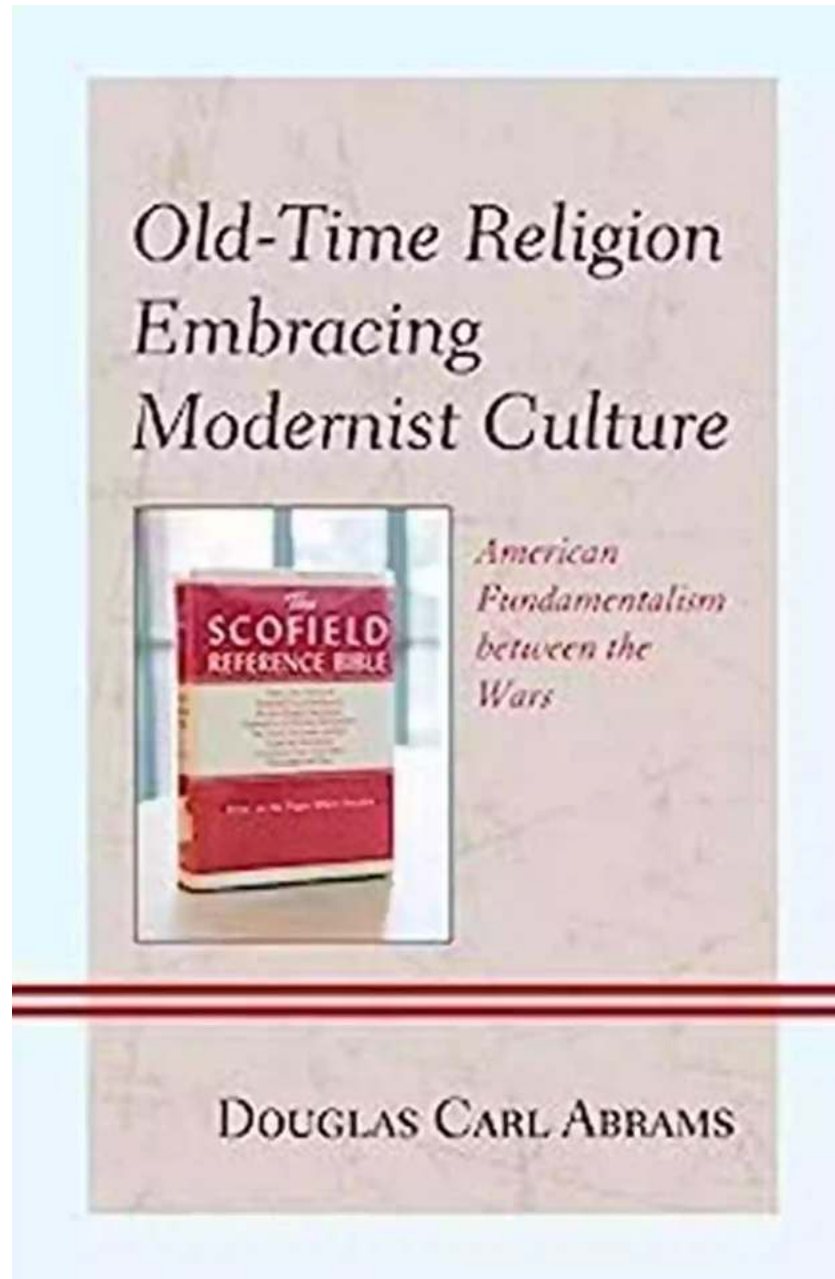


# Unveiling the Untold Story: American Fundamentalism Between The Wars

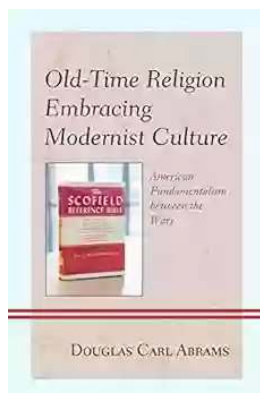


In the early 20th century, the American society witnessed a significant religious movement known as American Fundamentalism. Spanning the gap between World War I and World War II, this period saw a resurgence of religious fervor and a strong emphasis on traditional Christian teachings. In this article, we delve

deep into the world of American Fundamentalism between the wars, uncovering its origins, prominent figures, and lasting impact on American society.

## The Roots of Fundamentalism

American Fundamentalism emerged as a response to the increasing influence of secularism and modernism. As society witnessed rapid changes in science, technology, and social norms, a group of religious leaders sought to protect traditional Christian doctrines. The publication of "The Fundamentals," a series of essays defending core Christian beliefs, became the cornerstone of this movement. This marked the beginning of a firm resistance against perceived threats to traditional faith.



### Old-Time Religion Embracing Modernist Culture: American Fundamentalism between the Wars

by Douglas Carl Abrams (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 2523 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 259 pages



## The Rise of Prominent Figures

During this period, several prominent figures emerged as leaders of the American Fundamentalist movement. Names like William Jennings Bryan and Billy Sunday became well-known advocates, using their oratorical skills to spread the message of faith and morality throughout the nation. By appealing to the masses, they

managed to rally support for their cause and gain considerable influence within religious circles.

## **The Scopes Monkey Trial**

The Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925 stands as a watershed moment in American Fundamentalism. The trial revolved around the teaching of evolution in public schools, with John Scopes accused of violating a Tennessee law that forbade the teaching of anything contradicting biblical accounts of creation. The trial transformed into a national spectacle, attracting intense media attention and pitting fundamentalists against proponents of scientific modernism. Although Scopes was found guilty, the trial ultimately highlighted the cultural and ideological divide within American society.

## **Fundamentalism's Influence on American Society**

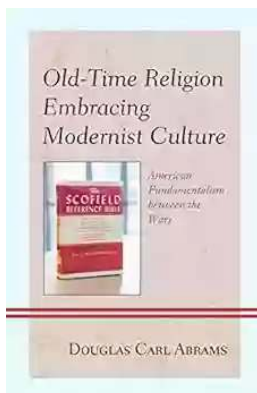
American Fundamentalism left a lasting impact on various aspects of society. Its emphasis on personal piety and strict moral codes influenced the temperance movement, leading to nationwide prohibition of alcohol. Additionally, fundamentalists contributed significantly to the rise of religious broadcasting and the establishment of Christian universities. Their adherence to traditional values also had a profound influence on politics, shaping the mindset of conservative voters for generations to come.

## **Decline and Legacy**

By the end of World War II, American Fundamentalism faced a decline in popularity. The rise of ecumenism and a shift towards more liberal theological interpretations challenged the fundamentalists' traditional doctrines. Additionally, society became more open to embracing cultural diversity and new ideas. However, the legacy of American Fundamentalism can still be witnessed today,

especially within evangelical movements and the ongoing debates on the role of religion in public life.

American Fundamentalism Between The Wars was an era defined by passionate religious conviction and a desire to preserve traditional Christian beliefs. This movement not only shaped the lives of its followers but also had a significant influence on American society as a whole. By understanding and uncovering the untold story of American Fundamentalism, we gain a deeper appreciation for its impact and the challenges it faced during a transformative period in American history.



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Old-Time Religion Embracing Modernist Culture focuses on the founding generation of American fundamentalism in the 1920s and 1930s and their interactions with modernity. While there were culture wars, there was also an embrace. Through a book culture, fostered by liberal Protestants, and thriving periodicals, they strengthened their place in American culture and their adaptation helps explain their resilience in the decades to come.

The most significant adaptation to modernist culture was the embrace of the modern, secular university as a model for evangelical higher education. After political battles along sectarian lines in the twenties, fundamentalists learned to compete in a pluralist society. By the thirties they were among the strongest supporters of Jews and began working with Catholics to fight communism. In politics and higher education they encountered issues of race, gender, and class. While opposing higher critics of the Bible, their approaches to texts were in some cases similar: a focus on the original languages, commitment to scholarship, ambiguities about both the role of reason and the interpretation of key doctrines. Several had graduate training, some even in European universities. With their views of end times, they continued innovative approaches to prophetic texts from nineteenth-century dispensationalists. In response to evolution and prophetic texts, in a time-conscious age, they also had innovative ideas about biblical time. Fundamentalists engaged in debate with Freud and, while rejecting his ideas, absorbed elements of psychology. Some understood William James' effort to accommodate religion and modern ideas. Although rejecting John Dewey's pragmatism, fundamentalists found value in studying modern philosophy. They tapped a secular, Enlightenment philosophy to defend their supernatural Christianity. Between the wars they even participated in the interest in Nietzsche. Usually dismissed as fractious, they rose above core differences and cooperated among themselves across denominational lines in building organizations. In doing so, they reflected both the ecumenism of the liberal Protestants and the organizational impulse in modern urban, industrial society.

This study, the first to focus on the founding generation, also covers a broad spectrum of fundamentalists, from the Northeast, Midwest, the South, and the West Coast, including some often overlooked by other historians



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