis in American Protestantism on supernatural truth and experience as opposed to naturalism, as shown in the 1979 Gallup Poll which revealed that more than eight out of every ten persons in America believed Jesus Christ to be divine, sixty-five million adults believed the Bible to be inerrant, and better than one-third of the adult population claimed to have had a life changing religious experience with fifty million saying this experience involved Jesus Christ.⁶² Fundamentalists and evangelicals alike are still caught up with premillennialism's fascination over the details of the still-imminent Second Advent, as the current spate of books and films on Armageddon indicate. The Fundamentalist zeal to win souls is strong as ever as witnessed in the efforts of organizations like Campus Crusade for Christ which is raising one billion dollars to evangelize the world in this decade. However, most Fundamentalists, as well as many evangelicals still see the saving of souls as the sum total of Christian obligation to the world, with separateness and personal purity taking precedence over the risk of deeper levels of involvement in society to work for

justice and social uplift.

The Fundamentalist impulse of Niagara is perhaps most vividly seen in the continuing widespread militancy not only by avowed Fundamentalists, but by many evangelicals, as noted in the Southern Baptist Convention, over the question of the inerrancy of Scripture.⁶³ This view of Scripture has become synonymous with belief in its reliability and authority. Preserving the Bible as the decisive basis for authority was, above all else, the *raison d'être* of the Niagara Bible Conference as well as the central focus of conservative Christians throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The history of this concern goes back to Massachusetts Bay and beyond, although no theory of inerrancy was spelled out until the nineteenth century.

Though its forms of expression are changing, the Fundamentalist-evangelical tradition, as mediated and shaped through Niagara and the prophetic conference movement constitutes a vital part of the American temper. The deep roots of Fundamentalism, not only in Niagara, but also in revivalism, the pietist holiness impulse, and Puritanism itself assures that this tradition will likely survive as a strong, independent conservative force well into the future.

FOOTNOTES

1. Light on Prophecy: Proceedings and Addresses at the Philadelphia Prophetic Conference, May 28-30, 1918 (New York: The Christian Herald Bible House, 1918), p. 14.
2. Sandeen, Roots, p. 246. Sandeen states that the word "Fundamentalist" was coined by Curtis Lee Laws in an editorial in the Watchman-Examiner, July 1, 1920. Others say that with the appearance of The Fundamentals, the movement received its name.
3. Truth 17(1891): 225 and 19(1893): 673.
4. Dollar, p. 43.
5. Wilt, p. 57.
6. Sandeen, Roots, p. xviii; Sandeen, The Origins of Fundamentalism, p. 22.
7. Sandeen, Roots, p. 193.
8. Ibid., n. 13.
9. Ibid., p. 199. Contributors associated with Niagara and the Niagara inspired prophecy conferences included George S. Bishop, W.J. Erdman, H.W. Frost, A.C. Gaebelein, James M. Gray, A.C. Dixon, W.G. Moorehead, L.W. Munhall, A.T. Pierson, C.I. Scofield, George F. Pentecost, and others immersed in Niagara theology (like R.A. Torrey, Charles R. Erdman, and Canon Dyson Hague).
10. Frank E. Gaebelein, The Story of the Scofield Reference Bible 1909-1959 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 13.
11. Truth 23(1897): 312.

12. As cited by Sandeen in Roots, p. 223. Another ardent dispensational premillennialist Arno C. Gaebelein wrote of his colleague Scofield: "Being instructed by Dr. Brookes in Bible study, he soon mastered with his fine analytical mind, the A.B.C.s of the right division of the Word of God. From Dr. Brookes' instructions he became acquainted with the high points of sacred prophecy relating to the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God" (as cited by Frank E. Gaebelein, pp. 19-20).
13. W.J. Erdman, A.T. Pierson, W.G. Moorehead, Elmore Harris, and Arno C. Gaebelein - see title page of The Scofield Reference Bible.
14. Sandeen, Roots, p. 222 and p. 224.
15. The three million figure comes from Dwight Wilson, Armageddon Now! (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 15. The statistics on the New Scofield Reference Bible come from Fuller, p. 1.
16. Sandeen, Roots, p. 304.
17. Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, Title Page, and Raush, p. 263.
18. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 62.
19. Scofield Reference Bible, p. iii.
20. Kraus, pp. 129-30.
21. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 205.
22. Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 783.
23. Marty, p. 179.
24. Sandeen, Roots, p. 227 and p. 229.

25. These conservatives were those who did not necessarily hold to verbal inspiration, premillennialism, or social withdrawal. Many evangelical denominations never got involved in the religious controversies of the twenties. This would include such groups as the Christian Reformed Church, Missouri Lutheran, the Mennonites, and the innumerable Holiness and Pentecostal groups who cannot rightly be termed "Fundamentalists."

26. Hofstadter, p. 134.

27. As cited by Rausch, p. 266. The petition's opening sentence was bold, asking the question, "What shall be done for the Russian Jews?" It answers: "Why not give Palestine back to them again? According to God's distribution of nations, it is their home, an inalienable possession from which they were expelled by force. . . . Let us now restore them to the land of which they were so cruelly despoiled by our Roman ancestors." The petition was signed by 413 outstanding Christian and Jewish leaders in the United States and through the State Department was distributed to the principal nations of the world - *ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

29. Watchword and Truth 21(1899): 308.

30. *Ibid.*, 23(1901): 198.

31. *Ibid.* For an excellent overview of the attitudes of Brookes, Stroeter, Gaebelein, and Blackstone toward the Jewish people see Rausch, ch. 10 "Our Hope," Jewish Missions and the National Restoration of the Jews."

32. As cited by Alexander Reese in The Approaching Advent of Christ (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1937; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975), p. 241.

33. See Wilson's Armageddon Now! for a fascinating study of the many ill-fated date-setting attempts of premillennialists since 1917.

34. Hal Lindsey, The 1980s: Countdown to Armageddon (New York: Bantam Books, 1980).

35. Carl F.H. Henry, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1947), p. 50. In 1960, Harold Ockenga, founder and first president of the National Association of Evangelicals, writing out of his own Fundamentalist background confessed: "It is wrong to abdicate responsibility for society under the impetus of a theology which overemphasizes the eschatological" - Christianity Today, October 10, 1960, p. 14.
36. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 43.
37. The inderdenominationalism inherent in the major institutions of Fundamentalism was based on an ecclesiology which emphasized the universal church rather than the denomination or local body of believers. This thrust was clear in the Niagara Conference and the prophecy conference movement and the concept has been adopted by twentieth century Fundamentalism. The Niagara men in turn were heirs to the voluntary society pattern of cooperation of early nineteenth century American evangelicalism.
38. Truth 4(1878); 451.
39. Christian Worker's Magazine, December, 1913 as cited by Dollar, p. 72.
40. As cited by Sandeen in Roots, p. 160.
41. Our Hope 8(1901): 381-82. These words were written at the height of the pre and post tribulation controversy which was becoming very heated in the ranks of Niagara leaders and which was the primary cause of the demise of the Niagara Bible Conference. Within a few years the pretribulationists won out with their emphasis on imminency, insisting Christ could come at any moment. This victory was bequeathed to Fundamentalism chiefly through the efforts of men like Arno Gaebelein and his close associate C.I. Scofield. Gaebelein felt that the Niagara Bible Conference had been raised up as a special testimony to the imminency of the coming of Christ and that when this phase of truth was given up by some of the leading Bible teachers in the movement (W.J. Erdman, Nathaniel West, and Robert Cameron were the men most frequently singled out), the conference collapsed - cf. Our Hope 16(1910): 521.
42. James Brookes relates that Miss Dryer conducted a meeting for ladies at the 1880 sessions of Niagara - Truth 6(1880): 429.

43. Sandeen, Roots, p. 182.
44. S.A. Witmar, The Bible College Story (Wheaton: Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, 1970), pp. 87-88.
45. Sandeen, Roots, p. 246.
46. Ibid., p. 183.
47. Joel A. Carpenter, "A Shelter in the Time of Storm: Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929-1942," Church History 49(1980): 67-68.
48. Sandeen, Roots, p. 186. Speakers included A.T. Pierson, A.J. Gordon, James Brookes, Nathaniel West, W.G. Moorehead, D.W. Whittle, and W.W. Clark.
49. Ramm, p. 89.
50. Daniel 5:27 (King James Version).
51. Sources for tracing this development are Louis Gasper, The Fundamentalist Movement (Paris: Moulton & Co., 1963); David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, eds., The Evangelicals, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977); Kenneth Kantzer, ed., Evangelical Roots (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers, 1978), especially Harold J. Ockenga's contribution, "From Fundamentalism, Through New Evangelicalism, To Evangelicalism," ch. 3; John D. Woodbridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, The Gospel in America: Themes in the Story of America's Evangelicals (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), especially ch. 3 "Great Is My Faithfulness - Regrouping and Renewal (1930-1978)"; and an older work, yet still helpful, especially in describing the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942 is Bruce Shelley, Evangelicalism in America (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1967).
52. Harold Ockenga, "Resurgent Evangelical Leadership," Christianity Today, October 10, 1960, p. 14.
53. See Charles J. Woodbridge, The New Evangelicalism (Greenville, S.C.: Bob Jones University Press, 1969). See also ch. 12 "An Enemy Within: New Evangelicalism," in Dollar.

54. Marsden in The Evangelicals, p. 143.
55. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, p. 228. See a summary of the results of the very extensive 1979 Gallup Poll on religion in America in Christianity Today, December 21, 1979, pp. 12-19.
56. Dollar, p. xv.
57. Ibid., p. 283.
58. Kenneth L. Woodward with Joe Contreras, "The Battling Baptists," Newsweek, June 22, 1981, p. 88. The 13.4 million Southern Baptist membership figure comes from the 1981 issue of the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches as cited by Christianity Today, June 26, 1981, p. 33.
59. See Louis Moore, "Presbyterians Affirm Deity of Christ, Vow to Be Led by Historic Confessions," Christianity Today, June 26, 1981, pp. 32-33. Hard-line Fundamentalists insist that when Southern Baptist and mainline Presbyterians affirm they are "fundamental," they use the term in reference to Reformation truths and not in reference to the position of historic American Fundamentalism.
60. Dollar, pp. 263-64.
61. See Newsweek, September 15, 1980, cover story "Born-Again Politics," pp. 28-36. Fundamentalism has had a love-hate attitude toward America as a Christian nation as exemplified in the present by men like Jerry Falwell and movements like the Moral Majority. One would expect these pessimistic premillennialists to wash their hands of the whole apostate mess in America and take refuge in their prophecy charts. Yet the Puritan dream of America as a Christian light for the nations (if it will only repent and uphold God's laws) seems to resurface in Fundamentalist circles at critical times in the history of the nation (as during the First and Second World War and the late 1970s).
62. Christianity Today, December 21, 1979, p. 14.
63. See for example Harold Lindsell, The Battle for the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976).

APPENDIX A

The 1878 Niagara Creed*

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

1

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

2

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience: Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 5:3,4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:4-6.

3

We believe that man, originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, fell from his high and holy estate by eating the forbidden fruit, and as the consequence of his disobedience the threatened penalty of death was then and there inflicted, so that his moral nature was not only grievously injured by the fall, but he totally lost all spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and subject to the power of the devil: Gen. 1:26; 2:17; John 5:40; 6:53; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 John 3:8.

* Truth 4(1878): 452-58.

4

We believe that this spiritual death, or total corruption of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire race of man, the man Christ Jesus alone excepted; and hence that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of Divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably bad, being in enmity against God, and incapable by any educational process whatever of subjection to His law: Gen. 6:5; Psa. 14:1-3; 51:5; Jer. 17:9; John 3:6; Rom. 5:12-19; 8:6,7.

5

We believe that, owing to this universal depravity and death in sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again; and that no degree of reformation however great, no attainment in morality however high, no culture however attractive, no humanitarian and philanthropic schemes and societies however useful, no baptism or other ordinance however administered, can help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven; but a new nature imparted from above, a new life implanted by the Holy Ghost through the Word; is absolutely essential to salvation: Isa. 64:6; John 3:5,18; Gal. 6:15; Phil. 3:4-9; Tit. 3:5; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23.

6

We believe that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin, and made a curse, for us, dying in our room and stead; and that no repentance, no feeling, no faith, no good resolutions, no sincere efforts, no submission to the rules and regulations of any church, or of all the churches that have existed since the days of the Apostles, can add in the very least to the value of that precious blood, or to the merit of that finished work, wrought for us by Him who united in His person true and proper divinity with perfect and sinless humanity: Lev. 17:11; Matt. 26:28; Rom. 5:6-9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18,19.

7

We believe that Christ, in the fulness of the blessings He has secured by His obedience unto death, is received by faith alone, and that the moment we trust in Him as our Saviour we pass out of death into everlasting life, being justified from all things, accepted before the Father according to the measure of His acceptance, loved as He is loved, and having His place and portion, as linked to Him, and one with Him forever: John 5:24; 17:23; Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:4-6,13; 1 John 4:17; 5:11,12.

8

We believe that it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Saviour; and that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own

worthiness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word, exciting within His children filial love, gratitude, and obedience: Luke 10:20; 12:32; John 6:47; Rom. 8:33-39; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6-8; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 John 5:13.

9

We believe that all the Scriptures from first to last center about our Lord Jesus Christ, in His person and work, in His first and second coming; and hence that no chapter even of the Old Testament is properly read or understood until it leads to Him; and moreover that all the Scriptures from first to last, including every chapter even of the Old Testament, were designed for our practical instruction: Luke 24:27,44; John 5:39; Acts 17:2,3; 18:28; 26:22,23; 28:23; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11.

10

We believe that the Church is composed of all who are united by the Holy Spirit to the risen and ascended Son of God, that by the same Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and thus being members one of another, we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian prejudices and denominational bigotry, and loving one another with a pure heart fervently: Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 2:32-47; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:20-23; 4:3-10; Col. 3:14,15.

11

We believe that the Holy Spirit, not as an influence, but as a Divine Person, the source and power of all acceptable worship and service, is our abiding Comforter and Helper, that He never takes His departure from the Church, nor from the feeblest of the saints, but is ever present to testify of Christ, seeking to occupy us with Him, and not with ourselves nor with our experiences: John 7:38,39; 14:16,17; 15:26; 16:13,14; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:9; Phil. 3:3.

12

We believe that we are called with a holy calling to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; and so to live in the Spirit that we should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh; but the flesh being still in us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage needs to be kept constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence to the dishonor of His name: Rom. 8:12,13; 13:14; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:1-10; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9.

13

We believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death immediately pass into His presence, and there remain in conscious bliss until the

resurrection of the body at His coming, when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in the glory; but the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the final judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power: Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6:7; Rev. 20:11-15.

14

We believe that the world will not be converted during the present dispensation, but is fast ripening for judgment, while there will be a fearful apostasy in the professing Christian body; and hence that the Lord Jesus will come in person to introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; and that this personal and premillennial advent is the blessed hope set before us in the Gospel for which we should be constantly looking: Luke 12:35-40; 17:26-30; 18:8; Acts 15:14-17; 2 Thess. 2:3-8; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Tit. 2:11-15.

APPENDIX B

How I Became a Premillennialist

by James H. Brookes*

Friends have asked me to print the story of my conversion to premillennial truth. During the first years of my ministry the subject had never occupied my attention. There was a vague and indefinite idea in my mind that after a long interval, probably many thousands of years, there would be a general resurrection and a general judgment; but even then there was no thought of our Lord's personal return to the earth. It was supposed that at some place, perhaps in the air, all would together, or one by one, hear the sentence that must fix their eternal destiny.

Apart from this no sermon had ever been preached in my hearing about the coming of the Lord. No allusion was ever made to it in the course of my imperfect theological training. No book concerning it had ever been read. In my boyhood people had heard, even in the distant and obscure part of the South where my mother lived, that Mr. Miller, of New England, had fixed upon the day of Christ's appearing, and it caused considerable excitement. But the day passed without any unusual occurrence; and those who looked for His coming were regarded as cranks, if not actually crazy.

The Theological and Literary Journal, edited by Mr. D.N. Lord, of New York, was taken, but his articles on Eschatology were skipped in reading. In fact, the entire theme was utterly distasteful to me, and even offensive. My eyes were closed and my heart sealed to the plain testimonies of God's Word; and the plain references to the second coming were either passed over, or at least they made no impression whatever.

At last a morning came when it was necessary to read the book of Revelation in family worship. It has always been my habit to assemble the members of my household immediately after breakfast for reading the Scripture and prayer, each one reading a verse in turn. On that particular morning, discovering that the book of Revelation was before us, some other place in the Bible was found; and when the family went out of the study the question

* Cited from David R. Williams, James H. Brookes: A Memoir (St. Louis: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1897), pp. 147-52.

was put to my conscience and heart. Why did you omit the last book God has given us?

The reply made to myself was: "Because I do not understand it. The book is so full of strange beasts and mysterious symbols, it does me no good. But did God make a mistake in putting that book into the canon of sacred Scripture? That it had a right there was as clear as the inspiration of John's gospel or the Epistle to the Romans; and after all might it not be my fault that it was so meaningless?"

Convicted and condemned at the bar of my own conscience, I opened the book and read it through at a single sitting. My mind was engaged and interested in an unusual degree; and my attention was arrested by a statement in the very beginning, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy; and keep those things which are written therein" (Rev. 1:3). It struck me that the Holy Ghost had said nothing about understanding it, but, "Blessed is he that readeth".

Enough was known about the prophecies in general to remember that the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation bear a close resemblance to each other; and so the former book was read with intense interest, and then the latter book again, at one time; and in an hour or two it was seen that in Daniel the Spirit of God explains some of the symbols, as the great image of Nebuchadnezzar and the four wild beasts, representing the four mighty world powers. This gave a little light upon my pathway through the book of Revelation.

Then it occurred to me to commence with the Old Testament prophets and the whole of the New Testament, with a lead pencil in my hand, marking every passage and verse that bears upon the future of the church and the world. That there were many other prophecies before reaching the book of Isaiah was unknown to me in my ignorance; but the four greater prophets and the twelve minor prophets, together with the entire New Testament, were carefully and prayerfully perused. Probably a month passed in the investigation, and not a single human book nor comment, nor exposition of any sort, was touched.

Having gathered up the marked passages and brought them together, three conclusions were definitely reached. First, Jesus Christ is coming back to this world as truly, bodily, visibly, personally as that He was born in

Bethlehem of Judea. Second, things shall not always remain as they are now, but "nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4); "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid" (Isa. 11:6); "The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isa. 33:24); "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). Third, this glorious change shall not precede, but succeed that glorious coming.

This was many years ago, and the conclusions then reached have been deepened by every day's study of the Word of God, and by the actual condition then and now of the church and the world. It has made me a lonely man, but it has been an unspeakable blessing to my soul, especially in times of sore affliction and discouragement. It has uprooted selfish ambition and a desire for human applause, and caused me to aim at least in bearing true testimony for our now rejected Lord, with a longing to be well pleasing to Him at His coming. Especially does "that blessed hope" throw a gleam of glory upon the graves of my beloved dead. It frets me no longer because many of my dear brethren can not see this precious truth, which shines like the sun at noonday from the Word of God, and which is a veritable key to unlock the meaning of the Scriptures. John the Baptist was a faithful witness when he said, "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven" (John 3:27). God forbid that a poor sinner should judge them, for to their own Master they stand or fall.

APPENDIX C

To the Friends of Prophetic Truth

by Robert Cameron*

Let it be borne in mind that I am writing these letters, not as editor of Watchword and Truth, but solely of my own motion, as if I had no connection with the magazine. I am using these columns just as they may be used by others, as the medium for the expression of my personal convictions respecting prophetic truth. What I say by no means commits this magazine to their advocacy.

What is to be given in this letter is the origin and history of the belief that the church will be taken up before the great tribulation sets in.

The Rev. Dr. Bullinger has said that this belief is the key to a right interpretation of prophetic Scripture, given to J.N. Darby by revelation from God. Many people so think, but so do not I. The very fact that it comes to us labelled as a fresh revelation from God, would stamp it as spurious to most Christian minds. "The faith, once for all delivered unto the saints," is limited to the holy Scriptures, and any addition to, or subtraction from that revelation, will receive a terrible retribution at the hands of God (Rev. 22:18-19). The so called prophets in France in the eighteenth century, the "utterances of prophets and prophetesses" in Edward Irving's church, and in Scotland, and the "revelations" of Johanna Southcoate, in England, nearly one hundred years ago; the book of revelation which Joseph Smith professed to receive, as well as those of Mrs. Eddy, Mr. Sanford and Mr. Dowie in our own day, are all to be rejected because they claim to be revelations in addition to what is already given in the Word of God. Upon the same principle this claim made for Mr. Darby, openly by Dr. B., but secretly by many who follow his teachings almost from the beginning of the "Brethren" movement, was certainly sufficient reason not to receive such a speculative novelty without much caution, much study of the Scriptures, and much prayer. The fact that it has a tendency to foster spiritual pride in carnal Christians

* Watchword and Truth 24(1902): 234-38.

should have led watchful disciples to say: danger, beware.

The first mention of this view, so far as I can ascertain, during the whole period of Christian history, was in the church of Edward Irving, in London, in the latter part of 1831 and the early part of 1832. And this leads to the inquiry, "Who was Edward Irving?" This is very important, because a magazine which poses as the purest exponent of the faith, and which is very severe in its criticisms of others, has recently denied that Edward Irving was excluded from the Presbyterian body for teaching doctrines concerning the humanity of Christ, that are unscriptural, fundamentally subversive of the faith, and, in the judgement of many Christians, positively blasphemous.

Edward Irving was a Scotch Presbyterian, and began his ministerial work as assistant to Dr. Chalmers in Glasgow. He then went to London as pastor of the Caledonia Chapel, where, as Carlyle, who had known him intimately from boyhood, says: "The great, the learned, and the high, the titled, the gifted, and the beautiful came round about him and sat mute and spellbound, listening to his wonderful words." His herculean and erect form, his blazing eyes, his dreamy face, his melodious voice, his marvellous penetration into the depths of Scripture and especially of the prophets, his great eloquence and his exalted diction, made him "the star of the metropolitan pulpit and the rage of London society." In 1830 he was tried for heresy before the London Presbytery, from which he appealed to the Scottish Presbytery, and by it he was afterwards deposed from the ministry. He then organized the new "Apostolic Church," having twelve apostles and claiming to possess all of the miraculous gifts of tongues, healings, and supernatural powers seen in the days of the apostles. A few fragments of this "Catholic Apostolic Church" still exist.

The first man designated as an "apostle," by revelation, through those who "spoke in the power," was Robert Baxter, a man of God, a man of unusual activity in religious work, and a man of more than ordinary ability. Although he never gave a willing sanction to Mr. Irving's teachings, he was fully identified with him in the attempt to realize the form and power of the

primitive church in the gifts of tongues, prophecies, and other supernatural powers. Indeed, he was the man to whom the whole church deferred, and under whose guidance Mr. Irving finally placed himself, in those memorable days. Afterwards, he was graciously delivered from the slavery to demons, and he gives a complete account of it all in "A Narrative of Facts, characterizing the supernatural manifestations, in members of Mr. Irving's congregation and other individuals in England and Scotland, and formerly in the writer himself. By Robert Baxter. Jas. Nisbet, 1835." I have just read the second edition of this narrative with care and with amazement. I can safely say that there is scarcely a heresy that now pervades modern, Protestant christendom of which the germs, and sometimes the fully developed body, is not found in the instruction that came from these "seducing spirits, speaking lies in hypocrisy" through Mr. Baxter and others. Mr. Irving began to depart from the faith by false teachings concerning the person of our Lord, then concerning the holiness of believers, and then this wonderful man, "whose eagle eye was eclipsed by too intent-gazing at the sun," as Carlyle says, wandered still farther away from the truth. He was forsaken by his friends, started for Scotland on a mission in obedience to the "demons" speaking in his assembly, and there he died of a broken heart. Never can I forget the description of the trial of this great man, given by the late Mrs. Moody of Canada, who, with her sister, Agnes Strickland, was an eye-witness of the whole. She declared that at the close of Mr. Irving's address the audience was sobbing like whipped children, and that the scene quite equalled that of the close of Edmond Burke's great address at the trial of Warren Hastings before the British House of Parliament. She said that even those who knew Irving was wrong, for very admiration of the man, wished that he might be freed from the imputation charged against him: But the Presbyterian heart stood firm, and the heresies were condemned. . . .

Now, dear brethren, I have to state a fact in history, known only to few, but abundantly capable of being established, - a fact that is here stated in all kindness, and without any desire to judge any one. When Mr. Irving was teaching these fundamental errors respecting our Lord, when he was

denying the sinlessness of his nature, and when evil spirits, both in known, and unknown tongues, were giving their sanction to these blasphemies - at that very time, and so far as I know, for the first time in the whole history of the Christian church, the new and strange doctrine that the church should be translated secretly, and before the great tribulation, was made known. And that, too, not by Mr. Irving alone, but by those who "spoke in the power," as they called the testimony of these deceiving spirits, professing to be the Spirit of God. Mark you, I do not say it was then announced for the first time. I only say so far as I know. Dr. Tregelles, B.W. Newton and others, say there is not a hint of this doctrine in any writings extant, from the days of Polycarp to the days of Irving. Is it not strange that John, dying about one hundred years after Christ was born, knew nothing of this "blessed hope," if it be "the blessed hope"? If he knew, why did he not name it to Polycarp? Is it not strange that neither Polycarp, nor any of his successors encouraged the hearts of the believers amidst their sufferings, with the assurance that they would be caught up before the tribulation? Is it not strange that when the early Christian teachers said Nero was the Antichrist, and his fiendish persecutions were "the tribulation," that neither Paul, in Rome at the time, nor any other writer, corrected the mistake by saying the church would not be on earth during the Antichrist and the tribulation? It is hard, in the light of these facts, to think that Paul, or John, who survived him more than thirty years, ever thought of such a deliverance. Indeed, John speaks of "the Antichrist" to the Christians, as if his coming was a matter of deep concern to the church. . . .

Now I have this much to say in all kindness.

1. Dear brethren, do you not think a great deal of care and caution should be exercised in accepting a doctrine, first taught by a man who held the most erroneous and impious views respecting our Lord of any man in Christian history?

2. Do you not think you should halt and weigh well the propagation of these views, which were taught by lying spirits in Mr. Irving's church?

3. Do you not think you should re-examine this question before appealing to Scriptures which demons used to convince Mr. Baxter, when he hesitated, to accept this rapture before the coming of the Lord and before the tribulation?

4. Do you not think it unwise to thrust upon the saints an acceptance of a doctrine that never was heard of, in all Christendom, until seventy years ago, and then for the first time from the lips of a man who was deposed from the ministry as a heretic, and which was sanctioned by what has been clearly demonstrated to be the voice of "lying spirits"?

5. Do you think that the whole body of believers, from the apostles down, were in ignorance respecting this truth, and that only to the few who have followed Messrs. Irving and Darby, the truth has been revealed?

6. Do you think it wise to exalt into "a test of fellowship" a doctrine so recently enunciated, that does not have a single passage of Scripture beyond the question of a doubt upon which to rest its feet, that had such a questionable origin, from the lips of a heretic, and supported by the testimony of demons, and that was enforced by him and by them, then, as it is by many now, as the only means by which a sleeping church could be aroused to activity?

7. Do you purpose ruling out of your fellowship your brethren who prefer clinging to the old paths, who take the liberty of teaching what they believe was taught by Christ and by the apostles, and what has been most surely believed by all Christians until the early part of this century, and what was taught by the Bonars, by Muller, by Groves, by Craik, by Tregelles, and by Newton?

Now bear in mind that the "Brethren," with Bellet, Groves, Darby and Congleton, were beginning to form into an assembly in 1829 - just seven years after Irving came to London, and that about 1833 this doctrine of rapture before tribulation began to be put forth in Lady Powerscourt's meetings, where all these hungry souls, seeking for primitive simplicity and power, congregated, and that after a time Mr. Darby became the herald of the new view, and you will readily trace its subsequent history.

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