A Fundamentalism Worth Saving

An Address to American Association of Christian Colleges and Seminaries

February 2, 2005 | by Dr. Kevin Bauder, D.Min., Ph.D. | Central Baptist Theological Seminary

At this meeting we are asking how we can retain the next generation of leaders for fundamentalism. The question assumes that the younger generation may decide to leave fundamentalism. If we were to lose the next generation of leaders, we would lose fundamentalism as we know it. In effect, the question that we are considering is, "How shall we save fundamentalism?"

This question puts the cart before the horse. If our efforts to attract future leaders are to be anything more than salesmanship, then we must offer the kind of fundamentalism that is worth living in and living for. Rather than asking how to save fundamentalism, we would do well to ask why fundamentalism should be saved, or, more specifically, what kind of fundamentalism is worth saving.

In answering this question, I first distinguish fundamentalism as an idea from fundamentalism as a movement. As I have said on other occasions, fundamentalism is a great idea. As an idea, fundamentalism is essentially a doctrinal and ecclesiastical reaction against unbelief masquerading as Christianity. Ideal fundamentalists affirm that all doctrine is important, but they recognize that some doctrines are more important than others. They assert that some doctrines are so important as to be essential to the gospel itself.

These essential or fundamental doctrines are held to be indispensably bound to the very definition of Christianity. While ideal fundamentalists certainly do not believe that Christianity can be reduced to a doctrinal statement, they affirm that Christianity rests upon an inviolable doctrinal foundation. To add to or subtract from that foundation is to deny Christianity itself. Moreover—and this is the crux of the matter—fundamentalists insist that no Christian fellowship can exist or should be pretended with people who deny the gospel.

This understanding distinguishes fundamentalists from two sorts of religious people. First, it distinguishes them from apostates, or people who deny essential doctrines while claiming to be Christians. Second, it distinguishes them from the people whom J. Gresham Machen called indifferentists, people who personally affirm the fundamentals but who refuse to acknowledge that those fundamentals are essential to the definition of Christianity or the existence of Christian fellowship. Typically, historic fundamentalists have felt themselves duty-bound not only to truncate visible fellowship with those who deny the gospel, but also to limit their cooperation with those whose view of the gospel is so low that they feel they can continue in fellowship with apostates.

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That is the idea of fundamentalism. It is, as I say, a great idea. It is an idea, however, that has been implemented only imperfectly in the fundamentalist movement—or perhaps I should say movements, for visible fundamentalism has not all been one thing. I do not intend in this address to rehearse the litany of complaints against organized fundamentalism. Virtually no one inside the movement, however, can fail to recognize the excesses that have regularly been its accouterments. These excesses are part of what my generation of fundamentalists began reacting against. Not surprisingly, that reaction is intensifying in the upcoming generation.

We might be tempted to think that we could retain the next generation if we would simply jettison these excesses. I believe that this suggestion is facile.

- **First**, rejecting the excesses would require a concerted effort across the movement, and we have not exhibited a great deal of ability to act with resolution in concert.
- **Second**, we cannot reject the excesses until we have decided what they are—and reaching that decision requires a conversation that must carried on with more temperance than we have generally been able to muster.
- **Third**, I suspect that even if all real excesses were eliminated, some younger fundamentalists (and perhaps some older ones) would still find reasons to object, because they do not really share the ethos of fundamentalism. While we should certainly love and seek to encourage such individuals, conceding too much to them could rob fundamentalism of its identity.

In other words, saving fundamentalism is a task that is going to require a capacity for reflection and careful thought, an ability to weigh consequences and to determine what genuinely matters, and a resolve to temper our conduct to the gravity of the ideas with which we are dealing. In a word, if any part of the fundamentalist movement is to be worth saving, that task demands that we exhibit the virtue of sobriety. We must be or become sober—and oddly enough, that is an exact description of the kind of fundamentalism that is most worth saving.

Scripture repeatedly exhorts us to exhibit the virtue of sobriety. Sobriety is a qualification for bishops, deacons, and their wives (1 Tim. 3:2–11). Old men in general are to be sober (Titus 2:2). Younger men and women are to be taught sobriety (Titus 2:4–6). In view of the end of the age, sobriety is held up as an essential virtue for the Christian life (1 Pet. 4:7).

What is sobriety? Put simply, it is serious-mindedness. Sober people are serious about their ideas, their words, and their conduct. They weigh the importance of what they think, and they envision the consequences of what they say and do. They refuse to treat life as if it were a game, and they regard no aspect of life as too insignificant to be held up for examination. Indeed, about the only thing that sober people refuse to take seriously is themselves—the genuinely sober person has neither time nor inclination to be pompous.

When it comes to the fundamentalist movement, what kind of fundamentalism is worth saving? My answer: a sober fundamentalism. What, then, would a sober fundamentalism look like? I offer several suggestions.

First, a fundamentalism worth saving will be a fundamentalism that takes doctrine seriously. You might think that this should go without saying. The fundamentalist movement is, after all, built upon the idea that we ought to value doctrine. I suggest, however, that we often value it wrongly.

Sad to say, some fundamentalist circles regard doctrinal teaching and especially doctrinal preaching as an offense. Furthermore, plenty of fundamentalist pulpiteers look upon doctrine as an unnecessary encumbrance upon their preaching. They seem to think that less doctrine means more vibrancy. Well, I agree with them in wanting vitality, and I too object to sermons that are bare recitations of the dry bones of systematic theology. The choice, however, is not between doctrine and vibrancy. Indeed, the only genuine vibrancy is solidly grounded in the teachings of God's Word. These are the teachings that must be communicated to God's people. If we are to take doctrine seriously, then we must begin by taking the fundamentals seriously. Too often we have been content to repeat forms of these doctrines that have been so reduced as to be suitable for printing on a business card. We must commit ourselves not only to the defense, but to the elaboration of the fundamentals. Doctrines such as the Trinity, the hypostatic union, and the vicarious atonement are complex and far-reaching in their implications. Such truths are worth understanding, developing, and teaching in their fullness. It is up to us to be the doctrinal guardians for present-day Christianity. Our failure to think seriously about the fundamentals has left the doors of the Faith open to errors such as Open Theism and New Perspective theology.

If we are going to take doctrine seriously, we must be prepared to say which doctrines are not fundamentals. Fundamentalism is not made stronger or more credible when we treat every doctrine as if it were the center of the faith. We need to dispel the notion that Christianity or even fundamentalism depends upon the Baptist distinctives, dispensationalism, premillennialism, pretribulationism, presuppositionalism, Calvinism, or anti-Calvinism. I believe that at least some of the above doctrines are taught in the Word of God. Even if they are true, however, they are not fundamentals. It is possible to make too much of some doctrines. We should not wish to drive leaders out of fundamentalism over doctrines that are not fundamental.

This problem is especially acute when we are caught waxing militant over idiosyncratic doctrines that have little biblical credibility. It is one thing to do battle for the virgin birth or the deity of Christ. But I know of a fundamentalist leader who built a career out of attacking the "demon of the AWANA circle." Others have defended racial segregation or their favorite version of the Bible as militantly as they have defended the substitutionary atonement. Even worse, some have made loyalty to their institutions or even their persons into a touchstone of supposedly biblical fundamentalism. Such tactics completely subvert our ability to think seriously about doctrine.

Yet we must also resist the temptation to reduce Christianity to a bare list of fundamentals. People who take doctrine seriously are interested in knowing and understanding all that Scripture teaches. While we must never treat non-fundamentals as if they were essentials, we must also never treat them as throw-away doctrines. If we are serious about doctrine, then we shall want to know and understand all that God's Word teaches. We will want to elaborate, not simply the fundamentals, but the entire system of faith as it is found in the Scriptures.

What will all this mean for fundamentalists in practical terms? It will mean that we stand united against all who either deny or devalue the fundamentals. It will also mean that we make room for charitable disagreement in issues that are not directly connected to the fundamentals. We will advocate our distinctive positions whether Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian, whether Calvinist, Arminian or something in between, whether Covenant, Landmark, or Dispensationalist, whether premillennial, amillennial, or postmillennial. We will do so charitably, not attempting to hide our real beliefs behind equivocal labels like Biblicist—labels that implicitly suggest that our fundamentalist opponents do not take the Scriptures as seriously as we do. We will fellowship with one another where we can, but we will also recognize the necessary limitations that distinctive doctrines place upon collaboration.

We are among fundamentalist friends here. To my Presbyterian friends I say, you are welcome in the pulpit of Central Baptist Seminary, though not to preach your polity. To my posttribulational friends I declare my willingness to appear in your pulpit, as long as you do not require me to preach your eschatology (and, by the way, in your pulpit I will not preach mine). To my pedobaptist friends I suggest that we can collaborate in a great many ways, though we could hardly plant a church together. To my less Calvinistic friends I offer the right hand of fellowship, and my commitment to labor with you in the Lord's vineyard for the salvation of souls. And to my more Calvinistic friends I say, God has His elect who have not yet heard: let's go find some! To all I say, Believe all that the Bible teaches and practice all that it commands. To be sure, our different understandings of the biblical teachings and commandments may separate us at some levels, but we can respect one another much more than if any of us chose to ignore an aspect of God's Word.

So a fundamentalism worth saving will take doctrine seriously. **Moreover, a fundamentalism worth saving will be a fundamentalism that takes the human condition seriously**. James tells us very clearly that we cannot claim to honor God if we despise humanity, because humans are made in the image of God. We will recognize the grandeur and dignity of being human, and we will value everything that sets humanity apart from other creatures and makes us godlike.

Let me give you a rough-and-ready way of expressing this principle. We cannot take God seriously if we do not take humanity seriously, and we cannot take humanity seriously if we do not take the humanities seriously. Of all the earth's peoples, we fundamentalists ought to be the most genuinely humane.

I am here speaking of the humanities in the broadest sense. In the service of God, such disciplines as languages, history, economics, government, jurisprudence, poetics, art, music, and philosophy are the glory and crown of human kind (next to theology, of course!). These activities require the engagement of the mind and of the affections in such a way that they become exterior expressions of the human soul. In them is the Imago Dei most clearly glimpsed.

Fallen humans may attempt to turn these activities into weapons in their rebellion against God. We are accustomed to being assaulted by supposedly humane productions that embody human depravity. Even when turned against God, however, such works still reflect the image of the Creator. For that reason we must not despise them. We may disagree with them, oppose them, and attempt to refute them, but we must never treat them with contempt.

God Himself does not treat our sins dismissively. Whether he saves us or condemns us, never does He simply disdain us. So it should be when we view our sinful fellow humans. True, their sins are an offense, and we are rightly offended by them, but beside this offense we ought to set two other perspectives. One is a genuine sense of compassion at the lostness and pain that people bring upon themselves through sin. The other is a glimpse of the reality for which people long, the Good toward which their sins point and for which their sins are made a shabby substitute. For sin is parasitic: it cannot exist without some good upon which to feed.

We cannot claim that we are good Christians if we are not even good people. Good people are not contemptuous of poetry, history, law, government, and the other humane disciplines. Rather, they invest themselves in such activities, using these tools in the effort (however misguided and sinful) to enrich the world. It is noble to fashion a beautiful object or an intricate idea. It is a splendid thing to lead a nation well or to challenge an injustice. Why should people believe that we love the greater good of the gospel if they see that we despise the lesser good of the truly humane?

Not for a moment am I suggesting that every person formally has to become a literary critic or a philosopher. Nor am I insinuating that these activities somehow take the place of preaching the gospel: I do not believe that any supposed cultural mandate is the mission of the church. Still, we must not despise such pursuits. We must recognize in the lawyer, the statesman, the historian and the artist genuine callings of God. If we abandon these disciplines to unbelievers, then we should not be amazed when those unbelievers use them against us.

For too long we have equated the term "humanist" with "secularist." Let me state as emphatically as I know how: we who are Christians (and even fundamentalists) ought to be the true humanists. We alone know the true value and dignity of humanity. We alone know that humans are made in the image of God. We alone know that God Himself has become one of us. We alone know that God valued us so highly that He gave His Son to save us. We alone know that a man will rule the kingdom of God. Humanist? No secular person has any right to the name. Any fundamentalism worth saving will take this seriously.

A **fundamentalism worth saving will also be a fundamentalism that takes learning seriously**. Battles are lost and won in the arena of ideas. Thinking is not a uniquely Christian discipline, but of all people Christians ought to be able to think well. Why?

For the simple reason that we are responsible to think rightly about God. Thinking rightly about God presupposes an ability to think rightly in general. Only the orderly mind is capable of drawing orderly conclusions about who God is and what He is doing. In our theology and our devotions, thinking is better than not thinking.

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The obligation to think is not negated by the fact that we have received special revelation from God. Indeed, revelation is one of the things that we must be prepared to think about. While biblical revelation is sufficient for doctrine and life, the Bible itself does not always show the relationships

between its own teachings. The doctrines of the Trinity or the Hypostatic Union, for example, are genuinely biblical doctrines. All the components of those doctrines are revealed in Scripture. The Bible itself, however, does not assemble the components into complete doctrines. It leaves the pieces disconnected. We are responsible to put the pieces together. For this task, thinking is better than not thinking.

Heretics arrive at their conclusions in two ways. Some simply ignore the revelation that God has given. Others, however, attempt to appropriate revelation in flawed ways. They accept revelation, but they think badly about it. If we think badly about God's revelation, we open ourselves up to error. Anyone who questions the value of good thinking should consider the number of professing Christians who have mis-thought their way into heresy. In order to avoid error, thinking is better than not thinking.

Good thinking is not a mysterious business. In order to do it well, we have to have two things. **First**, we must master the basic tools of thought, those liberal arts which are known as the Trivium. Those disciplines consist of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. While many mental operations can be performed without a mastery of these skills, thinking cannot.

Second, if we intend to think well, we must have at least a fair grasp of the history of ideas. This is true even of our biblical and theological ideas. If we claim that we simply go to the Bible alone and find a theology there, then we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. In fact we have been taught by people who were taught by people who got their ideas about the Bible from still others. This is not to deny that our theology really arises from the text of Scripture, but if we are candid we must admit that the ideas we believe have a history behind them. If we know that history we shall avoid many mistakes of the past, and we shall be spared the arduous task of reinventing the wheel.

What is true of biblical doctrine is much truer of other ideas. The entire history of Western thought is a conversation about certain great ideas and an effort to answer certain enduring questions. The conversation, to be sure, has sometimes gone awry. Wrong answers have been given and bad ideas have been posited. If we believe that we are somehow superior because we ignore the entire conversation, however, then we are both arrogant and naïve. Answers to the permanent questions have a way of sneaking in the back door and altering our theology, especially when we are unable to spot them. We will not even understand the many good and pious thinkers in that conversation (people like Luther, Calvin, Arminius, Edwards, Wesley, or the Princetonians) unless we understand the ideas—good and bad—to which they were responding.

Competence in the liberal arts and a basic grasp of the history of ideas are the stock-in-trade of all thoughtful people. They are certainly essential for every species of leader, including Christian leaders. Without these disciplines, a leader has no voice. He is merely an echo. Even in his understanding of the Scriptures he will be at the mercy of others, and he will never be sure which others to trust.

The place to firm up these skills is in college. For us to be serious about learning means that our colleges must produce graduates who have mastered the Trivium and who are adequately

acquainted with the development of ideas. Whether we are discussing universities, liberal arts colleges, or Bible colleges, we must focus upon producing thoughtful people.

Being serious about learning also means that we must be in a position to respond to current trends within those academic disciplines that most affect us. We must not only know the history of the conversation; we must not only eavesdrop on the conversation; but we must also have at least some people who are prepared to participate in the conversation. Perhaps that participation will take the form of disagreement and rebuke. If so, then at least our disagreements should be informed and our rebukes should be accurate.

By no means am I pleading for the kind of cultural and academic respectability that was the hallmark of the new evangelicalism. I frankly do not care whether the academy thinks that I am respectable or not. As a Christian scholar, however, I cannot afford to be ignorant of what other scholars are saying and thinking in my disciplines. I do not have the right to become ingrown and insular, nor can I permit that to happen to the institution over which I preside.

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At one time, fundamentalists were the leading voices in responding to the drift of secular and liberal ideologies. For some time now, we have been happy to abandon that task to other evangelicals who, for whatever reason, were happy to engage the secularists and liberals. The results for fundamentalism have been manifold.

First, our younger leaders have been forced to look outside of fundamentalism for serious responses to the latest threats. Whether we are discussing Open Theism, New Perspective on Paul, the move toward Catholicism, or the hermeneutical problem, we have difficulty finding fundamentalists who are competently addressing the issues. This leaves the unfortunate appearance that fundamentalist leaders are not competent to address the issues.

Second, because some evangelicals are speaking to these issues with boldness and clarity, younger fundamentalists have come to perceive them as more militant than their own fundamentalist elders. They find themselves puzzled as to why we disagree with John MacArthur and John Piper when these men are concretely and publicly doing more to defend the fundamentals than most fundamentalists. This leaves the unfortunate appearance that fundamentalist leaders are simply sniping at personalities, perhaps out of jealousy.

Third, because fundamentalists have been so negligent in speaking competently to the issues, no one really expects to hear from us anymore. Please understand that most evangelicals do not hate

or despise us. Rather, they barely know that we exist. We pop into their consciousness only when some news report highlights a bit of bizarre fundamentalist behavior. We simply are not on their radar screen. This is because of the unfortunate appearance that fundamentalist leaders have nothing to say.

Fourth, the failure to address the issues clearly and competently has left some doctrinal and practical boundaries unguarded, even for fundamentalists. This should not surprise us. We tell our people not to go to evangelicals for answers, but we don't give them answers either. Yet secularism, liberalism, and evangelical concessiveness have a way of trickling down, eventually reaching even fundamentalists. This results in the unfortunate tendency for fundamentalism itself to become liberalized—and which of us is prepared to say that he sees no signs of this?

One part of the solution is to become serious about learning. At the basic level, this means making sure that every graduate of our colleges and universities has mastered the tools of thought. At the more advanced level, we must seek to encourage and foster a generation of scholars and teachers who, while maintaining their commitment to fundamentalist distinctives, are capable of entering the most challenging intellectual arenas. We do not need many such people, but we cannot survive without some. A fundamentalism worth saving will be a fundamentalism that takes learning seriously.

Moreover, it will be a fundamentalism that takes meaning seriously. Without an accurate appraisal of meaning, much of biblical ethics becomes unworkable. For example, we know that we are not to let any corrupt communication proceed out of our mouths, but how do we know whether George Carlin's "seven words you can't say on television" are corrupt communication? Only if we know what those words mean.

I suspect that this is the point at which some younger fundamentalists are going to part company with me, for I believe that most of the activities that we pursue are carriers of meaning. Because they carry meaning, they cannot be morally indifferent. The only way that we can know whether we are doing the right things is to parse them for their meaning. Activities that communicate the wrong significance should not be pursued.

This means that we will label some activities as prohibited and others as obligatory even when Scripture does not directly address them. In doing so, we run the risk of appearing to go beyond Scripture, but this is unavoidable. To do otherwise is to settle for a truncated morality that disallows us from applying biblical principles to most of what we do.

This, I think, highlights the limited usefulness of a distinction between "historic" and "cultural" fundamentalism. Biblical obedience is never a-cultural for the simple reason that human beings are never a-cultural. We must always obey God at a particular time, in a particular place, situated in a particular culture. We do not really care whether George Carlin's words were obscenities in 1560, nor whether their cognates are obscene in German or Norwegian. We care about what they mean in English at the beginning of the 21st Century.

In short, the only way to be a historic, biblical fundamentalist is to be a cultural fundamentalist. The only alternatives are, first, to say that cultures are beyond the Bible's ability to critique and correct,

or second, to argue that fundamentalism is concerned only with doctrine and not with obedience. I doubt that any of us really wants to take either of those steps.

The failure to deal with meaning lies behind some of the complaints of the younger fundamentalists. Take the matter of clothing. Clothing makes a statement about who we think we are and who we think others are under the circumstances under which we meet. We do not wear tattered jeans to weddings, nor do we wear tuxes to bale hay. It seems to me that a Christian leader will not wish to present an appearance that endorses the current culture of incivility. I am sorry, but phat pants, pony tails, piercings, tattoos, and studded leather are going to be of limited usefulness to one's testimony for Christ. They are not even useful within the culture where they are accepted, for that is a culture that needs to be rebuked and corrected by Scripture. Of course, our mainstream culture also needs to be rebuked and corrected at many points. I am not suggesting that we should model ourselves after mainstream culture, but rather that we should refuse to adopt any cultural accouterment that contradicts Christian meanings.

The issue of meaning is especially important for those media that have the explicit purpose of reaching and shaping the imagination. We call such media "arts," and they have the power to drive meanings deeply into our souls. This is a power that we cannot afford to ignore.

Consider the problem of church music. It has become popular to say that God never tells us what kind of music He likes. Of course He does. He likes music that is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, full of virtue, and full of praise. When it is directed to Him in worship, He surely delights in music that is reverent and exalts Him, while just as surely He abominates music that is flippant and trivializes Him. Bad church music does not have to be rock or rap, it just has to be frivolous.

Again, it has become stylish among younger fundamentalists to suggest that we must separate over doctrine, but not over issues like music. I grant that we must not separate at every level every time we disagree about music, just as we must not separate every time we disagree about doctrine. But never? That is simply to be naïve about the terrible destruction that can occur when we debase the Christian faith.

A fundamentalism that is not serious about meaning will not be serious about obedience. Neither will it be serious about the religious affections. And without obedience and affection, right doctrine will either decay or else become a matter of pure formality. We must give ourselves to understanding the manifold ways in which meanings are communicated. We must come to appreciate cultures as networks of meanings. And we must pursue the best, forsaking not only the bad, but also the banal, rejecting not only the heretical, but also the hackneyed.

If you are counting, we are now up to the fifth way in which a fundamentalism worth saving must be sober. And it is this: **we must take piety seriously**. This is the necessary complement to taking doctrine seriously. A supposed piety without doctrine is religious endocrine, but doctrine without piety is a corpse.

Piety is never produced by simply gaining a knowledge of correct doctrine. To suppose that it is repeats the error of Aristotle, who thought that virtue was the necessary outcome of knowing the

right things. This Aristotelian view is, from a biblical perspective, just plain wrong. Because of sin we are terribly conflicted creatures. We can learn all the right truths and still make all the wrong choices. While correct doctrine is one part of the foundation of piety, by itself it is cold and helpless.

If we cannot foster piety through mere doctrinal instruction, much less can we impose it by regulation. Piety requires maturity, and maturity may be defined as the capacity for exercising sound judgment. It involves weighing, considering, comparing, and evaluating. The development of maturity requires experience, and frequently failure. What this means is that we will never produce maturity by aiming at conformity. Regulation and enforcement, however strict, will at best produce compliance. If the regulation is unreasonable or the enforcement is unjust, then it may well result in rebellion.

No, the focus of piety and the mechanism that turns our knowledge into obedience is right affection. At the core of biblical religion (whether Old Testament Judaism or New Testament Christianity) lies the necessity of a heart that is rightly inclined toward God. It is our fundamental duty (and our delight) to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Everything else grows out of this.

In other words, Christianity is not simply a system of intellectual affirmations (though it is that). It is also a living, personal communion with the True and Living God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as enabled and mediated by the ministrations of His Holy Spirit. Christianity includes an element that is terribly personal, subjective, and emotional, and this element is so important that if it is surrendered, Christianity is no longer Christian.

Not all emotions are created equal. There is a difference between *koilia* and *splangchna*; between appetite and affection; between passion and sensibility. To appeal to the appetites or passions will result in what Rolland McCune calls "glandular religion." Some fundamentalists have been guilty of that appeal. For example, the appetite for recognition will reinforce a legal system that emphasizes conformity to rules. Alternatively, the yearning for catharsis (another form of appetite) can reinforce a "spill your guts" testimony time or session of public confession. Some pastors and especially evangelists have built entire careers on such appeals. Nothing is more despicable or subversive than the *koilia* masquerading as Christianity.

The danger is that we will overreact to these excesses by denying the role of emotion altogether. That is just as wrong, resulting in a desiccated orthodoxy that feeds other appetites such as conceit and arrogance. Emotion still sneaks in through the back door, for a sneering religion is still an emotional religion, and the emotion is still wrong.

We fundamentalists have done ourselves no favors by scowling at those who wished for a closer and more intimate walk with God. In some corners of fundamentalism it has become fashionable to disparage anything that smells like deeper life, higher life, Keswick, or holiness. To be sure, I am aware of the theological problems that characterize those schools of thought. But I resonate with their aspirations, because I believe that their yearning is for something thoroughly biblical. Our scornful attitude has too often communicated not simply disagreement with their methods, but contempt for their spiritual aims.

The solution is neither to indulge the passions nor to deny the validity of emotions. It is rather to foster the right emotions, to cultivate ordinate affections. This is not the time to describe how that is to be done. My present point is simply that in any fundamentalism worth saving, the matter will be taken seriously.

We are dealing with a younger generation for whom the personal and emotional has become very important. In my opinion, this is not a bad thing. We do not have to choose between the mind and the heart. God has so constituted us that we can have both. In fact, if we do not have both we become caricatures.

One very practical lesson arises from this observation. Some evangelicals take the affections much more seriously than some fundamentalists. We will not gain a hearing, let alone a following, among the younger fundamentalists by criticizing those men. Our only alternative is to show them a better way, a way in which they can safely maintain doctrinal precision, ecclesiastical integrity, and ordinate affection.

The problem with glandular religion is not that it takes the emotions too seriously, but that it does not take them seriously enough. A fundamentalism that is serious about piety will distinguish healthy affections from destructive passions. Believe it or not, cultivation of the right emotions is a matter that takes rigorous thinking. If fundamentalism is not willing to think seriously enough to be seriously emotional, then let it perish. A fundamentalism without piety is not a fundamentalism that is worth saving.

You are growing weary, but we are drawing near to the end.

A **fundamentalism worth saving will be a fundamentalism that takes separatism seriously.** You might wonder why I would say this. Who, after all, takes separatism more seriously than we do?

As Hamlet would say, "Aye, there's the rub." Separatism is the major—and perhaps the only—demarcator between fundamentalism and other forms of evangelicalism. It is what sets fundamentalism apart. It provides the differentia in the very definition of fundamentalism. If we do not get separatism right, then we do not have fundamentalism. And I can think of at least three reasons why we need to turn serious attention to the subject of separatism.

The **first reason** is that the younger generation is not buying it. At Central we see graduates from many of your institutions. It does not matter where they come from: very few of them arrive at our doorstep convinced of the merits of separatism.

Should we even speak of "young fundamentalists"? I have a colleague at Central who suggests that the younger leaders are (generally speaking) broadly evangelical in their sensibilities, and that they need to be won to fundamentalism. Nothing could be more disastrous for organized fundamentalism than if these men decided to remain in the movement while they were unconvinced of separatism.

We must make the case for separatism all over again. That brings me to the **second reason** why we must take separatism seriously, and that is that a comprehensive defense of separatism remains to be written. Please don't misunderstand me—I deeply value the contributions of writers like Moritz and Sidwell and especially Pickering. They are good works and I require my students to read them. But they are deficient in three areas. First, they tend to be parochial, speaking from assumptions that are not necessarily shared even by all fundamentalists. Second, they have left separatism open to objections because they have failed to integrate it into a larger ecclesiological vision that deals comprehensively with the nature of the church and of Christian unity. Third, they have not adequately defined the limits of separatism or provided a mechanism by which one can distinguish legitimate from illegitimate separations.

And this brings me to the **final reason** that we must take separatism seriously. Fundamentalists have done separatism too badly too often. We have sometimes made it the excuse for political posturing and power grabbing. We have sometimes tolerated unchristian conduct and even error to our Right while excoriating the smallest deviations to our Left. These abuses have cast a pall of opprobrium over separatism. The young leaders who are training in our schools are aware of that opprobrium, and they are waiting for us to make the case for a legitimate separatism that that can be defended theologically and implemented deliberately.

Gentlefolk, if we lose separatism we have lost fundamentalism. If separatism were untrue, that would be no great loss. But it is not untrue: it is connected to the importance of the gospel itself. To lose it would be more than we can afford. It is time for us to turn the best efforts of our best exegetes and theologians to a renewed, sustained articulation and defense of biblical separation. Any fundamentalism at all must be a fundamentalism that takes separation seriously.

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Having said all of the above, let me make one final plea. While a fundamentalism worth saving must take ideas seriously, it must never take itself too seriously. We must bear constantly in mind how limited, frail, sinful, and comedic we really are. People are funny, and we are people. We should not be offended if we are sometimes laughed at. In fact, it would do us good to laugh at ourselves.

Why should we be immune from criticism, either from without or from within? Our critics serve a valuable purpose. They point out the flaws, faults, and inconsistencies that our friends are inclined to excuse. They help us to see ourselves as the rest of the world sees us.

Of course, we must not become preoccupied with self-criticism or the "paralysis of analysis." That is just a different way of taking ourselves too seriously. But when our young leaders-in-training snigger about our foibles, let us not be ponderous. Fundamentalism is likely to be a much more attractive option if people discover that we can take a bit of criticism and even a joke or two.

That is essentially what I have to say. A fundamentalism worth saving must take certain things seriously. If it does not, then I truly do not care whether it survives. I can get along quite well without a fundamentalism that is frivolous and flippant.

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Let me add one further word about how such a fundamentalism might be nourished. These very brief remarks will be focused upon three suggestions. **First**, some years ago Dr. Bob Jones III suggested that it might be time to change the name of fundamentalism. I am not sure whether it is or not, but I think we might discuss the question. The problem lies in finding a better name. He suggested "preservationist," but that does not seem to have caught on. I believe that his grandfather was one of the Methodists who were known as "essentialists." That might be a name worth resurrecting. My personal favorite is "Paleoevangelical," and by that name I am willing to be known, but it is probably too cumbersome. I suggest that we begin an ongoing conversation about this topic.

Second, if fundamentalists are going to converse, then fundamentalism must have an identifiable voice. That voice must speak for and across the movement, which means that it cannot be too closely associated with any particular institution. I suggest that the time has come to consider launching a journal of opinion that would do for fundamentalism what National Review did for conservatism. It must have the mission, first, of defining the mainstream of the fundamentalist movement. This requires that it provide room for the articulation of major fundamentalist principles and for the discussion of legitimate fundamentalist differences. Furthermore, it would distinguish mainstream fundamentalism from the speckled birds and camp followers who attach themselves to the movement and who often seek to dominate it. The editors would have to be charitable in spirit and catholic in sensibility, but truly merciless at their task, for only the most rigorous thinking and the most articulate writing could be allowed. Obviously the creation of such a publication is an enormous undertaking, but we could also begin a conversation about this.

Third, we might focus directly on training fundamentalist leaders by creating camps and conferences that address both their concerns and ours. Some of this is already being done, but it could be facilitated by an umbrella organization. During the 1940s, the fathers of American conservatism created the Intercollegiate Studies Institute for the purpose of training college and university students in conservative principles. Perhaps the time has come for a Christian Studies Institute (maybe even a Paleo-evangelical Studies Institute) that would train potential leaders in the core ideas of fundamentalism. The students of all of our institutions would benefit if we could bring the best and brightest of them together for mutual encouragement and growth. To adapt a line from D. G. Hart, we could help the more conservative become better thinkers, and the better thinkers become more conservative.

As the saying goes, "All's well that ends," and I have reached the end. I wish you to know that I am willing to take my own advice. The ideas that I have articulated, I take seriously. But I do not take myself so seriously as to think that this presentation is above correction. Perhaps it even deserves a good belly-laugh. I now submit it and myself for your scrutiny.