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Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism in the US and Beyond

Forgotten Voices in Early Twentieth-Century Evangelical Theology

by Kenneth J. Stewart

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Abstract: Standard accounts of fundamentalism and evangelicalism in the inter-war period of the twentieth century uniformly emphasize the paucity of energetic scholarship in Scripture and Theology. It is suggested that energies were largely directed towards theological combat. We are told that those who did research and write did so for those who shared their commitments. This standard approach passes over the fact that on both sides of the Atlantic, there were evangelical scholars already in their careers in the 1920s and 30s who worked away doing solid scholarship, scholarship which laid the foundations for the better-recognized blossoming of evangelical learning in the post-World War Two era.

Keywords: Fundamentalism, Evangelicalism, Inter-Varsity, Tyndale House, Fuller Theological Seminary

Introduction

The dominant historiography regarding fundamentalism and evangelicalism prior to 1950 suggests that orthodox evangelical Protestants had been struggling to contain the advance of liberal and modernist viewpoints in the period extending to the end of World War I. Then, with the subsiding of the distraction of that armed conflict, conservative Protestants—observing the fresh advance of modernist views—became alarmist and bellicose. As the story has been told, fundamentalism (in its various hues) predominated in the 1920-1950 period. Serious Christian learning and scholarship declined in this period with evangelicalism only gradually extricating itself from this cul-de-sac through the North American founding of the National Association of Evangelicals (1942), the establishing of Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, CA (1947) and the formation of the Evangelical Theological Society (1949). Such developments were accompanied by the emergence of Billy Graham as a national figure after 1949, and the launch and reach of *Christianity Today* magazine (1956).

Respected historians of Christianity have elaborated this storyline of evangelical retreat and retrenchment within the USA for almost half a century. So, for example, George Marsden in “From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism” (1975),

Fundamentalism and American Culture (1980), and *Reforming Fundamentalism* (1987) charted the stages of disengagement and reengagement.¹ John Fea, in his 1994 essay, "Understanding the Changing Façade of American Protestant Fundamentalism," further developed the idea of phases in this movement, finding four. Two of these, the "militant" and the "divisive," describe the 1930-1960 period.² Joel Carpenter, in *Revive Us Again* (1997), noted the paucity of learned evangelical leaders after 1920, leaving the movement beholden to "evangelists, pastors, and Bible teachers" for direction.³ Douglas Sweeney, in *The American Evangelical Story*, traced evangelical reengagement with the "larger theological world" to the late 1940s.⁴ Garth Rosell, in his *The Surprising Work of God* (2008), depicted the reaction against the fundamentalist disdain of learning as falling in the post-1945 era and in the wake of sustained prayer for revival.⁵ Owen Strachan, following in Rosell's footsteps in his *Awakening the Evangelical Mind*, depicted the resurgence of evangelical learning as postwar and very much centered around Harold John Ockenga and a coterie of young scholars he befriended as they were pursuing doctoral studies in greater Boston.⁶ Concurrently, there has been some readiness to portray the situation of evangelical scholarship in the United Kingdom as less dire, with a recovery underway earlier.⁷

This historiography, while it has helpfully drawn attention to the enterprises which followed the 1942 creation of the NAE, has at the same time not been fully

1. George M. Marsden, "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism," in *The Evangelicals: Who They Are and What They Believe*, eds. David F. Wells and John Woodbridge (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 125-27, describes a militant post-World War Two phase (1919-1926) followed by a period of withdrawal and sectarianism that lasted from around 1926 to about the 1940s. This sectarian phase was followed by another in which evangelicalism aimed at re-integration into modern society, while fundamentalism remained belligerent. This interpretative framework was pursued further in his writings during the 1980s. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987).

2. John Fea, "Understanding the Changing Façade of American Protestant Fundamentalism," *Trinity Journal* 15, no. 2 (1994): 181-99. Notably, Fea dated what Marsden called the sectarian phase of fundamentalism as "militant" and saw it as embracing the whole period from 1920-1936. This was followed by a "divisive" phase extending from 1941-1960, in which a movement held together by controversy gradually differentiated.

3. Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 71.

4. Douglas Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 172.

5. Garth Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 195.

6. Owen Strachan, *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), chapters 3-4.

7. See this particularly in Mark Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), chapter 4. This situation in the United Kingdom compared to that of the USA had been interpreted more guardedly by F. F. Bruce, "The Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research," *Evangelical Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (January 1947): 52-61. See also Derek Tidball, "Post-War Evangelical Theology: A Generational Perspective," *Evangelical Quarterly* 81, no. 2 (2009): 145-60.

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convincing because there remain several strands of evidence that point to earlier demonstrations of scholarly evangelical strength. This paper will argue that serious evangelical scholarship never entirely receded, though it initially worked under difficult constraints. Among these strands of contrary evidence are these:

Considerable Theological Diversity Observable in *The Fundamentals* Project (1909 ff)

There is, first, the diversity of outlook and conviction reflected in *The Fundamentals*, which were first published as pamphlets before being bound together in hardback volumes in 1917. This was a collaborative effort of Christian leaders who, while agreeing on essentials, varied widely in their levels of theological education and sophistication. The *Fundamentals*, in fact, mixed the efforts of those who were learned stalwarts, some even heads of theological colleges, and those whose accomplishments had more to do with notable pastoral success. The first group showed themselves to be still at home in the wider world of biblical and theological scholarship, which manifested the troubling trends seeming to warrant *The Fundamentals* project. We can grant fully that, as Marsden, Noll, and others have asserted, fundamentalism did become more belligerent and bellicose in the post-World War One era, without also granting that all of thoughtful conservative Protestantism was swept along by this tendency to shallowness and acrimony.⁸ What is more, Marsden's earlier suggestion that Protestant fundamentalism was primarily a North American phenomenon has more recently been displaced by an acceptance that it existed internationally.⁹ This being said, the belligerence for which fundamentalism became known was most concentrated in the western hemisphere.

While some of these thoughtful stalwarts had passed away by 1930, they used the balance of their careers to uphold orthodox Christian belief as winsomely as they could. These I will call the continuing evangelical "intelligentsia." Examples are as follows: Presbyterian contributors to *The Fundamentals* included James Orr (1844-1913), who we also remember for his volumes *The Christian View of God and the World* (1893), *The Progress of Dogma* (1902), *The Problem of the Old*

8. Mark Noll is careful to show the distinctions which can be drawn among the many contributors to *The Fundamentals*. See Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 38-47. Noll poignantly shows how *The Fundamentals* illustrate the growing tendency of conservative Protestants to forgo dialogue with those more moderate and liberal than themselves and to address the already convinced. Individual British contributors to *The Fundamentals* project are examined in an illuminating chapter by Geoffrey Treloar, "The British Contributors to *The Fundamentals*," in *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom During the Twentieth Century*, eds. David W. Bebbington and David Ceri Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), chapter 1.

9. Marsden's claim was originally set out in Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon: A Comparison with English Evangelicalism," *Church History* 46, no.2 (1977): 215-32. See Bebbington and Jones, *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom*, for a wider perspective.

Testament (1906) and the editing of the first edition of the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1915). Thomas Whitelaw (1840-1917), like Orr, a contributor to *The Fundamentals*, showed his familiarity with German criticism in *The Patriarchal Times* (1903). American Presbyterians were well-represented. B. B. Warfield (1851-1921) supplied to *The Fundamentals* project an essay on “The Deity of Christ,” his faculty colleague at Princeton, Charles R. Erdman, supplied an essay on “The Holy Spirit and the Sons of God.” Melvin Grove Kyle (1858-1933), then known as the most prominent evangelical advocate of biblical archaeology, supplied material on “The Recent Testimony of Archaeology to the Scriptures.” Future president of Xenia Theological Seminary, he would take responsibility for the preparation of a second edition of the Bible encyclopedia edited by James Orr.¹⁰ Baptists were represented such as E. Y. Mullins (1860-1928), president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and author of *The Christian Faith in its Doctrinal Expression*. From the sister seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, James J. Reeve (1866-1946) contributed as well. Anglicans such as W. H. Griffith Thomas (1861-1924), author of many commentaries and the posthumously published *Principles of Theology* (1930), as well as Dyson Hague (1857–1935), like Thomas connected with Wycliffe College, Toronto. Also participating in the writing of *The Fundamentals* was George F. Wright (1838-1921), the Congregationalist scholar of Oberlin College, Ohio; there, he combined scientific interests in geology with the teaching of the New Testament. He produced such intriguing titles as *The Ice Age in North America and its Bearing on the Antiquity of Man* (fifth edition, 1911). We should take it as settled that a significant proportion of the contributors to *The Fundamentals* were what might be called “gentleman theologians.” They held positions of influence in well-regarded schools; they were known for their thoughtful writings.¹¹

This Generation of Scholarly Evangelicals Was Succeeded by Another

The generation that learned from the aforementioned scholars entered their academic careers during the period when fundamentalism is characterized as growing less gentlemanly and more belligerent. One prominent member of this generation was J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937), who in spite of his personal involvement in controversy, wrote substantial volumes such as *The Virgin Birth of Christ* and *The Origin of Paul's Religion* that showed him to be capable of work of the highest standard.¹² J. Oliver Buswell (1895-1977) was installed as president of Wheaton

10. Jeffrey McDonald has recently drawn attention to the activity of Kyle in an essay, “Advancing the Evangelical Mind: Melvin Grove Kyle, J. Gresham Machen and the League of Evangelical Students,” *Religions* 12, no. 7 (2021), viewable online at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/7/498>.

11. In drawing these observations, I have utilized the four-volumes-in-two edition published by Baker Grand Rapids, in 2003.

12. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 36 suggests that, despite his scholarly books, Machen

College in 1926. He had already gained the BD and MA.¹³ As president, Buswell secured the services of philosopher Gordon Clark (1902-1985) for Wheaton College in 1936, Clark having gained the PhD at the University of Pennsylvania in 1929. Harold Ockenga (1905-1985), who followed Machen from Princeton Theological Seminary to Philadelphia, graduating in 1930, acquired a Pittsburgh PhD by 1939 while in a busy urban pastorate.¹⁴ Julius R. Mantey (1890-1965), a protege of the late A. T. Robertson (1863-1934), the Greek scholar of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, gained that seminary's doctorate and spent his entire career teaching that same discipline at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago.¹⁵

Ned B. Stonehouse (1902-1962), just joining the faculty of Westminster Seminary as Harold Ockenga passed through it in his senior year, had completed a New Testament doctorate at the Free University of Amsterdam in 1929. His colleague in Philadelphia from the beginning was Allan A. MacRae (1902-1997). Macrae had studied at BIOLA and graduated from Princeton Seminary then did doctoral research in Berlin before completing a PhD at the University of Pennsylvania in 1936.¹⁶ Edward J. Young (1907-1968), who would join that same faculty in 1936 after graduate study in Semitics at Leipzig, went on to complete an Old Testament doctorate at Dropsie College, Philadelphia in 1943.¹⁷ Merrill C. Tenney (1904-1985), for so long associated with Wheaton College, had been on the faculty of Gordon College from 1929 while a graduate student at Boston University. These were the teachers of the next generation which is today credited with helping evangelicalism to clear out the cobwebs. While we can acknowledge that some of those mentioned here had associations with the strident fundamentalist controversy, the principle remains that all of these had commenced or completed doctoral study in the pre-1940 period. A good number had a decade or more of teaching experience before the 1940s dawned. Many of these were already drawing recognition for their publications. In a good number of cases, the generalization drawn by Mark Noll that this generation of scholars wrote books primarily for other theological conservatives is inadequate.¹⁸

invested no time in writing for scholarly journals such as the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. However, as late as 1928, Machen was writing "Forty Years of New Testament Research," *Union Seminary Review* 40 (1928): 1-12.

13. David Michael Maas, "Buswell, James Oliver, Jr.," in *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the United States*, Vol. 1, eds. George Thomas Kurian and Mark A. Lamport (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 360-61.

14. Rosell, *Surprising Work of God*, 63.

15. Warren Cameron Young, *Commit What You Have Heard: A History of Northern Baptist Seminary, 1913-1988* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1988), 63. Mantey is best remembered for the Dana and Mantey, *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (1927).

16. Robert Dunzweiler, "Tribute to Allan A. Macrae" in *Interpretation and History: Essays in Honor of Allan A. Macrae*, eds. R. Laird Harris et al. (Singapore: Christian Life, 1986), 37.

17. Davis A. Young, *For to Me to Live is Christ: The Life of Edward J. Young* (Willow Grove, PA: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2017).

18. Noll's interesting observation, given in *Between Faith and Criticism*, 44-45, would apply in very many cases, but the exceptions are noteworthy. E. J. Young's biographer details that scholar's

The same intellectual vitality was being shown in the Dutch American Protestant world. It is significant that the *Systematic Theology* of Louis Berkhof (1873-1957), first published in 1934, was in use in many Presbyterian seminaries (including Princeton) in the 1930s as well as in the new Fuller Seminary soon after its 1947 founding.¹⁹ Berkhof had as his colleagues in Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Clarence Bouma (1891-1962), a Princeton Seminary graduate who had gained a ThD from Harvard (1924) and Martin Wyngaarden (1910-1966), who furthered his Princeton Seminary studies with a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, gained in 1922.²⁰ Their affiliates in the Netherlands became well-known in North America after World War Two, but had already been active in scholarship before the wartime hostilities began. There was the father and son team, Jan Ridderbos (1879-1960) and Herman Ridderbos (1909-2007), both associated with the Theological School at Kampen.²¹ Their contemporaries at the theological faculty of Amsterdam's Free University included theologians Valentine Hepp (1879-1950), his junior colleague G. C. Berkouwer (1903-1996), the Old Testament scholar, G. Ch. Aalders (1880-1961) and New Testament scholar, F. W. Grosheide (1881-1972).²² When the British Inter-Varsity Fellowship's press began to publish monographs in this period, titles originally published in Dutch began to appear. Aalders' *Short Introduction to the Pentateuch* was one such. The launch of the *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (commencing 1951) under the editorship of Ned B. Stonehouse (Eerdmans/Marshall Morgan & Scott) emerged from this matrix.²³ Stonehouse recruited his Amsterdam doctoral supervisor, Grosheide, the younger Ridderbos of Kampen, a fellow Free University doctoral graduate from South Africa, Jac Muller, and an additional South African, Norval Geldenhuys, to the team who wrote the individual New Testament volumes. It was Stonehouse's late 1920s collaboration that came to expression in this series.

Meanwhile, the pre-World War Two era was also a period of promise within conservative French Protestantism. Three authors in particular came to the attention of the English-speaking world, the Paris theologian, August Lecerf (1872-1943), the Montpellier theologian, Jean Cadiér (1898-1981), and Pierre-Charles Marcel

extended interactions with British OT scholar, H. H. Rowley. See Allan A. Harman, "E. J. Young," in *Bible Interpreters of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Walter Elwell and J. D. Weaver (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 191.

19. Henry Zwaanstra, "Louis Berkhof," in *Reformed Theology in America*, ed. David A. Wells (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 171n57.

20. On Bouma, see Kenneth J. Stewart, "Rehabilitating Clarence Bouma, First President of ETS," *Presbyterian* 49, no. 1 (2023): 144-55.

21. We find articles by each in the *New Bible Commentary* (1953) and *Dictionary* (1960).

22. The theological faculty of the Free University in this period is described in Arie Theodorus van Deursen, *The Distinctive Character of the Free University in Amsterdam: 1880-2005* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), chapters 2-3.

23. The British edition of this commentary series went by the name, *New London Commentary*.

Kenneth J. Stewart: *Forgotten Voices in Early Twentieth-Century Evangelical Theology* (1910-1992).²⁴ All became known outside their homeland as their works were translated.²⁵ Lecerf and his pupil, Marcel, had formed strong links with the theological developments at Kampen and the Free University of Amsterdam.

A very similar process can be observed in the UK and in what Australian historian, Geoffrey Treloar, has called “Greater Britain.”²⁶ In 1936 the Anglican evangelical, T. C. Hammond of Dublin (1877-1961), already active as an apologist within Ireland, was invited to Sydney, Australia to become the principal of Moore Theological College. Just before he embarked, he dictated what would prove to be one of the most influential handbooks of evangelical theology in the first half of the twentieth century, *In Understanding Be Men*. This, he followed up with an apologetics text, *Reasoning Faith: An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*.²⁷ In New Zealand, the classicist E. M. Blaiklock (1903-1983) was university lecturer in Greek and Latin from 1927 and professor of Classics from 1946. Like many of his generation, he turned his knowledge of the Classical world to the study of the New Testament; a host of publications such as *The Christian in Pagan Society* (1951) followed.²⁸ Meanwhile, Alan Stibbs (1901-1971), who had been a missionary to China with the China Inland Mission, returned to England in 1935 because of persistent poor health complicated by military hostilities. He joined the teaching staff of Oak Hill College and was soon advising the young Inter-Varsity Press in publications.²⁹ Ernest Kevan (1903-1965), later to be first principal of London Bible College (today’s London School of Theology), was at this time advancing his education at the University of London while serving London pastorates.³⁰ Christ College Cambridge fellow, G. T. Manley (1872-

24. On Lecerf, see the dissertation of Thomas Reid, “Auguste Lecerf: an Historical Study of the First of the Modern French Calvinists” (PhD diss., Reformed Theological Seminary, 1979).

25. August Lecerf’s major work of 1931 was *Introduction to Reformed Dogmatics* (E.T. London: Lutterworth, 1949). Jean Cadiér is best remembered for *The Man God Mastered* (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship: 1960), a short life of John Calvin. Marcel became known for his 1950 work on infant baptism, Pierre-Charles Marcel, *Baptism: The Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace* (London: James Clarke, 1953), and on preaching, *The Relevance of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963).

26. The interesting phrase is that of Geoffrey Treloar, *The Disruption of Evangelicalism: The Age of Torrey, Mott, McPherson and Hammond* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 2017), 10.

27. T. C. Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men*, originally published in 1936 by Inter-Varsity (UK), was reissued in a 1983 revised edition prepared by the late David F. Wright. The story of the hasty production of Hammond’s 1936 work (just prior to his embarking for Australia) is told by Oliver Barclay in *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995: A Personal Sketch* (Leicester: IVP, 1997), 31.

28. On Blaiklock, see <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5b28/blaiklock-edward-musgrave>.

29. See the biographical sketch of Stibbs in Andrew Atherstone, ed., *Such a Great Salvation: The Collected Essays of Alan Stibbs* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2008), 15. Stibbs had a hand in the editing and abbreviating of the writings of the late American theologian, B. B. Warfield, on biblical inspiration, released in a 1941 pamphlet as *Revelation and Inspiration*. For details, see Kenneth J. Stewart, “J. I. Packer as a New Warfield? A Chapter in the Post-1930 Resurgence of Reformed Theology,” *Themelios* 47, no. 3 (2022): 518.

30. Ernest Kevan, while serving churches and the London Bible College, was able to complete the University of London BD, MTh, and PhD. See Paul E. Brown, *Ernest F. Kevan* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2012).

1961), had been to India with the Church Missionary Society, and then returned home for reasons of health. Selected to be the secretary of the Church Missionary Society, he simultaneously functioned as the chairman of British Inter-Varsity's Literature Committee.³¹ Manley both compiled the multi-authored *New Bible Handbook* (Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1947) and later wrote on the Second Advent and the book of Deuteronomy.³² J. Stafford Wright (1905-1985) and Phillip Edgcumbe Hughes (1915-1990) were both associated with The Bible Churchman's Training College, Bristol in the 1930s.³³ John W. Wenham (1913-1996), who would later be associated with that same college, was, in the prewar years, lecturing in Greek in St. John's College, Highbury (London). At this stage, he was already known for his love of the writings of J. Gresham Machen and B. B. Warfield.³⁴ On the eve of World War, the Brethren classicist, W. E. Vine (1873-1949) was completing his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, a work which has remained continuously in print since that time.³⁵

North of the border, there were also evidences of a resurgent evangelical scholarship. In 1935, F. F. Bruce (1910-1990) interrupted his Vienna postgraduate study to take a lectureship in Greek in Edinburgh University. Subsequently, he would teach in three English universities, completing his career as Rylands professor of Biblical Criticism at Manchester. He would later collaborate with the American Ned B. Stonehouse by contributing three volumes to the *New International Commentary* and (at the latter's death) succeeding him as the editor of the commentary series. At Glasgow, the future editor of the *New Bible Commentary* (1953), Francis Davidson (1882-1953), became principal of the Bible Training Institute (a Bible college begun in the era of D. L. Moody) in 1938, having taught there since 1934. Davidson's prowess in biblical theology was recognized by his giving the annual Tyndale House biblical lecture in 1946.³⁶

31. Douglas Johnson, *Contending for the Faith: A History of the Evangelical Movement in the Universities and Colleges* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 318.

32. G. T. Manley, *The Book of the Law: Studies in the Date of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); *The Return of Christ* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1960). Biographical details regarding Manley (1872-1961) are hard to locate. Basic details are available in *Crockford's Clerical Directory*.

33. Wright (1905-1985) both studied at and then was vice-principal of the Bristol College from 1930. He was instrumental in bringing onto the staff rising scholars Philip Edgcumbe Hughes (1915-1990) and John Wenham (1913-1996). The college took the new name, Tyndale Hall, in 1952.

34. Roger Beckwith, "John W. Wenham," in *Bible Interpreters of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Walter A. Elwell and J.D. Weaver (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 253-59. Oliver Barclay, *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995* (Leicester, IVP: 1997), 31.

35. Vine is best remembered for his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, initially published in multiple volumes by Pickering and Inglis in 1939. An accomplished classicist, Vine's work made word-study, then being championed in Germany by Gerhard Kittel, accessible to those working from English translations. On the quality of Vine's work, see F. F. Bruce, "W. E. Vine the Theologian," in *W. E. Vine: His Life and Ministry*, ed. Percy Ruoff (London: Oliphants, 1951), 70-72. Bruce wrote forewords for the individual volumes, which when complete were consolidated in one. Bruce also gave high praise to Vine's NT commentaries on Galatians and Thessalonians.

36. G. W. Grogan, "Davidson, Francis," in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. Nigel M. Cameron (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 235. In addition to his editorial labors,

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Another contributor to that *Commentary* was Daniel Lamont (1870-1950), professor of Practical Theology in New College, Edinburgh (1927-1945). His colleague at Edinburgh, the dogmatician G. T. Thomson, (1887-1958), cowrote the commentary on Romans in the same volume. Another Scot, George Hendry (1904-1993), by then professor of theology in Princeton Theological Seminary, contributed the exposition on Ecclesiastes to the same volume. Edinburgh Church historian, J. H. S. Burleigh (1894-1985), an authority on Augustine, edited the *Evangelical Quarterly* (1943-1950). At Aberdeen University, the sympathetic church historian G. D. Henderson (1888-1957) was writing prolifically on subjects ranging from Jonathan Edwards to Scottish links with the Dutch churches.³⁷ And in Edinburgh's Free Church College (today's Edinburgh Theological Seminary), professors John Macleod (1872-1948), Donald Maclean (1869-1943), and John R. MacKay (1865-1939) were exercising a biblical and theological influence out of all proportion to the size of their small college. What was especially notable was the continued presence of evangelical theologians within the Scottish university faculties of divinity—a phenomenon not evident at that time in England.

This state of things being so, by 1938, the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, drawing on sympathetic academics in both countries, began discussions regarding raising the level of evangelical biblical and theological scholarship. These talks began informally in September of that year with a small group (the Biblical Research Committee) including G. T. Manley, Alan Stibbs, H. E. Guillebaud (1888-1941), John Wenham, and Douglas Johnson (1904-1991).³⁸ By July 1941, these discussions would lead to a conference on “The Revival of Biblical Theology” which now drew the persons above-named as well as D. M. Lloyd Jones (1899-1981) and the Brethren scholars F. F. Bruce and W. J. Martin.³⁹ These 1941 deliberations would lead eventually to the conceptualizing of the *New Bible Commentary* (1953), the companion *Dictionary* (1962), and the series of Tyndale Biblical Commentaries. This was also the context in which the small but highly influential book of F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (1943), came to be published.⁴⁰ The idea of a residential center for intensive biblical studies was put forward; this idea was the

Davidson delivered a notable Tyndale House (Cambridge) Biblical Lecture published as *Pauline Predestination* (London: Tyndale Press, 1946).

37. We will find that he was a regular contributor to the *Evangelical Quarterly* (f. 1929), discussed below.

38. The 1938 conference is quite fully described in T. A. Noble, *Tyndale House and Fellowship: The First Sixty Years* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006), 30.

39. Tim Grass, *F. F. Bruce: A Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 42-3. It emerges that W. J. Martin had become a lasting friend with Edward J. Young during their years of study at Leipzig. See Davis A. Young, *For Me to Live is Christ: The Life of Edward J. Young* (Willow Grove: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2017), 82.

40. F. F. Bruce, *In Retrospect: Remembrance of Things Past* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 123-29, provides valuable recollections of how these evangelical efforts at serious biblical studies were reviewed in the major periodicals of that time.

germ from which grew the establishment of Tyndale House, Cambridge in 1944.⁴¹ It was in this same conference that the ownership and management of the periodical, *The Evangelical Quarterly*, passed from the hands of its founders to the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. The dynamism of the now-aged founders of that periodical was ebbing, and being in full support of these Inter-Varsity developments it was natural for them to join forces.⁴² But this consideration leads us, naturally, to consider this in a larger framework.

The Launch of New Periodicals

The way had been opened to a new era of theological scholarship with the 1929 commencement of the *Evangelical Quarterly* at Edinburgh. The *EQ* commenced publication in the January of the same year, which saw the demise of the *Princeton Theological Review* (1903-1929). There was more to this transition than at first met the eye. The decision to end publication of the PTR had been long in coming and the faculty of another theological college with which Princeton had cordial relations, Edinburgh's Free Church of Scotland College, was well aware of this.⁴³ The new journal, commencing in January 1929, featured many of the same writers as had filled the pages of the expiring American publication. Princeton professor Caspar Wistar Hodge (1870-1937) wrote the lead article for the first issue of *EQ*. By 1930, the former editor of the PTR, Oswald T. Allis (1880-1973), was announced as associate editor of the new periodical; he remained in this role until his passing. The *EQ* became a kind of meeting place for scholarly senior evangelical Protestants drawn from the Continent, Great Britain, the USA, and Canada. There, one also found essays by the Amsterdam theologian, Valentine Hepp (1879-1950), the aged French Calvin scholar, Emil Doumergue (1844-1937), and the German historical theologian, August Lang (1867-1945). Many younger scholars such as future Archbishop of Canterbury, Donald Coggan, the historical theologian, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, New Testament scholar, P. E. Hughes, and theologian T. F. Torrance made their literary debuts in its pages.⁴⁴ From the American side, we find early contributions from Gordon H. Clark, Edward J. Young, and Cornelius Van Til. The *EQ* in its first decade was clearly demonstrating an energetic effort to foster international evangelical scholarship. While we certainly

41. Noble, *Tyndale House and Fellowship*, 49.

42. Grass, *F. F. Bruce*, 43. Bruce, "Tyndale Fellowship," 53, directly credits John R. MacKay and Donald Maclean of the Free Church college with the 1929 launch of the *Evangelical Quarterly*.

43. The Free Church of Scotland College's principal, John Macleod, had visited Princeton in September 1928 and would have been aware both of the uncertain future of the *PTR* and of the polarization within Princeton Seminary that would lead to its division. See G. N. M. Collins, *John Macleod, D. D.* (Edinburgh: Free Church of Scotland, 1951), 141.

44. F. F. Bruce, "Evangelical Quarterly," in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. Nigel M. Cameron (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 305; John H. Skilton, "Oswald T. Allis" in *Bible Interpreters*, eds. Elwell and Weaver, 129.

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observe some scholars writing in the twilight of their careers, what is especially striking in that pre-World War Two era is the emergence of a younger generation drawn from the USA and the UK. Many were already in teaching posts; major works of scholarship were already on the drawing-board.

In the same inter-war period arose the original *Christianity Today* magazine (not the contemporary publication of the same name), founded in 1930 by the New Jersey mainline Presbyterian, Samuel G. Craig (1874-1960). It stood for a robust doctrinal evangelicalism. Craig, a Princeton Seminary graduate, had functioned until 1930 as the editor of a denominational newspaper, *The Presbyterian*, published at Philadelphia. But as Craig's opposition to the reorganization of Princeton Seminary and support for the new seminary at Philadelphia (Westminster) made him an ecclesiastical square peg, he threw his energies into organizing a more robust alternative publication. Craig eventually parted ways with J. Gresham Machen when it became clear that Machen was resolved to incur discipline from their denomination over his promotion of a nondenominational mission agency. Craig, who did not support that agency's existence, or the near-certain prospect of denominational division, maintained his magazine, which was aimed at conservative mainline Presbyterians in the American north and south. *Christianity Today* also had readers and contributors well beyond the USA well into the 1940s. In 1934, the then-Evangelical Theological College of Dallas, TX (now Dallas Theological Seminary) assumed ownership of *Bibliotheca Sacra*, a theological journal earlier managed by Xenia Seminary of St. Louis and Oberlin College, Ohio.⁴⁵ By 1938, young Westminster Seminary (f. 1929) commenced publication of the *Westminster Theological Journal*. And it was not only transatlantic evangelicals who were busy with such theological journalism. Australians who were personally conversant with the resurgence of evangelical scholarship in the United Kingdom determined to do their part and in 1942 launched the *Reformed Theological Review*. This journal, Australia's longest-running theological publication, commenced under the leadership of three men, two of whom had conducted theological studies in Edinburgh, itself a center of the new evangelical scholarship.⁴⁶

45. John D. Hannah, *Uncommon Union: Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 107. Xenia Seminary, St. Louis, was in a period of instability, having recently relocated from Ohio. Earlier still, *Bibliotheca Sacra* had been managed at Oberlin College, Ohio and before that at Andover Seminary.

46. Rowland Ward, *Presbyterians in Australia: Origins, Conflicts and Progress: 1803-2018* (Melbourne: New Melbourne Press, 2021), 303; Reformed Theological Review, "History," accessed 3 October 2023, <https://rtrjournal.org/index.php/RTR/History>. John Gillies (1807-1952) was a retired professor of New Testament at Ormond College, Melbourne. He was associated with Arthur Allen (1905-1958), a Presbyterian minister (a 1937 graduate of the Free Church College, Edinburgh) and Robert Swanton (1910-1992, a Presbyterian minister ordained in South Australia and recently returned from graduate studies at New College, Edinburgh). In time, their effort would be supported by T. C. Hammond and Moore Theological College, Sydney.

Developments in Bible Translation

Meanwhile, on a completely different front, we can note the completion and publication of an idiomatic bible translation project which predated the better-known efforts resulting three decades later in the *New International Version*. I refer here to the publication in 1945 of the Berkeley Version of the New Testament, an idiomatic contemporary version. The NT was the work of Gerrit Verkuyl (1872-1967), a 1904 graduate of Princeton Seminary. With the encouragement of the Princeton faculty, Verkuyl went on to complete a PhD in New Testament at the University of Leipzig. After working for many years in the Christian Education division of his denomination, he took what was, by the standards of the time, early retirement in order to devote himself to the task of producing a contemporary language New Testament. On account of its wide acceptance, Zondervan purchased the rights to the version in 1950. Verkuyl, working with a team of twenty Old Testament scholars, then added the OT.⁴⁷ After Zondervan released the entire Bible in 1959, F. F. Bruce declared that “among the recent English translations of the whole Bible which have been sponsored by private groups none is more worthy of special mention.” Since its 1936 origination closely coincided with the 1937 determination to produce the Revised Standard Version, and its completion (in 1959) took place with the completed RSV already in circulation, Bruce suggested that the Berkeley, or Modern Language Bible (as Zondervan styled it) was “a more conservative counterpart” to that version.⁴⁸ For our purposes here, it is enough to note that this represents a very notable example of scholarly conservative Protestant initiative by an established scholar in the decade before any renaissance of evangelical learning is conventionally reckoned to have been underway.

New Theological Societies

That theological societies supportive of evangelical theology were begun in the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. in the post-World War Two era is quite well-known.⁴⁹ But it would be a mistake to suppose—in keeping with the now-conventional historiography—that Tyndale House and Fellowship in Cambridge and the Evangelical Theological Society were the creation of a new generation of biblical and theological scholars only beginning to exert its influence in the postwar period. In

47. <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1962/03/he-began-his-life-work-at-65>, accessed 21 March 2023.

48. F. F. Bruce, *The English Bible: A History of Translations from the Earliest English Versions to the New English Bible* (London: Lutterworth, 1961), 220. It is noteworthy that Verkuyl’s New Testament translation was available for sale a year before the New Testament portion of the Revised Standard Version was available in 1946.

49. The closely parallel beginnings of the two societies are helpfully sketched by Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013), 93-96.

fact, as one reads the accounts of how these distinct societies emerged, one is struck by the importance of the sponsorship and leadership of well-established scholars in these new initiatives. The promoters of these enterprises were individuals whose academic careers and publications were well on their way in the mid-1930s.

As regards the early discussions leading to the creation of Tyndale House, we have referred (above) to a circle of scholars already in their careers: G. T. Manley, Alan Stibbs, and F. F. Bruce, to which were soon added W. J. Martin, lecturer in Semitics at the University of Liverpool and David Broughton Knox, an Australian Anglican posted to the UK as a military chaplain. Geoffrey Bromiley, then of the Bible Churchman's Training College, Bristol soon appeared in this company and in 1942 was tasked with the creation of "study circles" which would bring into communication established and younger scholars in the various theological disciplines. One is struck by the transnational scope of what Bromiley was attempting. In Old Testament, Bromiley sought to link Americans Oswald T. Allis and Edward J. Young with Netherlanders G. C. Aalders and Jan Ridderbos and an English contingent comprised of Donald Coggan, Stafford Wright, Derek Kidner, and Donald Wiseman. His list of New Testament scholars to be approached was larger still. It included the Australian (named above) David Broughton Knox (later of Moore Theological College, Sydney), Leo Stephens-Hodge, J. Connell (later of London Bible College), George Beasley-Murray (future principal of Spurgeon's College), and Marcus Loane (future archbishop of Sydney). Dogmatic theologians were to be brought into discussion with one another also. Here Scottish names were in abundance: G. T. Thomson, Daniel Lamont (both of New College, Edinburgh), Francis Davidson of Glasgow's Bible Training Institute, and the rising T. F. Torrance. D. M. Lloyd Jones, recently resident in London's Westminster Chapel, and Alan M. Stibbs of Oak Hill College were joined by the Norwegian O. Hallesby and the French theologian, Auguste Lecerf.⁵⁰ The wartime conditions that made such consultation highly difficult eventually gave way to freer international travel and with it, theological conferences.

On the American side, momentum built from August 1944 onward in gatherings of evangelical scholars invited together by Harold J. Ockenga, pastor of Boston's Park Street Church. Conferences that met at Plymouth, Massachusetts featured academic papers across the theological disciplines. Each such gathering (they were reconvened in 1945 and 1947) was larger than the preceding; each featured a wider range of American evangelical colleges and seminaries representing Presbyterian, Baptist, Christian Reformed, and Bible Church constituencies. Carl F. H. Henry, Cornelius Van Til, Clarence Bouma, H. C. Thiessen, Merrill Tenney, Everett Harrison, and Alan MacRae were among the presenters featured.⁵¹ The momentum demonstrated

50. Noble, *Tyndale House and Fellowship*, 45. One is struck by how many of those named had already been active contributors to the *Evangelical Quarterly* in the 1930's.

51. The only account of these gatherings known to the present writer is that provided in Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God*, 197-201.

by these now-mature scholars in these summer gatherings alerted thoughtful faculty members at the region's Gordon College to the plausibility of attempting a nation-wide society which would draw together evangelical scholars working in the theological disciplines. And so, from Gordon College went out letters of invitation to attend a December 1949 inaugural gathering at Cincinnati, Ohio of a planned Evangelical Theological Society.

The accounts we have of that inaugural meeting offer strong corroboration of the thesis being advanced in this essay: there were on hand proficient evangelical practitioners of the theological disciplines who had been at their posts from the 1930s onwards ready to forge a professional society aimed at mutual encouragement. The initial president chosen by the society was Clarence Bouma (1891-1962), who held a ThD from Harvard Divinity School. Since 1924, he had been teaching theology, ethics, and apologetics at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids. He was one of five faculty members of his institution to be present. Gordon Divinity School, Fuller Seminary, Faith, Westminster, Asbury, and Northern Baptist seminaries were well represented. Christian philosopher Gordon Clark (1902-1985) was present; by 1949 he was professor of Philosophy at Butler University, Indianapolis—having earlier taught at the University of Pennsylvania and Wheaton College.⁵² Quaker philosopher Harold B. Kuhn was present; the Asbury professor had gained the Harvard doctorate. Oswald T. Allis, the Berlin-trained Old Testament scholar was on hand, as was his former colleague, Allan MacRae (1902-1997), who had gained the doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania. Several doctoral graduates of the Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning (Philadelphia)—already well on in their teaching careers—were there: Edward J. Young (1907-1968), G. Douglas Young, and R. Laird Harris (1911-2008). Various theologians were in the Cincinnati gathering: Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003) of Fuller, J. Oliver Buswell (1895-1977) of Faith Seminary, John Murray (1898-1975) of Westminster Seminary (Philadelphia), and Warren C. Young of Northern Baptist Seminary.⁵³ Sixty scholars in all attended the inaugural meeting.

Further Confirmations of the Attainments of this Pre-World War Two Generation

Corroboration of the level of accomplishment recognized to exist in this generation is available to us in more than one way. We see it first in the publication of theological literature across national and linguistic divides. Several examples will illustrate this.

52. Clark, an under-studied figure through this whole era, has been carefully described by Douglas Douma, *The Presbyterian Philosopher: The Authorized Biography of Gordon H. Clark* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016).

53. Here I rely on the tabulation of persons present provided by John Wiseman, "The Evangelical Theological Society: Yesterday and Today," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28, no. 5 (1985) 6-7. There is also a report on the founding convention and a detailed accounting of the persons and institutions represented in *Calvin Forum* 15, no.7 (1950): 131, 149-60.

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Beginning in 1939, Inter-Varsity (UK) issued English versions of three publications by Free University of Amsterdam professor, G. C. Aalders (1880-1961): *Recent Trends in Old Testament Criticism* (1939), *The Problem of the Book of Jonah* (1948), and *Short Introduction to the Pentateuch* (1949). In 1946, Douglas Johnson of British Inter-Varsity endorsed the press's copublication of the volume of essays produced by the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia: *The Infallible Word*. It was recognized at the time as being a forceful articulation of biblical authority. The same British publisher issued its own edition of E. J. Young's *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1949). Inter-Varsity (UK) secured the same author as the original commissioning editor of the Tyndale series of Old Testament Commentaries.⁵⁴ Conversely, Inter-Varsity's 1943 title by F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* was available in the USA even in wartime 1943. What we have here is straightforward evidence that the biblical and theological writing of scholars who had been plying their trade since at least the 1930s was raising the level of discussion among thoughtful evangelicals internationally.⁵⁵

We see the same phenomenon from a slightly different perspective when we consider the mobility of faculty whether for new employment or for guest lectures. Harold Ockenga, intending that Fuller Seminary attain a desired level of academic rigor made serious (but not always successful), attempted to recruit individuals for the faculty of Fuller Seminary, which opened in 1947. For reasons which are not entirely clear, Old Testament scholar Allan MacRae of Faith Seminary could not be enticed. Neither could church historian Paul Wooley of Westminster or philosopher Gordon Clark of Butler University.⁵⁶ But experienced academics Everett F. Harrison of Dallas Theological Seminary and George Eldon Ladd of Gordon Divinity School were agreeable to such invitations.⁵⁷ Fuller, aiming high, was determined to secure those who had track-records of teaching and writing extending back into the 1930s. Fuller did the same when in 1958 it secured the services of the British historical theologian, Geoffrey Bromiley, who (as we have seen) had been seeking to advance scholarship since the early 1940s.⁵⁸

54. First published in the USA by Eerdmans, 1949. The U.K. edition followed in 1954. See also Davis A. Young, *For Me to Live is Christ: The Life of Edward Young* (Willow Grove: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2017), 192.

55. An interesting testimonial to the value of such material was provided by I. Howard Marshall (1934-2015), who testified that reading Aalders on the Pentateuch had sustained him in his own early theological studies. See *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 17.

56. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 27-28. Douma, *The Presbyterian Philosopher*, 203.

57. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 120. On Ladd's career, see John A. D'Elia, *A Place at the Table: George Eldon Ladd and the Rehabilitation of Evangelical Scholarship in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

58. See the biographical details provided by David A. Hubbard, "Geoffrey Bromiley: An Appreciation," in *Church, Word and Spirit: Historical and Theological Essays in Honor of Geoffrey W. Bromiley*, eds. James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), xi-xiii.

Fuller Seminary's notable Payton Lectures illustrate a similar point in the period through 1960. Honored academic lecturers invited for this purpose included Oswald T. Allis and John Murray, both representatives of the Princeton theological tradition as mediated through Westminster Seminary and Gordon Clark, the Butler University philosopher-theologian.⁵⁹ Conversely, London Bible College marked the occupying of new premises in 1958 by inviting as its inaugural international lecturer, E. J. Young.⁶⁰ All this is to say that both through faculty publication and by the travels and transitions of experienced evangelical academics, we have considerable evidence that evangelical theological work begun in the pre-World War Two period was held in high regard by 1950. It had never disappeared—though admittedly—it had known lean times.

Importance

Evangelical historiography has not utterly denied that scholarly work took place in the evangelical world in the decades between the two world wars; it has instead tended to emphasize its meagerness. This tendency involves more than humility. The emphasis is regularly placed on the new directions and new initiatives observable in the post-war era.⁶¹ This paper has aimed to demonstrate the inadequacy of such an approach. The history of publication in Scripture and theology (though perhaps modest), the launching of several new theological journals (some international in scope), the founding of new theological institutions as well as two new associations of conservative scholars, goes far to suggest that it was the between-the-wars generation which both laid the foundation for and provided leadership to the many fresh expressions of theological vitality emerging in the middle of the twentieth century. This is the generation that blazed the trail for the newer evangelicalism. Once the contribution of this inter-war generation is properly acknowledged, we may expect an overdue re-assessment of how and when transatlantic evangelicalism overcame its admitted shortcomings which followed on from the earlier period of theological conflict.

59. Allis's lectures of 1950 are described in John Skilton, "Oswald T. Allis," in *Bible Interpreters*, eds. Elwell and Weaver, 128. John Murray's 1953 Payton Lectures were jointly published by Eerdmans and Inter-Varsity (UK) in 1957 as *Principles of Conduct*. Clark's 1951 Payton lectures were published by Eerdmans as *The Christian View of Men and Things* (1952).

60. Young lectured on the theme, "The Study of Old Testament Theology Today." See Harmon, "E. J. Young," 199.

61. See this perspective winsomely set out in Derek Tidball, "Post-War Evangelical Theology: A Generational Perspective," *Evangelical Quarterly* 81, no. 2 (2009): 145-60. See also Stanley, *Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism*, chapter 4.