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I Am a Fundamentalist: And Other Timely Messages

Samuel H. Sutherland

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"In these times of spiritual crisis,

REAFFIRMING,

NOT rethinking the faith"

I am a

FUNDAMENTALIST

*and other
timely
messages*

by Dr. Samuel H. Sutherland

president

THE BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES, Inc.

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THE KING'S BUSINESS Magazine

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by S. H. SUTHERLAND, 1900-

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I Am A Fundamentalist

It would appear that there is a growing tendency in certain circles of Bible-believing Christians to shy away from the term "fundamentalist." It does not seem that the reasons for declining to be classified as a fundamentalist, however, are altogether valid. A fundamentalist is one who thoroughly believes in the great fundamentals of our Christian faith. Some of the greatest heroes of the faith have been identified with the proclamation of these fundamentals. There is no reason whatever for being ashamed to be identified with men of the caliber of Moody, Torrey, Scofield, Riley, Machen, Gaebelein, Pettingill, Gray and a host of other valiant warriors of the Christian faith who lived during the latter part of the last century and the first part of our present century.

It is to be regretted that there have been and that there are at the present time certain individuals who classify themselves as fundamentalists but by their actions and attitudes bring the name into disrepute. Yet this has been true in every movement and every Christian group from the earliest beginnings of church history. Just because some people go to extremes in espousing a certain cause is no reason whatever for repudiating the cause itself.

Bible-believing Christians today should be proud to identify themselves with the leaders of the past generations. To try to classify oneself as a Bible-believing Christian and at the same time disassociate himself from these great warriors of the Christian faith can only lead to doubts in the minds of others concerning his own avowed position. Furthermore, repudiation of the word "fundamentalist" would appear as a repudiation of the men and the cause which they espoused in the early years of the great fundamentalist-modernist controversy. There is no evidence to indicate that there is any leader or group of leaders in conservative Christian circles today who is qualified to lead the great host of Bible-believing Christians away from the well-known fundamentalist position into any other similar position to be known by another name.

We of this generation have been given a glorious heritage by the men who have preceded us. We can do no better today than to proclaim to our own generation the magnificent scriptural truths which already have been proclaimed to previous generations. Certainly the system of unbelief known as modernism which the fundamentalists have so vigorously opposed is still in existence today. There is no reason whatever therefore for repudiating the word or that for which it stands.

I AM A FUNDAMENTALIST.

The Fundamentals

Much continues to be written and spoken concerning fundamentalists and the fundamentalist position. It is well, therefore, to consider something of the background truths found in the Word of God which have become the basis of this position.

In 1909, Mr. Lyman Stewart, founder of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, and Mr. Milton Stewart, his brother, published a series of books, entitled, "*The Fundamentals*." These books were given widespread circulation, over three million copies being distributed. Many were sent, free of charge, to missionaries on the foreign fields and to ministers throughout the United States. Articles in these books were written by outstanding conservative theologians and Bible students.

Five great doctrines of the church became known as "The Fundamentals": (1) the infallibility of the Bible, (2) the virgin birth of Christ, (3) the miracles, (4) the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ on Calvary's Cross and (5) His bodily resurrection. It was never intended that these should be considered the only fundamentals of the faith, but they became more or less the symbols of the orthodox faith of the entire Protestant movement.

Among modernism's new names are "liberalism," "rationalism," "Barthianism" and, more lately, "neo-orthodoxy" and "neo-evangelicalism." The fundamentalists are also known as "conservatives" and "Bible-believing Christians." Regardless of the name, in one way or another, the mod-

ernists deny one or more of these great fundamentals of the faith and thus endeavor to weaken the very foundation of historic Christianity and to make the Cross of Jesus Christ of none effect. On the other hand, the fundamentalist, conservative, or Bible-believing Christian gladly affirms his convictions regarding these great truths. He enthusiastically adheres to them, and, as opportunity is presented, proclaims these and the other great doctrines of our historic faith to the salvation of souls and the building up of saints in our most holy faith.

The historic Christian position through the centuries has been acceptance of these great truths as the foundations of its theology, doctrine, and preaching. In spite of all satanic efforts to destroy their significance, these truths shine as brightly as they ever did because they are the eternal truths of God. There is no reason whatever to believe that in this particular generation the critics of the Word of God will have any more success than they did in the past. God's Word standeth sure!

History Repeats Itself

History repeats itself. Fifty years ago, with increasing frequency, unfamiliar voices were beginning to be heard within Christian churches and denominational gatherings. These voices were raised in denial of the full authority of the Scriptures, in questioning the authenticity of the Virgin birth of Jesus Christ and in proclaiming the documentary theory of the Pentateuch, the late date of the writing of the book of Daniel, the duteo-Isaiah hypothesis, and all the other destructive theories propounded by the higher critics of both the Old and New Testaments.

In the field of science, the theory of evolution had gained quite widespread acceptance. All of these ideas were comparatively new and rather startling, but they seemed quite acceptable, especially to those ministers who either did not have or had lost an awareness of the deep significance of the great foundation doctrines of the Word of God. And because of this lack of spiritual conviction and discernment,

many men among the clergy accepted these theological vagaries and began to proclaim them from their pulpits.

These man-made, Bible-denying notions became crystallized into what is now known as "modernism." The popular thing of that day was to proclaim oneself a "modernist," thus giving the impression of being right up-to-date in one's thinking and cognizant of the discovery of the very latest truth. Modernism began as a very sly, subtle form of unbelief. A minister would begin by raising doubt about some relatively unimportant portion of Scripture. When the shock of that passed away, he would then put a question mark over another more significant point of Scripture. By use of repetition, persuasion, ridicule of Bible-believing Christians, and by representing himself as refined, cultured, and charming, the faithless pastor would then proceed to "brain-wash" his parishioners until they came to the point of believing that he could do or say no wrong.

Denominational leaders of this stripe sought to establish the same aura around themselves. When anyone dared to take exception to what they said, immediately the cry of "Persecution!" "Heresy hunting!" and similar epithets went up. The issues became confused in the welter of persecution complexes that were created by the modernists themselves and in their own behalf. Many churches were lost to the cause of Christ and were led into the abysmal depths of blatant modernism because their pastors would not allow the issues to be decided on their own merits but, instead, kept the arguments on a personality level, thus making sure that they would have the support of their undiscerning friends and parishioners.

Of course, modernism did not show itself in all of its hideousness right at the first; it posed, as it were, as an angel of light. The process of emerging into full view was slow, subtle, and satanic. The generation of Christians fifty years ago would have been shocked beyond words had they been able to look ahead and see just where these attractive new ideas were leading them and their churches. But alas, by the time the course and destination became apparent it was too late to do anything about it and church members

were forced to one of two alternatives — either to submit to the trends of the times and to remain more or less loyal to their pastors, or to pull up stakes and to leave the churches that very possibly they themselves had helped financially to build and in which they had labored for many years, and to seek fellowship in some uninviting environment, but in a place where at least they could hear the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed.

Today many Bible-believing church lay leaders, who were brought up in churches where modernism has been exposed and repudiated, would be utterly shocked if they were told they were being taught a modern version of the old modernism of a generation ago. But actually this is the case in all too many places. Even as modernism crept in almost unawares fifty years ago, so history is beginning to repeat itself in our day and generation. At that time the old terminology was still used, but new shades of meaning were attached. There was a great deal of high-sounding talk given out from the pulpits about God's love for everybody and that therefore Christians, especially the man behind the pulpit should love everybody and never say anything of a derogatory nature about anyone. And as a result of all this, the modernist minister was able to say almost anything whether it was true to the Word of God or not, and no one dared question him.

So, today, we are having a repetition of exactly the same condition that prevailed a generation ago. We are hearing more and more about the "neo-orthodoxy" or the "new-evangelicalism." And in the field of science such phrases as "progressive evolution," "threshold evolution" and others of a similar nature are becoming more and more widely used in theological circles. This "new" brand of modernism — for that is exactly what it is — gained great momentum with the issuance of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. When stripped of all the beautiful verbiage which surrounds these "new" ideas, they boil down at the present time to a toning down of the authority of the Word of God, the completed work of Christ on Calvary's cross, the utter sinfulness of the heart of man, and the attendant necessity

for the new birth to take place before a man can be saved. There is a belittling of the "faith of our fathers," and an effort on the part of modernist preachers to persuade their hearers that at last the Word of God and the will of God have been revealed to them so that they have something brand-new to present to the expectant world. Now the old cry is going up, if any criticism is offered — "Unloving!," "Intolerant!" and the like.

One's heart is grieved and saddened almost beyond words to realize, (1) that there are men who are willing to take the great truths of the Word of God as they have been presented to the world during the past nineteen hundred years and change, modify, or adapt these truths to the whims and fancies of the free thinkers both in theological and scientific fields, and (2) there are people in the pews who would never think of classifying themselves or allowing themselves to be classified as modernists but who are succumbing to this latest and most insidious form of modernism.

From all indications, the old controversy is emerging, once again, albeit under a new guise. Evidently the old battle must continue to be fought between belief and unbelief, with merely a change of terminology, of names, and of faces among the principal contestants. If there ever was a day when a call to prayer and extremely clear thinking were needed on the part of true Christians everywhere — *now* is that time!

Protestantism Today

In the February 1961 issue of *Fortune* there appeared an article entitled "Can Protestantism Hold Its Own In A Modern America?" In it the author lays bare much of the problem that exists in American Protestantism today. Although there is no indication that he understands in his heart what is meant by the "salvation of his (man's) soul" yet, in describing the completely decadent condition of the Protestant church in America as a whole, he speaks almost as would a fundamental, premillennial preacher, proclaiming the prophetic truths of Scripture concerning these last days of this dispensation. If the basic problems of Protestantism

as enumerated in the article had been written by a Bible-believing, fundamentalist preacher, the article would have been classified as the product of a ranting, raving, "hell-fire-and-brimstone" type of preacher, so out of place in many pulpits in America today. It is to be devoutly hoped that because it was written by one who is quite apart from the current theological controversies and was written from an objective point of view, ministers will take its message to heart and return once again to proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Word of God.

A few of the significant statements which appear in the article are quoted as follows: "About 35% of all Americans belong to Protestant churches . . . this church membership percentage figure perhaps represents the saturation point in a country where there is no legal compulsion to attend services and where dread of hell-fire is rare. Christianity amounts to little more than a vague spirit of friendliness, a willingness to support churches, provided these churches demand no real sacrifice and preach no exacting doctrines. It (modern Christianity) is a far cry from the demands and the intensely personal and searching character of early Protestantism. Today, people in droves come to church but meanwhile, despite all the church-going, there is the widespread increase in immorality. Drugstore racks are crowded with salacious magazines and paper backs; the services of the psychiatrist are more and more in demand; sexual perversion and addiction to narcotics flourish in a bored age. The rate of divorce is high; so is the rate of crime. It is almost as if shallow religiosity and spiritual decadence were warp and woof of a cultural pattern. In the twentieth century, Protestantism, like other divisions of Christianity, is challenged by aggressive rival beliefs, of which Communism is chief. Against this threat the Protestant pulpit has given forth an uncertain sound."

The author of the above-mentioned article quotes the Roman Catholic editor of Jesuit weekly, *America*, as saying, in part, "American Catholicism is not prepared to assume the duty of furnishing religious and moral guidance to the whole nation on short notice and if the Protestant churches

cease to influence the mass of the Americans, the alternative may be a sub-paganism." "Today," the Catholic editor continues, "we are certainly not a Catholic country nor are we on the way to becoming one. But we have virtually ceased to be Protestant." The writer continues, "The malady that afflicts Protestant churches nowadays is called 'Palagianism.' Palagius, a fifth century theologian, taught that there is no original sin, man's will is wholly free, the grace of God is not the only essential for salvation and consequently, man's lot presents no serious problem of redemption."

More need not be said concerning the article referred to above and the rather keen insight into the condition of Protestantism in America today that the author has shown.

The situation he depicts must be considered from two points of view: (1) This is exactly what the Word of God says will be the condition at the end of the age. In Second Timothy 3, beginning with verse 1, we read, "This know also that in the last days [of this dispensation] perilous times shall come. For men shall be . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"; in Second Thessalonians, chapter 2, beginning with verse 1, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. [literally, 'The apostasy']" And, indeed, even when our Lord was here upon the earth, He explicitly stated that in the last days of this dispensation conditions would be as "it was in the days of Noah . . . as it was in the day of Lot . . . even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." And so, as Bible-believing Christians who are confidently looking for the soon return of our Lord, we rejoice in the development of every sign that points to His coming, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. (2) But there is another point of view that we must also consider and that is the moral responsibility which is ours to warn unsaved people of the nearness of the Lord's return and to do everything possible to awaken ministers of the Gospel to their opportunities, indeed, to their responsibility of proclaiming

the great truths of the Word of God in an effort to snatch, as it were, "brands from the burning." This is the reason that we as Christians are alarmed and are exceedingly distressed because of the utter lifelessness which characterizes Protestantism today so far as its vital convictions and testimony are concerned. We confidently look for the Lord to come — and that right soon. Therefore it behooves us to be diligent about proclaiming the great fact of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ministers and lay leaders alike must awake to the solemnity of this hour in which we live and revert to the strong, solid preaching and teaching of God's Holy Word in all of its beauty and power, likewise in all of its solemn warnings which are directed toward the lost.

This is the day in which laymen should encourage their pastors to preach these great truths, including "hell fire and damnation" and that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way by which this terrible condition can be avoided. Such preaching is not at all popular. But, regardless of that, it is in the Word of God, and the faithful minister must proclaim the whole counsel of God. Such preaching often hurts, but it is the only kind of effective preaching that will stir men to turn from the error and sin of their ways unto the Lord Jesus Whom to know is life eternal.

Standard for Christian Morals

In a recent issue of *This Week* magazine, there appeared an article entitled, "Science Takes a New Look at Sex in America." It was written by Howard Whitman, "one of America's best-known writers on scientific and sociological subjects." In certain ways it was an encouraging article, chiefly because almost for the first time in many, many years there seemed to be a facing up to facts in connection with the moral degeneracy which is characteristic of the present times. It is our conviction that this moral degeneracy is due, in large measure, to the completely erroneous attitude toward sex which has been advocated by leading sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and other authorities who deal

with the great sociological problems which exist in our modern-day life.

It was an encouraging surprise to note in the article a quotation from a prominent psychologist who said, "There is very tangible and very present hell on this earth. It is this — the hell of neurosis and psychosis — to which sin and unexpiated guilt lead us." For years it has been very unpopular and all but taboo in certain sociological circles to apply the term "sin" to the utterly immoral acts and talk that are so prevalent even in so-called decent society today. If a young unmarried girl is found to be pregnant, it has been considered completely wrong and unwise to say or even think that she and the young man involved have committed sin. These sociologists declare that the young people are merely victims of an unhealthy economic and sociological condition; they should be encouraged to do better, but certainly they are not to be condemned for what they have done. It has come to the point where reformers, in an effort to elevate society, have taken the position that those who engage in such conduct not only should not be condemned but also by their attitude, these sociologists even refuse to condemn the sinful act itself. Thus immoral behaviour has become glamorized and made rather fashionable, instead of being portrayed as the wicked deed which the Word of God plainly describes it to be.

Much of the blame for this terrifying situation must be placed on the shoulders of behavioural sociologists and psychiatrists who have endeavored to minimize the sinfulness of sin and specifically the sinfulness of immorality. They have been endeavoring to gloss it over as though it were something that would be well to avoid, but if not, there is nothing much to be alarmed at if couples indulge in such conduct.

It made one rather disheartened to read in the above-mentioned article that the purpose of present-day "researchers in human behaviour" is to "bring understanding out of confusion." The article continues, "The purpose is not to restore the old Victorian standards based on ignorance and fear, but to establish new ones based on knowledge and the

freedom to select the good, reject the bad." One wonders just how naive these "researchers in human behaviour" can become — in thinking that proper knowledge of sex and sex relations can and will lead young people to "select the good, reject the bad." Such an approach ignores completely the universal fact of the sinfulness of man and the fact that the "heart of man is desperately wicked" — that man, by nature, will select the bad even though he may know the good very well indeed! Furthermore, we might well ask the question, What was so wrong with the "old Victorian standards" anyway? It is readily granted that even in those days evidently a great deal of immorality existed "under cover." But that was not because of "the Victorian standards." Those standards were based, in large measure, upon the standards which are laid down by God in His Holy Word. It was not the Victorian standards that were wrong — it was those who violated those standards who were wrong.

In view of the fact that it is quite readily admitted by social workers, today, that moral standards have degenerated to an appreciably lower level than were those of the Victorian era, one must conclude that all of the knowledge about and emphasis upon sex which we have seen in these recent years certainly have not produced the desired results of keeping young people from falling into sin.

The call, today, is for the church of Jesus Christ to proclaim once again the sinfulness of sin and the tragedy that surely results in following one's sinful desires. The call today is for the church to proclaim, once again, a doctrine of self-discipline, self-restraint and self-control, rather than self-indulgence and self-gratification. And the call today, is for the church of Jesus Christ to let the world know how intensely it despises, even as God Himself hates, sin in any form while at the same time loving the sinner and caring for his soul. The ten commandments, as given to Moses by Himself, so many centuries ago, still constitute the moral code by which the Lord expects Christians to conduct themselves and which Christians and non-Christians alike should set up as their standard for the welfare of the individual

and for society as a whole. When we are born again, He writes the moral law in our hearts.

In addition to speaking out against sin and encouraging people everywhere to "abhor that which is evil," it is the added responsibility and glorious privilege of the church to proclaim the fact that even though a man is a sinner in thought and word and deed — there is still hope. That hope lies in the personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as one's own Saviour from sin. He alone can save and deliver from the guttermost to the uttermost. It is the glorious privilege of the church to beseech men everywhere to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and to trust Him completely for salvation and everlasting life as well as for victory over sins of the flesh.

Present-Day Prophetic Paradox

One of the most tragic aspects of present-day fundamentalism is its alarming neglect of the prophetic Scriptures. A generation ago, internationally and nationally known Bible teachers preached the premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ to vast audiences everywhere without "fear or favor." In the aggregate, millions of the Lord's people were blessed in their own lives by these truths and were led to "search the Scriptures" in their light. Widespread interest in the Word of God and what it had to say about the future was aroused, and Bible conferences became the order of the day. At the same time, sadly enough, the vast majority of the unsaved were unmoved and exhibited little concern over matters eschatological.

Then the picture changed sharply, suddenly. The atomic age was ushered in. The stoutest hearts of men of the world are "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:26), and now at long last they are seeking an answer to the question of what is to become of our civilization. *And here is the paradox of our times.* The church should have the full, complete, decisive, authoritative answer from the Word as to the "time of the end." But, tragically, this generation has failed

to produce Bible teachers of the caliber of their predecessors. Where are giants like Scofield, Gray, Torrey, Riley, Gaebeline, Pettingill, Chafer, Haldeman, Blackstone, Bauman, Rood, and a host of others who knew "what it was all about" from God's standpoint, whose writings and sermons stirred thousands everywhere to "turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from Heaven" (I Thess. 1:9-10)? What has brought about such a state of affairs, such a paradox? When the prophetic message needs most to be proclaimed, when in a sense the world is ready for it, there are relatively few capable of presenting it with accuracy and authority, with persuasion and power. We have not far to look for an explanation.

Over the past two decades, modernism and its "country cousins" — neo-orthodoxy and the "new evangelicalism" — have muddied the stream of prophetic truth so effectively that a church congregation seldom hears a prophetic message any more, and when it does, there falls upon the ears of the Lord's people a sermon so watered-down, so lacking in conviction, so apologetic, that the results are negligible. No one is thrilled, no one is moved to say as they did a generation ago: "We must have more of this. What does the Bible say about the future?"

The fact of the imminent return of Christ to set up His millennial kingdom on earth is described in the Bible as a comforting blessed and purifying truth (I Thess. 4:18; Titus 2:13; I John 3:2-3). Incidentally, I ask in passing if the true church of Jesus Christ were called upon to go through the tribulation period (which most certainly it is not), how could the hope of His return ever be considered comforting, blessed or purifying? Possibly one of the reasons that congregations, even in fundamentalist circles, seldom hear prophetic messages nowadays is that there is a popular notion abroad that unless a preacher or teacher comes up with something "new," "distinctive" or "original," he cannot be considered a thinker or a scholar. The result is that publishing houses and religious book stores are cluttered up with "new" books, by "new" authors, presenting "new" concepts of God and His Word. Most unfortunate of all,

these self-styled intellectuals are not satisfied simply to build their own cases, and to allow them to be compared with the writings of the past generation, to stand or fall on their own merits. Oh, no, all too frequently they seek in every possible way to discredit the men of God who preceded them, as if to tear them down would build up the reputations of the "new" expositors. What little of constructive nature they substitute is pathetic in the extreme.

All of this leads one to paraphrase the cry of Mary Magdalene, as she stood weeping at the empty sepulcher of the Lord: "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." Certainly the neo-orthodox and the new-evangelical writers have taken away the Lord of prophecy and the great body of truth surrounding His return. What they have produced in its place cannot by the wildest stretch of anyone's imagination be termed "comforting, blessed or purifying." While it is admitted readily that about some of the minutia of prophetic events there may be differences of opinion, and that some details cannot be interpreted with any degree of certainty until the time of their actual fulfillment is nearer at hand, surely the time has come to cease magnifying these things and to proclaim once more the broad outline of prophecy in all its simplicity, beauty and certainty. Peter declared, "We have also a more *sure* word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (I Peter 1:19). Well, the place is dark to the point of a blackness you can feel, and God's people and the lost world need the light of prophecy. The world has been saying for a long time "Cheer up; the best is yet to come" but that is changing fast to: "The worst is yet to come." The prophetic Word agrees that the worst is indeed ahead, but it is the worst that comes before God's best. Ere there falls upon this civilization that time of tribulation "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21), the Lord has declared that He will take His own to be with Him, "That where I am there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Meantime Christians everywhere should de-

mand that their pastors declare "the whole counsel of God" including the prophecies, and to acquaint their people with the classic Scriptural writings on the Lord's return, and to voice fearlessly and clearly what God has to say about the future of this old world and of His church. There is a whole generation of young men and women in abysmal ignorance of these things we were taught so faithfully a generation ago. Perhaps if the Christian leaders would go back to "searching the Scriptures" and to preaching them, the next generation might be saved from the prophetic paradox of the present.

Ecumenical Movement

The ecumenical movement is forging ahead at a merry clip. Everyone seems to be talking about merging with somebody else. Church union is in the air. And there seems to be no way of stopping this trend. For the sake of anyone who may not be acquainted with the term *ecumenical*, let me explain that it has reference to the merging of various denominations into larger and larger unified groups until at last there will emerge one great "super church."

In December 1960, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church, USA, made a startling proposal which received widespread acclaim in many areas and widespread condemnation in others. He proposed a union of four great denominations, namely Episcopal, Methodist, United Church of Christ and United Presbyterian, USA. The year 1960 was ecclesiastically significant as well for an overture, the like of which has not taken place since the Reformation fires broke upon the world. The head of the Church of England met with the Pope at Rome, in an apparent effort to iron out differences and to bring about a more cordial working arrangement between the two immense religious bodies.

Although these great mergers are still in the "talk" stage, we have evidence of actual ecumenical success in the process of formation of the United Church of Christ, a union of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Church. Furthermore, two great branches of the Presbyterian Church became one some time ago. Most assured-

ly the end is not yet. It seemed to me that the ultimate in irresponsible mental meanderings on the subject of ecumenicity was reached by a newspaper commentator who recently stated: "Any move in the direction of uniting the spiritual forces of the world's various faiths — and not just those of Christianity but Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and other forms of acknowledging divinity — is welcomed not only by spiritual and lay leaders but also by thoughtful statesmen." These idealistically-minded liberals who have no religious convictions of their own assume that either no one else has any or that no one should have any. Now, strangely enough, this kind of union so abhorrent to a Bible-believing Christian is predicted in the Scriptures. In the 17th and 18th chapters of the book of Revelation the "scarlet woman" is depicted — a portrayal of the final unification of all religions of the world. While the anti-christ will be seeking world-wide empire, he will make use of this huge religio-political system for his own purposes. At first he will flatter her and bestow favors upon her; but once he gains universal rule, he will destroy this world church by which he will have built himself up, and will demand instead that all the world worship him. All of this is clearly foretold in the Scriptures.

Let us take a sharp look at this idea of church mergers in our day. On the surface it sounds brotherly, sentimental, "sweet." On the surface it sounds as if it were the fulfillment of Ephesians 4:5 "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." The unsuspecting, spiritually-undiscerning person, as well as the one without convictions about his beliefs, will be taken in readily by this ideology and trapped in a completely false type of Christianity. True, the time will come when there will be indeed such unity but it will not occur in this dispensation and it will not be brought about by church mergers. It will take place when the Lord Himself comes for His blood-bought ones and we are all forever "together with the Lord." The only possible basis for Christian unity is complete agreement on the fundamentals of the Word of God.

Consider what happens when the question of church

mergers arises. At once the plea is made that the fundamentalist give up his "narrow ideas," and that we should get together with everyone else on the great unifying beliefs we hold in common. We are told that the first ones with whom we should unite are the liberals. But who is giving up what? It is never the modernists who give up their denials of the faith. It is the Bible believer who is asked to surrender his distinctive doctrines. For instance we believe in the infallibility of the Bible — that it is indeed the inspired Word of God; the liberals do not. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, conceived of the Holy Ghost, was born of a virgin; they do not. We believe that when Christ was upon the earth He performed mighty miracles of healing and even raised the dead; they do not. We believe that after three days the Lord Jesus actually and literally rose from the grave; they do not. We believe that the only way by which a man can be saved is through faith in the atoning, substitutionary work of Jesus Christ, wrought out on Calvary's cross; they do not. These truths (and others) are the foundation upon which Christianity is built. The modernist will not accept these teachings for the sake of a union; the fundamentalist will not surrender them, as they are dearer than life itself to him. So where is there any possibility of ecumenicity? Church union sounds "Christ-like" to the unthinking person who is unaware of what is involved. Actually, it is a satanic trap for the purpose of destroying the very vitals of Christian truth itself. It is not to be wondered at that the idea of such ecumenicity comes in large measure from those who have few convictions of their own. They have a vague feeling that such a get-together would be "nice." They are not interested in determining what the basis of such union would be. They only know that it must not consist of the great historic doctrines of the Christian church which are so "controversial!"

One can respect adherents of a faith entirely opposite to his own if they hold to their convictions. The religious leaders of these groups are not insisting upon union with anyone else. For example, Roman Catholicism is not talking about union with the Protestants. We can have even a

measure of respect for a Unitarian who declares his convictions even though we utterly disagree with his views. But when one who is actually a Unitarian in belief, although disguised as a member of a Protestant body, tries to lead us to give up the things which separate us from Unitarians in order that we might unite under a single banner, we see him in his true light and have only the utmost contempt for his betrayal of the faith, and for his blatant hypocrisy.

The Lord's people had better analyze this so-called "noble" ideal of church union under the light of God's Word and recognize it for what it is — the laying of the groundwork for the last great masterpiece of Satan — the ecumenical, politico-religio monstrosity of the last days — the great world church of the book of Revelation, which is a far, far cry from what Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, meant when he spoke of "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Academic Freedom

Today a great deal is heard about "academic freedom." Anything that limits or curtails academic freedom, so-called, is supposed to be a bad thing. Recently one of the "new evangelical" scholars wrote an article which appeared in an eastern religious magazine in which was stated, "We may write out a strong creed, put it into the charter of the college in such a way it can never be changed and vigorously enforce it . . . but such a policy will inevitably lead to academic mediocrity."* But, this is not necessarily a dilemma at all. It is entirely possible for a thorough-going scholar also to have a strong creedal conviction. Furthermore, it is entirely possible for an institution of higher learning to have a strong creedal position and to attract to itself faculty members who likewise have the same convictions and who are also outstanding scholars in their own fields.

*Dr. Bernard Ramm, Author. Article entitled, "Can Christian Schools Find Their Way Out?" First published in "Gordon Review" and reprinted by permission in Eternity Magazine, Sept., 1960.

A creed is simply a compilation of doctrines which have been arranged into an orderly system of truth as it is revealed in the Word of God. Some academicians talk much about academic freedom, as though it will be necessary for one throughout his life, constantly to be changing his views, ideas, notions, and even his convictions, in order to be considered a first-rate scholar. But the Word of God has some very clear things to say about individuals of this type: "Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7). A scholar is looking for truth. The scholar who has found truth in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ need not look further, for He is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:32-36). A scholar then discovers that all other learning either points to or stems from the Person of Jesus Christ who is God, the Second Person of the Trinity.

Thorough-going scholarship is to be commended and respected. But there is a vast difference between such scholarship and the irresponsible excursions into one's mental aberrations which lead only to high-sounding ideas couched in multi-syllabic words which may or may not mean a thing to the reader or the hearer. In the field of philosophy alone, history is filled with the accounts of the dismal failure of men who enjoyed their academic freedom. They constructed their own elaborate systems of philosophy only to have the philosophers of succeeding generations knock their systems down to build their own systems of philosophy upon the ruins of those who preceded them. For untold centuries mankind has been engaging in intellectual pursuits with all the academic freedom he could possibly desire. And where has it led him? The answer is quite obvious. Of course it is true that through the centuries there has been accumulated a great mass of facts which in many ways has made life easier and more comfortable. But mankind's academic freedom has not led him in the slightest to an understanding and application of those facts for his moral and spiritual betterment and real peace of mind! An immature and emotionally un-

stable generation still cries out for academic freedom in order to find out truth. But truth has already come in the Person of Jesus Christ, and the self-styled intellectuals who are continually craving academic freedom would do well to discover Him and let Him reveal to them what freedom really is.

Academic freedom is to be commended in areas of research where ultimate truth as found in the revealed Word of God does not pertain. But it is dangerous indeed for one, especially one who is a professing Christian, to tamper with the truth of God's Word under the guise of academic freedom. It is almost as though such a one were putting his own puny little mind up against the infinite mind of Almighty God and boasting that his own intellectual prowess were greater than His. We would do well to hear more of our moral and spiritual responsibilities to God and to the Word of God and to hear less of man's pusillanimous efforts to achieve academic freedom.

Christians everywhere would do well to consider carefully before they place their dedicated funds into the hands of institutions of higher learning whose faculty members are always sounding out the cry for academic freedom, placing it in contradistinction to the Scriptural convictions of their fellow faculty members or of the school as a whole.

Is Indoctrination Our Business?

Recently in a prominent Christian journal, published in the Middle West, there appeared an article entitled, "Who Cares What You Learn?"* In essence, this was a defense of the Christian college. However, one section of the article leaves the reader quite puzzled—to say the least—as to the author's meaning, and the significance of some of his statements. For instance, we quote this statement: "It is not the purpose of the Christian college to indoctrinate . . . indoctrination always leads to frustration." Under some circumstances, this sentence might be considered not of suffi-

*"Christian Life," January 1961, Lionel A. Rediger, Vice-President and Academic Dean, Taylor University, Upland, Indiana.

cient import to merit further discussion, but in the light of today's trends in evangelical circles, it has great bearing on what we believe to be an alarming situation in religion and education. To this author's concept of the purpose of a Christian college, we take vigorous exception. Such a declaration as his is right in line with the position of the "new evangelicals" who constantly prate of "academic freedom," but they are afraid to teach or to speak with any degree of authority. The implication is that for one to have convictions of his own, and to state them with persuasiveness intended to convince others, is a non-intellectual attitude.

One is completely bewildered as to what is the purpose of a Christian college if it is not to indoctrinate its students in the great, eternal truths of the Word of God, with their accompanying tremendous impact upon the personal lives of young men and women. For years Christian parents and Christian pastors have sent their young people to Christian colleges — sometimes at great personal sacrifice — with the devout hope and prayer and firm conviction that they might be indoctrinated and have their feet firmly planted on true Scriptural foundations upon which to build their further education and service. Every college in the country founded by Christian leaders or Christian denominations was organized with the very objective of teaching and perpetuating the great doctrines of Christianity, and establishing the rising generation in resultant holy living, as opposed to the ideologies of the irreligious and the anti-religious taught in purely secular institutions of higher learning. Indeed, a Christian college that no longer indoctrinates its students in our most holy faith, in large measure has ceased to be a Christian college at all, and is no different from a secular institution which actually, to all intents and purposes, it has become. One of the tragic by-products of the rationalism of the last fifty years is this very doctrine of "anti-indoctrination." Today it finds expression in the much-abused term, "academic freedom," and this latest and most weird notion that "indoctrination always leads to frustration." Just the contrary has been proven to be true. It is lack of indoctrination that has led to frustration on the part of

young people. Young people want assurance, something upon which they can depend in a shaking world like ours. But they are not taught what to believe or why they should believe it. No wonder they are turning more and more to ideologies which are the direct antithesis of Christianity. These anti-Christian views are taught with zeal, fervor, and authority that should put to shame weak and ineffectual so-called Christian teachers. They make every conceivable effort to indoctrinate their students, and it is paying off to a distressing degree. Communist leaders are declaring openly and fearlessly their plans and programs for indoctrinating into their atheistic and anarchistic ideology the youth of every nation, especially those at the college and university level. Proponents of the evolutionary hypothesis are perfectly open, outspoken, and bold in their effort to indoctrinate in the theory of evolution the young men and women who sit in their classes. Those who deny God's Word and all of the great historic doctrines of the Christian faith are fearless in their endeavors to urge upon young people an utter repudiation of these truths which born-again Christians hold so dear. At the same time, so-called Christian leaders piously proclaim that it is not "our purpose to indoctrinate our young people" in the things that they ought to believe. Every one of Paul's epistles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is an impassioned plea for just such indoctrination of churches and individuals. Such indoctrination has been the primary purpose of the true church from its beginning to the present time. Great preachers of the past, as well as those of today, indoctrinate their hearers in the truths of the Bible. But when it comes to Christian institutions of higher learning, are we to be told in a flippant manner, "it is not our purpose to indoctrinate"? When Christian institutions fail in this high and holy purpose, they are on the road to spiritual oblivion. Such betrayal of objective always results in the complete disappearance of spiritual reality in the life of the college itself.

It may be claimed in defense of this article hitherto referred to that the author's objection is to the type of in-

doctrination which he defines as follows: "Indoctrination is the process in which a teacher transmits his information, interpretations, prejudices, etc. to passive students who sit, listen, write what they hear and attempt to return it on examinations." This is about as inadequate a definition of the teaching philosophy as one could imagine, and the author's definition of the word *indoctrination* in no way modifies the blanket criticism which he makes of the very concept of indoctrination itself. With the exception of the most exacting sciences where facts and figures are studied, there is no teacher alive who does not transmit his information, interpretations, and prejudices either in favor of or against, the material he presents to his classes. As a matter of fact, a teacher may not say anything but may reveal his views by the mere intonation of his voice. Furthermore, if a professor is worthy of his position he will make every effort to keep his students from becoming "passive" but will inspire them to active thinking.

Today the Christian college has one of the greatest responsibilities and most glorious opportunities in the history of civilization to measure up to the tremendous challenges of the hour. A living and lively faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as He is revealed in the Word of God, is the only way of peace and rest and salvation to anyone. If conditions in the world about us are viewed in the light of God's Word, we need not fear tomorrow, although in the world men's hearts are failing them for fear, as predicted in the Bible. We who have been indoctrinated in the great truths of the Scriptures and who have put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and whose lives are motivated by Him, may look to the future with joy and hope. For while we do not know what the future holds, thank God, we do know the One who holds the future in His blessed hands, and we are confident that He does all things well. This is the message that the Christian college has for its youth. The church has the Christian young person only a few hours each week. Think of the hours spent in the college classroom and the influence upon the lives of the young men and women that the Christian college may have! Paul wrote to young Timothy of in-

doctrination: “. . . The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). How shall we escape God’s condemnation if we fail our young people in this hour?

It is to be regretted that the magazine in which this article appeared and which is making a significant impact upon the Christian life of today should lend itself to propagating such an unfortunate idea as that expressed in this article.

Modern-Day Pharisees

During the days of our Lord’s earthly ministry there was in existence a sect known as Pharisees. Undoubtedly this group of individuals was as religious as any group has ever been, before or since that time. Yet it was to them and concerning them that our Lord pronounced His most scathing denunciation. Matthew has recorded some of His searching words: “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites . . . ye fools and blind . . . ye blind guides which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel . . . ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess . . . ye are like whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward but are within full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness . . . ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Matthew 23:13-33).

In view of the fact that our Lord ministered to publicans and sinners, thereby having personal contact with them while at the same time speaking so vigorously against the Pharisees of His day, we do well to consider some of the reasons why He said what He did concerning them. As a background, certain facts about the Pharisees need to be kept in mind. First, they were all very learned men; second, doubtless they were highly respected by the common people as very religious men; third, they stood out in any company of people as the religious leaders of their day and were acknowledged as such; fourth, they were well acquainted with the Scriptures of the day, namely, our Old Testament; fifth, they knew the prophetic Scriptures concerning the coming of the Messiah; sixth, they completely rejected

Jesus Christ as the Messiah who was to come, not believing Him to be the Son of God manifest in the flesh; seventh, they violently opposed Christ in all that He said and did, and they did everything possible to persuade the common people to reject Him; eighth, they were largely instrumental in bringing the Lord to trial and in having Him crucified on Calvary’s cross.

However, the most significant fact concerning the attitude of the Pharisees was that they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and all that He claimed to be. If He had not claimed to be God and one with the Father, it is likely that the Pharisees would have accepted Him as a great teacher and one of the prophets and all would have been well between them and Him. But the Pharisees were endeavoring to obtain salvation for their souls through personal merit and their own good works. And so because the Lord clearly stated, “Ye must be born again,” and told them, in effect, that the only way of salvation was through personal faith in Him, they rejected Him. That salvation could be secured only by humbling oneself in simple faith and believing in Him as Saviour, instead of trusting the works of the law in which they placed so much confidence and about which they boasted so loudly, was repugnant to these self-righteous Pharisees. Therefore they repudiated Him, and He, in turn, leveled His strongest words of denunciation against them.

There is an alarming similarity between many of the religious leaders of our day and the Pharisees of our Lord’s time. Religion, as such, is becoming increasingly popular. However, alas, it is a completely “bloodless religion,” a form of godliness which denies “the power thereof.” Today these religious leaders are well-educated, cultured and, in many instances, extremely refined. They are respected by the masses. But tragically they, too, to a large degree reject the Lord Jesus Christ for what He claims to be. They are the blind leaders of the blind. Even as our Lord invited the common people of His day to come and find rest to their souls, so today He extends the same invitation. As He in His day thoroughly condemned the religious leaders for

willfully turning their backs upon Him and going in their own religiously iniquitous ways, so it seems quite evident that were He living in the flesh now, He would declare the same thing to these modern-day religious leaders. It is extremely serious for a person to assume a place of spiritual leadership of a local congregation or of the public in general.

But there is another problem that is equally serious which is disturbing the minds of many earnest, Bible-believing Christians. It is this: to what extent should Bible-believing Christians have fellowship with those who deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning work on Calvary's cross? Our Lord Himself gave us the example of what our attitude should be toward all deniers of the faith and that was to have no continuing fellowship whatever with them. Furthermore, the Word of God is quite explicit in this regard: "What part has he that believeth with an unbeliever?" (II Cor. 6:17); "Have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

The old saying, "Birds of a feather flock together" is certainly applicable here and any individual, no matter how loudly he proclaims his orthodoxy and evangelical zeal, inevitably will come under suspicion if he continues in fellowship and cooperation with those who deny the claims of our Lord. One's motives may be of the very highest, such as the honest desire to win these religious leaders to the Lord Jesus Christ. But, as a matter of fact the records over the years do not show that such a course produces any such result. Instead, by such associations, the cause of Jesus Christ is brought into disrepute and the ends obtained are most unfortunate indeed. Today, we should follow the example He Himself set for us. Doubtless, there are occasions when one is obliged to associate with such leaders. But these are the exception and should never be allowed to become the rule. Certainly most earnest prayer should be offered in behalf of the religious leader who has departed from the faith or one who has never come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in the first place, but to make these modern-day Pharisees partners in the Lord's business is not only incon-

gruous but also injurious to any Bible-centered and Christ-honoring program.

May the Lord guide and direct us all during these momentous days that we might remain true to Him, that our testimony might be clear-cut, that there might never be a question in the minds of any as to whose we are and whom we serve, and what is our uncompromising stand on the deity of Christ and related truths of the Word of God.

Bible Translations

The English-speaking world has been presented, within the past few years, with an unusually large number of English translations of the New Testament and, indeed, of the entire Bible. Two of these translations have been widely discussed. The pros and cons of their value have been presented and many people have come to very definite conclusions regarding the relative merits of these translations. I refer, of course, to the Revised Standard Version which appeared in 1952, and to the New English Bible, New Testament, which appeared in 1961. This is not the place to begin to enumerate instances in the New English Bible or the Revised Standard Version which lead to these conclusions. Such passages have been cited in many worth-while pamphlets and articles dealing with the subject.

The expressed purpose of each translation was to provide a new translation of the Bible in contemporary English. In the Revised Standard Version preface it is stated, "A major reason for revision of the King James Version is the change since 1611, in English usage. Many forms of expression have become archaic." Furthermore, "English words which are still in constant use now convey a different meaning from that which they had in the King James Version." In the New English Bible the translators have not attempted in the least to revise the King James Version but as they themselves express it, they endeavored to provide a "genuinely new translation in which an attempt should be made consistently to use the idiom of contemporary English to convey the meaning of the Greek." It seems to be quite

generally agreed, however, that in making these translations which have forsaken in large measure the language of the Authorized Version, something of a very serious nature has been lost so far as majesty of expression is concerned. Further, it must be remembered that the purpose of writing the Bible in the first place was to present God's plan of salvation to a lost humanity. This redemptive plan was wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. This fact is clearly revealed both in the Greek and the Hebrew. And it is faithfully translated in the Authorized Version. The tragic fact is that in both the Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible there is much left to be desired in the "contemporary English" that is used to convey this great foundational doctrine of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross.

The Revised Version of 1881, and the American Standard Version of 1901, retain almost altogether the majestic phraseology found in the King James translation. At the same time, the translators had the advantage of all of the latest manuscript discoveries so that they (a) noted the "change since 1611 in English usage," (b) changed the words that "are obsolete and no longer understood by the common reader," (c) changed the words "which are still in constant use but now convey a different meaning from that which they had in the King James Version." Although very ancient copies of portions of the New Testament have been discovered in more recent times, yet no new manuscripts have been unearthed that would necessitate changing these translations to any significant degree whatever.

But even these word problems are comparatively rare and of relatively minor importance. We do not appreciate in the least the tendency to downgrade the King James Version. These translators of the "contemporary English" versions have not strengthened the significance of the Word of God in their translations in the least. Rather they themselves have produced an inferior translation both in type of expression and certainly in doctrinal content. It seems to be quite the fad to read from these modern translations.

It will be interesting to see how long this particular fad lasts.

It is impossible to accept any translation merely at its face value. One must always consider the theological position of the translators. Throughout the Bible there is the unmistakable evidence of the fact that it claims to be the Word of God. Because of language limitations it is impossible to give an absolutely literal translation of the entire Book. Those who believe the Bible is verbally and fully inspired of God will produce one type of translation; those who do not believe that it is the inspired Word of God will produce an entirely different type of translation. The historic position of the Church of Jesus Christ is that the Bible is the Word of God. The translators of the King James Version believed exactly that. The committees of the versions of 1881 and 1901 believed exactly that. These "contemporary English" translations reveal the fact that their committees do not believe in the verbal and full inspiration of the Scriptures. Therefore, regardless of how interesting any given verse may be in the modern translations, this whole philosophy of inspiration and of the purpose and work of translating the Scriptures must be kept in mind. The reader must be constantly on guard lest he find himself being led astray in what he erroneously considers to be the "Word of God."

For one who is desirous of obtaining a new Bible, either for personal use or as a gift, we would strongly recommend the King James Version with the Scofield Notes. It is appropriately called the Scofield Reference Bible. In the marginal notes, the Scofield Reference Bible incorporates many of the word changes which are found in the Revised Version of 1881, so that the reader has the advantage not only of having the Authorized Version but also the Revised Version and at the same time he has the tremendous advantage of having the Scofield Notes to assist him in following through the great doctrines that are found in the Word of God. These notes have been of inestimable value to countless thousands of people since they first appeared. Indeed, they have proven so valuable and helpful that a committee of

evangelical scholars has been brought together by the Oxford Press to make certain revisions in these notes so that they will be even more understandable and of even greater blessing to this and future generations.

If one desires still further aid in reading the text of the Authorized Version, he could do no better than to obtain a copy of the Amplified New Testament which is essentially a copy of the Authorized Version with many, many of the words amplified to present an added shade of meaning which is implied in the Greek but which is not found in any one word of the English translation. The Amplified New Testament may be read either from a devotional or practical point of view or as a reference work. The translation has not yet appeared which is to be compared in any vital way with the value of the Authorized Version.

