

Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity, Session 26, Rise of Fundamentalism, Part 2 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Green, American Christianity, Session 26, Rise of Fundamentalism, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Roger Green's lecture, "American Christianity, Session 26, Fundamentalism, Part 2," explores the origins and characteristics of American Fundamentalism by examining three key movements: dispensational premillennialism, the Holiness Movement, and Pentecostalism. The lecture then discusses two additional groups that emerged during this period but remained distinct: Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy and appealing to the intellectual and wealthy, and Jehovah's Witnesses, founded by Charles Taze Russell and attracting the socially marginalized. Finally, Dr. Green outlines criticisms leveled against Fundamentalism and briefly introduces evangelicalism and the liberal response as outcomes of this movement, illustrating these points with anecdotes and examples.

**2. 23 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Green, American Christianity, Session 26 – Double click
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Church History → American Christianity).**



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3. Briefing Document: Green, Session 26, Rise of Fundamentalism, Part 2

Briefing Document: American Fundamentalism, Part 2

Overview: This session of Dr. Green's lecture on American Christianity delves deeper into the landscape of American Fundamentalism by examining three key movements that contributed to its formation: Pentecostalism, Christian Science, and Jehovah's Witnesses. The lecture also explores criticisms leveled against fundamentalism as a whole and briefly introduces evangelicalism and the liberal response as subsequent developments.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Three Broad Movements of American Fundamentalism (Continued):

- **Pentecostalism:** Described as a "mirror image of religious experience," contrasting with classical Protestant liberalism's emphasis on human-initiated religious experience exemplified by Jesus. Pentecostalism emphasizes religious experience as originating solely from the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Formed by the convergence of five streams:
 1. **Emphasis on Entire Sanctification:** Drawing from Wesleyan theology, Pentecostals believed in a life-transforming experience of entire sanctification.
 2. **Empowerment of the Holy Spirit:** A strong focus on the Holy Spirit empowering individuals and groups.
 3. **Dispensational Premillennialism:** Shared the same historical lens as dispensational premillennialists.
 4. **New Theology of Faith Healing:** Faith healing became a crucial and defining characteristic of early Pentecostalism.
 5. **Restorationism:** Viewed itself as restoring the "primitive church" with its power and miracles.
- **Charles Fox Parham:** Often considered the "father of Pentecostalism," he was a Midwestern evangelist and faith healer who preached that all Christians must be baptized by the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues.

- **Assemblies of God:** Formed in 1914, it became the largest and most prominent Pentecostal denomination, shaped by figures like Parham. Other smaller Pentecostal denominations with similar emphases on speaking in tongues, faith healing, and the imminent return of Christ also emerged.

2. Other Movements Arising in the Atmosphere of Fundamentalism:

- **Christian Science (Founded by Mary Baker Eddy, 1879):**
 - Emerged from Eddy's miraculous healing and appealed to the "wealthy, the influential, and the intellectual."
 - Characterized by "idealism" and likened to "Protestant liberalism to the extreme" and even a "Gnostic movement."
 - **Core Beliefs:** Denied the reality of matter, sin, disease, and death, asserting that the spiritual world is the only reality. Sickness is seen as a result of "false belief," requiring a "proper understanding" of Christian faith for healing, often sought through Christian Science practitioners rather than medical doctors.
 - **Practices and Symbolism:** Christian Science churches often feature scripture verses alongside the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy, presented as equal in authority.
 - Churches typically have two equal-sized pulpits, one for the Bible and one for Mary Baker Eddy's book, with corresponding passages read during services.
 - **Challenges and Decline:** While initially attracting a wealthy following, Christian Science has faced problems due to its denial of medical treatment, leading to legal issues in cases of child deaths. Membership in Christian Science churches is reportedly declining.
 - **Intellectual Appeal:** Emphasizes an intellectual approach to Christianity, evident in their reading rooms. They also founded the "Christian Science Monitor," known for its journalism.
 - **Distinction from Scientology:** Explicitly stated as not being Scientology.
- **Jehovah's Witnesses (Founded by Charles Taze Russell):**
 - These are "basically Unitarians" who are not Trinitarian.
 - Appealed to "social outsiders," "the poor," and those in inner cities lacking social norms and discipline.

- Emphasizes a strict ethical life for members to demonstrate their status as part of the "redeemed" or "elect of God."
- Contrasted with Christian Science, appealing to the "down and out" rather than the "up and out."
- Had no connection to the dispensational pre-millennials, Pentecostals, or the Holiness tradition, existing as a separate movement.

3. Results of Fundamentalism:

1. **Criticisms of Fundamentalism (Based on Sandin's "The Roots of Fundamentalism" and evangelical perspectives):****Inability or Unwillingness to be Self-Critical:** A lack of introspection and an assumption of infallibility.
2. **Odd View of Scripture:** Often focusing on the "minutia of prophecy" rather than the broader context.
3. **Judgment Rather Than Love:** Exhibiting a judgmental attitude, sometimes even towards other fundamentalists.
4. **Truncated Gospel of Health and Wealth:** Preaching that genuine faith leads to health and financial prosperity.
5. **Often Ahistorical:** Lacking a sense of the long history of Christianity, with a tendency to see the church beginning with their own recent movement.
6. **Built Around Superstars:** Developing a "cult of personality" where the movement's success and stability depended heavily on individual charismatic leaders.
7. **Often Condemns the Entire Church:** Viewing any church not aligned with their specific doctrines as "satanic and evil."
8. **Often Lacks a Sense of Social Responsibility:** Neglecting care for the poor and neighbors.
9. **Often Lacked Engagement with Modern Intellectual Trends:** Fundamentalist leaders were often unable to engage with contemporary intellectual discourse, partly due to a perceived lack of training in biblical theology, doctrinal theology, and biblical languages in fundamentalist schools.

10. **"Orthodoxy Gone Cultic"**: Emphasizing "minor virtues while cultivating major vices." Christianity could be reduced to a list of prohibitions ("don't drink, smoke, dance, or chew") without necessarily fostering genuine Christian character.

4. Evangelicalism as a Coming Off of Fundamentalism (Briefly Introduced):

- Evangelicalism is presented as a movement that emerged from fundamentalism. This will be explored in more detail in subsequent lectures.

5. The Liberal Response to Fundamentalism (Briefly Introduced):

- The lecture notes that there was a liberal response to the rise of fundamentalism, which will also be examined later.

Key Quotes:

- **Pentecostalism**: "Pentecostalism comes along and says, we believe in religious experience, but it's not a religious experience that human beings can kind of muster up... That religious experience, which is important for Pentecostalism... comes only by the work of the Holy Spirit, so it comes only by God."
- **Christian Science (Idealism)**: "If there's one word you want to associate with Christian science, it would be the word idealism."
- **Christian Science (Denial of Reality)**: "Christian science through the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy, Christian science denied the reality of matter, sin, disease, and death. It denied that those things, that that wasn't the real world. The only real world was the spiritual world."
- **Christian Science (Equality of Scripture and Eddy's Teachings)**: "right next to each scripture verse, there will be the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy. These things are equal... there are two pulpits in that church. And they're both equal... on one pulpit is the Bible... And on the other pulpit is Mary Baker Eddy's book... those two pulpits are equal. And the Bible and the book of Mary Baker Eddy are also equal, equal words."
- **Jehovah's Witnesses (Appeal)**: "This appeal was to the social outsiders. This appeal was to the poor. This appeal was inner city to the poor, those outside of the social norms and social constructs, who had no home, who had no family, and who had no discipline in their lives."
- **Criticism of Fundamentalism (Self-Criticism)**: "Beware of the person who is not self-critical... The most critical person in your theology should be you."

- **Criticism of Fundamentalism (Orthodoxy Gone Cultic):** "fundamentalism is orthodoxy gone cultic... they emphasize minor virtues while cultivating major vices."

Conclusion:

Dr. Green's lecture provides a comprehensive overview of the key movements that shaped American Fundamentalism beyond dispensational premillennialism. By examining Pentecostalism, Christian Science, and Jehovah's Witnesses, the lecture highlights the diverse theological and social appeals within this broader religious phenomenon. Furthermore, the critical analysis of fundamentalism's shortcomings, drawing from evangelical perspectives, sets the stage for understanding the emergence of evangelicalism as a distinct movement and the broader religious landscape's response to fundamentalist theology and practices. The personal anecdote at the end serves as a vivid illustration of some of the criticisms, particularly the judgmental and exclusive attitudes sometimes found within fundamentalist circles.

4. Study Guide: Green, American Christianity, Session 26, Rise of Fundamentalism, Part 2

Study Guide: American Fundamentalism, Part 2

Key Concepts and Themes:

- **American Fundamentalism:** Understanding its continuation and branching into different movements.
- **Pentecostalism:** Its origins, core beliefs (religious experience through the Holy Spirit), and the five streams that shaped it (entire sanctification, Holy Spirit empowerment, dispensational premillennialism, faith healing, restorationism).
- **Charles Fox Parham:** His role as a key figure in early Pentecostalism and his emphasis on Spirit baptism evidenced by speaking in tongues.
- **Assemblies of God:** The formation of a major Pentecostal denomination and its core tenets.
- **Christian Science:** The emergence of this movement, founded by Mary Baker Eddy, and its core beliefs (idealism, denial of the reality of matter, sin, disease, and death, spiritual healing).
- **Mary Baker Eddy:** Her experience and teachings as the founder of Christian Science, and the unique place her writings hold alongside the Bible in the movement.
- **Jehovah's Witnesses:** Their distinct theological positions (Unitarianism) and social appeal (to the marginalized). Their independence from the fundamentalist movements discussed.
- **Criticisms of Fundamentalism:** Examining internal criticisms regarding self-criticism, interpretation of scripture, judgment vs. love, a truncated gospel, ahistoricism, cult of personality, condemnation of the broader church, lack of social responsibility, and lack of engagement with modern intellectual trends.
- **"Orthodoxy Gone Cultic":** The idea that fundamentalism, while rooted in orthodox beliefs, sometimes adopted problematic and exclusionary characteristics.
- **Evangelicalism:** Briefly mentioned as a movement that emerged from fundamentalism (to be discussed in more detail later).

- **Liberal Response to Fundamentalism:** Briefly mentioned as another consequence of fundamentalism (to be discussed in more detail later).

Quiz:

1. Describe two of the five streams that contributed to the formation of Pentecostalism.
2. What was Charles Fox Parham's key teaching regarding baptism by the Holy Spirit? What was considered the definite sign of this baptism?
3. Explain the core tenet of Christian Science regarding the nature of reality, according to Mary Baker Eddy. How does this belief impact their approach to sickness?
4. What was the social demographic that Christian Science primarily appealed to? What aspects of their theology might have attracted this group?
5. How did the social appeal of Jehovah's Witnesses differ from that of Christian Science? What are some of their key theological distinctions from mainstream Christianity mentioned in the lecture?
6. According to the lecture, what is one criticism of fundamentalism regarding its approach to scripture? Provide a brief example from the lecture.
7. Explain the criticism that fundamentalism often exhibited "judgment rather than love."
8. What does the criticism of fundamentalism as being "ahistorical" mean?
9. Describe the concern that fundamentalism often built itself around "superstars." What potential negative consequence could this have?
10. According to the evangelical critic quoted, what "minor virtues" did some fundamentalists emphasize, and what "major vices" did they allegedly cultivate?

Quiz Answer Key:

1. Two of the five streams that contributed to Pentecostalism are: (1) an emphasis on entire sanctification as a life-transforming experience, drawing from Wesleyan theology, and (2) a strong emphasis on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit upon individuals and groups.
2. Charles Fox Parham taught that all Christians must be baptized by the Holy Spirit. He also believed that the definite sign of this baptism was speaking in tongues.

3. Christian Science, through Mary Baker Eddy's teachings, denied the reality of matter, sin, disease, and death, considering the spiritual world the only true reality. They believed sickness was the result of false belief, requiring a proper spiritual understanding for healing, rather than medical intervention.
4. Christian Science primarily appealed to the wealthy, influential, and intellectual members of society. Their philosophical idealism, which denied the material world and emphasized the power of the mind and spirit, likely resonated with this demographic.
5. Jehovah's Witnesses appealed to the social outsiders, the poor, and those on the margins of society, unlike Christian Science's appeal to the elite. The lecture mentioned that Jehovah's Witnesses are Unitarian, rejecting the Trinity, a key distinction from mainstream Christian theology.
6. One criticism of fundamentalism regarding scripture is that it sometimes focused on the minutiae of prophecy rather than understanding the broader message. The lecture gave examples of groups fixating on specific dates for the second coming of Jesus, such as the group in Granis, Arkansas, and the book "88 Reasons why the Rapture is going to take place in 1988."
7. The criticism that fundamentalism often showed "judgment rather than love" refers to a tendency within the movement to be critical and condemnatory, not only towards those outside their specific groups but sometimes even towards other fundamentalists with differing views.
8. The criticism that fundamentalism was often "ahistorical" means that it lacked a broad understanding and appreciation for the 2000-year history of Christianity. There was a tendency to act as if the Christian church began with their particular movement or denomination.
9. The concern that fundamentalism often built itself around charismatic "superstars" was that the movement's success and stability became overly reliant on these individuals. Consequently, when a leader faced scandal or left the movement, the entire enterprise was at risk of collapsing.
10. The evangelical critic suggested that some fundamentalists emphasized minor virtues like abstaining from drinking, smoking, dancing, and chewing, while allegedly cultivating major vices, implying a potential disconnect between outward appearances of piety and inner character.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the five streams that converged to form Pentecostalism. In what ways did these diverse influences shape the early characteristics and beliefs of the movement?
2. Compare and contrast the theological and social appeals of Christian Science and Jehovah's Witnesses as discussed in the lecture. What factors might explain their different target audiences and core beliefs?
3. Evaluate the criticisms leveled against fundamentalism as a whole, as presented in the lecture. Which of these criticisms do you find most compelling and why?
4. Discuss the significance of Mary Baker Eddy's role in the Christian Science movement, particularly in relation to the authority of scripture. How did her teachings and the structure of Christian Science churches reflect her perceived authority?
5. Considering the lecture, what are some potential challenges or negative consequences that can arise within religious movements that exhibit a lack of self-criticism or build themselves heavily around individual leaders?

5. FAQs Green, American Christianity, Session 26, Rise of Fundamentalism, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: American Fundamentalism and Related Movements

1. What were the three main movements that formed the foundation of American Fundamentalism, and what were their key characteristics? American Fundamentalism was primarily shaped by three movements: Dispensational Premillennialism, the Holiness Movement, and Pentecostalism. Dispensational Premillennialism offered a specific interpretation of history and prophecy. The Holiness Movement emphasized a modern understanding of morality and purity of heart achieved through God's grace, with some adherents even advocating for "sinless perfection." Pentecostalism centered on the experience of the Holy Spirit, often manifested through speaking in tongues, and drew from five streams: entire sanctification, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, dispensational premillennialism, a theology of faith healing, and a restorationist view of the primitive church.

2. How did Pentecostalism emerge as a distinct movement, and what were the foundational beliefs and practices associated with its early development?

Pentecostalism arose from a confluence of different theological streams and traditions. Key influences included the Holiness Movement's emphasis on entire sanctification, a strong focus on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the historical framework of dispensational premillennialism, a developing theology of faith healing, and a desire to restore the perceived power and miraculous nature of the early Christian church. Charles Fox Parham is often considered a key figure in its early development, emphasizing the necessity of baptism by the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues. The formation of the Assemblies of God in 1914 marked a significant step in the institutionalization of Pentecostalism as a major denomination.

3. What were the core tenets of Christian Science as founded by Mary Baker Eddy, and to which social groups did it primarily appeal? Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy, was characterized by a strong sense of idealism, almost Gnostic in nature. It denied the ultimate reality of matter, sin, disease, and death, asserting that the spiritual world was the only true reality. Sickness was seen as a result of false belief that could be overcome through proper spiritual understanding and the help of Christian Science practitioners rather than medical doctors. This movement primarily appealed to the wealthy, the influential, and the intellectual, who found its philosophical idealism attractive and financially supported the movement.

4. How did the beliefs and appeal of Jehovah's Witnesses contrast with those of Christian Science, despite both emerging during the same broader period as Fundamentalism?

While both Christian Science and Jehovah's Witnesses emerged in a time of significant religious innovation, their beliefs and target audiences were starkly different. Jehovah's Witnesses are fundamentally Unitarian, rejecting the Trinity, and they emphasized a strict ethical lifestyle for their adherents as a demonstration of their redeemed status. Unlike Christian Science's appeal to the affluent and intellectual, Jehovah's Witnesses primarily appealed to social outsiders, the poor, and those marginalized by mainstream society, offering a sense of belonging and purpose. They had no direct connection to the dispensational premillennial, Pentecostal, or Holiness traditions that shaped much of Fundamentalism.

5. What were some of the key criticisms leveled against American Fundamentalism as a whole?

Critics, including some within the evangelical movement, identified several problematic tendencies within Fundamentalism. These included an inability or unwillingness to be self-critical, an occasional odd or overly literalistic view of scripture focused on minute details of prophecy, a tendency to show judgment rather than love (both towards outsiders and other fundamentalists), the preaching of a "truncated gospel" focused on health and wealth, an often ahistorical perspective lacking a sense of the broader history of Christianity, a reliance on charismatic "superstar" leaders leading to potential instability, a tendency to condemn the entire Christian church outside of their own specific groups, a frequent lack of social responsibility and care for the poor, a lack of engagement with modern intellectual trends, and a tendency to emphasize minor behavioral virtues while potentially cultivating more significant vices ("orthodoxy gone cultic").

6. How did the term "charismatic" come into use in relation to Pentecostalism and other Christian traditions?

The term "charismatic" gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s to describe a trans-denominational movement that emphasized the gifts and work of the Holy Spirit, often including practices like speaking in tongues and faith healing. While Pentecostalism also emphasizes these aspects, "Pentecostal" typically denotes a specific denominational identity (like the Assemblies of God), whereas "charismatic" refers to a broader movement that transcends traditional denominational lines, even including individuals and groups within mainline Protestant denominations and Roman Catholicism.

7. What examples from the source material illustrate some of the criticisms of Fundamentalism, particularly regarding interpretations of scripture and attitudes towards other Christian groups?

The source provides several illustrations. The repeated attempts to date the Second Coming of Christ, such as the group in Granis, Arkansas, and the book "88 Reasons why the rapture is going to take place in 1988," exemplify an "odd view of scripture" focused on specific prophetic timelines. The confrontational letter from Bob Jones III to the Evangelical Theological Society, criticizing their openness to social reform and ecumenical orientation and even suggesting a name change to "Evangelical Social Society for the Furtherance of the Kingdom of the Antichrist," demonstrates a judgmental attitude and a condemnation of other Christian groups not aligned with their specific separatist approach. The anecdote about Bob Jones University refusing to rent a film to Barrington College (and labeling Gordon College as "of the devil") further illustrates this exclusionary and condemning attitude towards other Christian institutions.

8. What personal anecdote does Dr. Green share to illustrate a particular characteristic he observed in some fundamentalists? Dr. Green shares his experience on a flight with a man named Andy Vandenberg from Canada. Vandenberg declared his church to be the only true church in the world and was highly critical of others. This encounter, and the subsequent 60-page packet and personal letter Vandenberg sent, including a scathing letter sent (with a copy to Dr. Green) to prominent figures like Billy Graham denouncing them as servants of Satan, vividly illustrates the critical, judgmental, and often uncharitable attitude that Dr. Green and others have identified as a negative characteristic of some within the fundamentalist movement, highlighting their lack of self-awareness and tendency to condemn those with different theological perspectives.