

CHAPTER 13

Where Are You Standing?

RATIONALISM, REVIVALISM, MODERNISM, LIBERALISM & FUNDAMENTALISM

THE PROBLEM OF RATIONALISM

Rationalism has been a problem throughout the years of church history, especially in more recent centuries. WHAT IS RATIONALISM? Why is it a problem? Why is it dangerous?

When you think of the word RATIONALISM you should think of the word REASON. RATIONALISM is a RELIANCE upon REASON in order to determine what is true. RATIONALISM places a high value on HUMAN REASON (what man thinks) and places a low value (or no value) on DIVINE REVELATION (what God has said in His Word, the Bible). The emphasis is upon REASON rather than REVELATION (God's revealed truth).

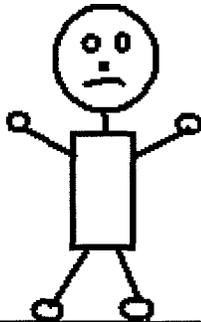
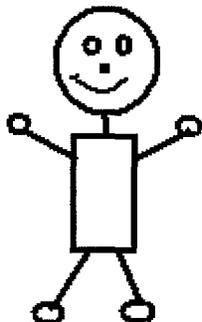
HOW SHALL I FIND OUT **THE TRUTH** ABOUT LIFE AND WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT? The Lord Jesus Christ said, "THY _____ (God's Word) IS _____" (John 17:17). "If ye continue in My _____ then are ye My disciples indeed (My true disciples), and ye shall know _____ and _____ shall make you free!" (John 8:31-32). Rationalism says this: IF YOU WANT TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH, DEPEND UPON YOUR MIND AND UPON YOUR THINKING. Don't open the Bible, but instead use your mind and THINK!

GOD SAYS:

"Trust in the Lord.....and
LEAN NOT (DON'T LEAN) UNTO
thine own understanding." Proverbs 3:5

RATIONALISM SAYS:

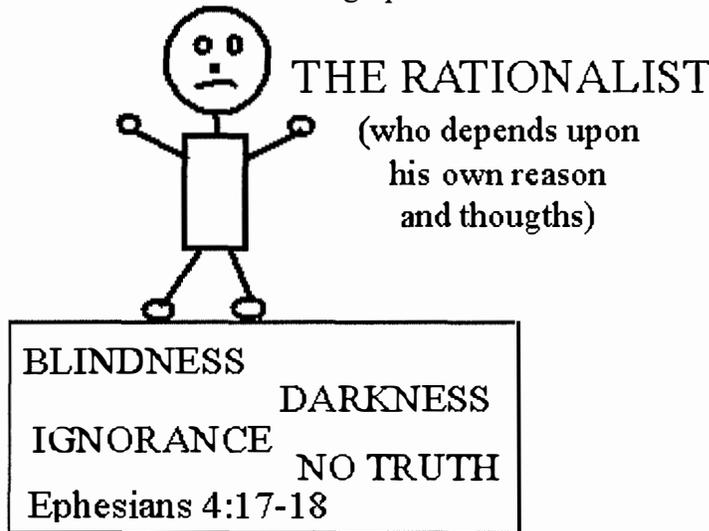
LEAN (depend, rely) UPON
YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING! See Isaiah 65:2

WHERE ARE YOU STANDING?	
MAN'S REASON IS SUPREME	GOD'S TRUTH IS SUPREME
<p>Of Myself, By Myself, For Myself</p> <p>I AM MY OWN FINAL AUTHORITY.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">↑</p>
<p style="font-size: 2em;">↑</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">↑</p>
<p>Everything is judged and tested by human reason.</p>	<p>Everything is judged and tested by God's Word: "Prove all things (test all things by the Word of God)"-1 Thess.5:21</p>
<p style="font-size: 2em;">↑</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">↑</p>
<p>"It must be true because it makes sense to me and to my way of thinking. It's reasonable. It's logical to me and to my way of trying to put things together."</p>	<p>"It must be true because God says so. I know nothing. God knows everything."</p>
<p style="font-size: 2em;">↑</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">↑</p>
<p>THIS THINKER IS DEPENDING ON HIS OWN REASON. HE THINKS HIS THINKING WILL BRING HIM TO TRUTH.</p>	<p>THIS BELIEVER IS DEPENDING ON THE WORD OF GOD. HE KNOWS THE BIBLE IS TRUTH.</p>
	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>* RATIONALISM * What man thinks MAN'S THOUGHTS Isaiah 55:7-8</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>* REVELATION * What God says GOD'S THOUGHTS Isaiah 55:7-9</p> </div>

What is wrong with RATIONALISM? To answer this we must answer another question: WHAT IS WRONG WITH MAN'S REASON? What is wrong with man's thinking? MAN'S THINKING CANNOT BRING MAN TO A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH! Why not?

Ever since the fall of man (Genesis 3) the mind of man has been out of tune and out of touch with reality (because it is out of tune and out of touch with God). Fallen men do not think correctly. Sin has affected the mind and the thinking of men. Notice this description of man's thinking before the great Genesis Flood: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was _____ in the earth and that EVERY imagination of the _____ of his heart (his mind) was only _____ continually" (Genesis 6:5).

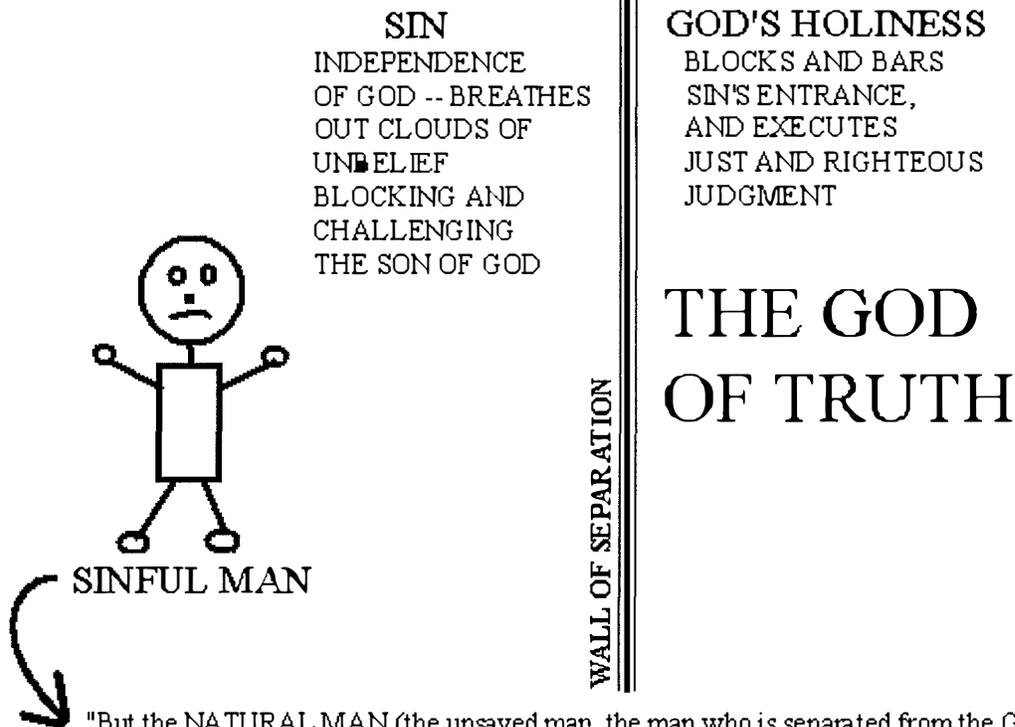
In the New Testament we have another description of the mind of fallen, unsaved men: "that ye henceforth walk not as other GENTILES walk, in the _____ (emptiness, their minds were devoid of truth) of their _____, having the _____ darkened (they are blind), being alienated (separated) from the life of God (they are dead, having no real and right relationship with God), through the _____ that is in them, because of the _____ (hardness) of their heart" (Eph. 4:17- 18). In light of this verse, consider what the rationalist is standing upon:



See also Titus 1:15 which tells us more about the condition of the mind of fallen, unsaved men: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but EVEN THEIR _____ and conscience is **DEFILED**." It is the mind that is defiled and polluted by sin.

"Sin has so twisted and perverted the intellect of the natural man and Satan has so blinded his mind that he often thinks he knows more than God. Pride leads him to exalt his own mentality to such an extent that, if God says anything which his tiny intellect and puny reason cannot comprehend, then he declares God's saying 'foolishness.' He boldly proclaims God's sacred truth to be fable; God's eternal word to be an earth-born myth. His endeavor to fathom God's ocean of truth with his little teacup of a mind is pathetic, and his arrogant method of casting aside God's supernatural revelation when it goes contrary to his sin-saturated reason is pitiful indeed."
(Ruth Paxson, *Life on the Highest Plane*, p.74)

Since sinful man is separated from a HOLY GOD (Isaiah 59:2), the mind of sinful man is separated from TRUTH because God is the SOURCE of all truth. All truth comes from God, and if a person is separated from God he is separated from the truth of God:



"But the NATURAL MAN (the unsaved man, the man who is separated from the God of truth, the man who does not have the SPIRIT OF TRUTH living in his heart) receiveth NOT the things of the Spirit of God: for they are FOOLISHNESS unto him: neither can he know them (HE CANNOT KNOW THE TRUTH OF GOD), because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Not only is the mind of man separated from the truth of God, but the mind of man is actually OPPOSED TO GOD. Man's mind is AGAINST GOD and is an enemy of God! Romans 8:7 says, "Because the _____ mind (the fallen, fleshly mind of man) is ENMITY AGAINST GOD." (It is HOSTILE toward God, at odds, at war, in rebellion against God). The mind of man is at war against God and it is at war against what God says.

READ ISAIAH 55:6-9.

MAN IS TO FORSAKE AND TURN AWAY FROM HIS OWN THOUGHTS

Man is going the wrong way and thinking the wrong thoughts (verse 7).

MAN IS TO TURN UNTO THE LORD WHOSE THOUGHTS ARE **HIGH AND HOLY AND HEALTHY.**

There is no problem with God's thinking. Man needs to turn to Him and trust Him (verses 6-7).

RATIONALISM is not a solid foundation to stand upon. Rationalism will lead us astray. We must not lean upon our own understanding and our own reasoning and our own thinking. Here are some examples of how rationalism can get people **off track**:

1) The Word of God (the Bible) reveals that there is ONE GOD and this ONE GOD reveals Himself in THREE PERSONS – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is ONE but He is THREE. He is THREE but He is ONE.

To many people this does not make sense. How can He be THREE and yet ONE? It is not logical. It seems to go against reason. Therefore many people do not believe in the Trinity. They lean upon their own understanding and their own understanding does not help them know WHO GOD REALLY IS.

There are many things that our little, puny minds cannot understand and cannot grasp. God wants us to BELIEVE even though we may not understand. It may not make sense to us, but it makes sense to God!

2) A man might reason in this way: "Every person that I have ever known has had a father and a mother. There is not one man on earth that did not have a father and a mother at one time. Jesus was man, therefore He must have had a father and a mother too. He must have been a man like all other men that I know."

This may be logical and reasonable, but it is very wrong. The Lord Jesus was a Man, but He was a UNIQUE MAN. He was not like every other man. He had a mother but had no earthly father. He was the Son of God and was born of a virgin. God was His Father. He was a Man but He was also God! He was the Son of God and He was God the Son. Reason apart from revelation will lead you astray.

3) **Miracles** go against reason. The Bible tells us about many miracles which God accomplished by His power and for His all-wise purposes. For example, it does not make sense that a man (Peter) could walk on the water. Everyone knows that people cannot and do not walk on water. Also it does not make sense that a crowd of 5000 people (not counting women and children) could be fed from just five loaves and two fish. This is unreasonable. It could not happen. It is physically impossible.

Man's reason says, "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE."

Divine revelation says, "WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE" (see LUKE 1:37).

Unbelieving men using their reason try to explain away the miracles in a way that will satisfy their minds. Here are examples of a couple of foolish explanations:

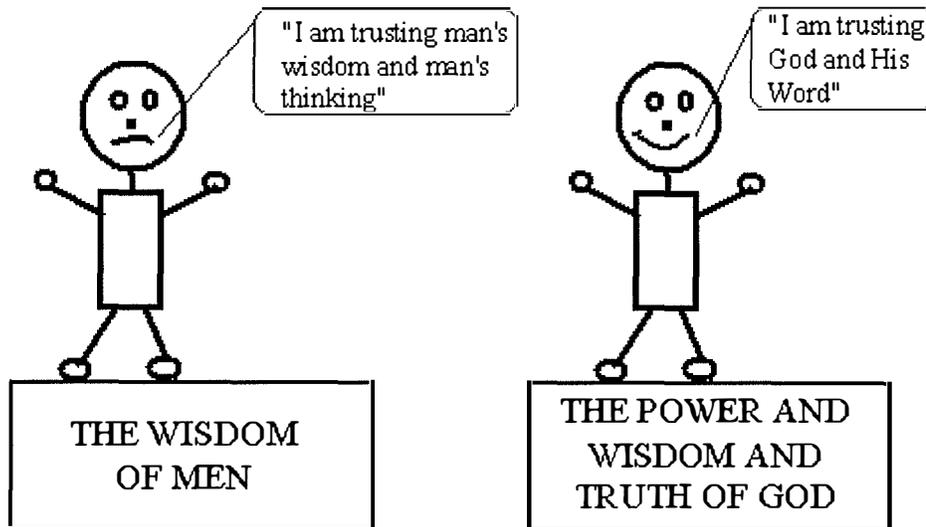
"The Lord did not really walk on the water, because that is impossible. Instead He was actually walking on a sandbar. When Peter got out of the boat, he too stepped onto the sandbar. But after a few steps he walked off the sandbar into the deeper water. The Lord had to reach out and pull him back up."

"The crowd of 5000 was not really fed from just five loaves and two fish because this is impossible. It is impossible because my mind just cannot see how this could happen. This is what really must have happened: The crowd was very selfish. They all had their lunches hidden away under their tunics. When they saw the young lad share his lunch with the Lord then they all felt ashamed that they had been so selfish and they began pulling out their lunches. Thus there was plenty of food for everyone and even much food that was left over."

What do you think of these explanations? Do they make sense? Are they reasonable? Do you see any problems with them? It is much better just to believe what God says and take Him at His Word!

What is it that governs your life? Is it **your** thoughts or **God's** thoughts? Is it your reason or God's revelation? Is it your wisdom or God's Word? **WHAT ARE YOU STANDING UPON?** Listen to Paul's wise words spoken nearly 2000 years ago:

"That your faith should not stand on the wisdom of men but in the POWER OF GOD." 1 COR. 2:5



THE PROBLEM OF REVIVALISM

That which is dead or nearly dead needs to be REVIVED. There is the right kind of revival which comes from GOD (He is the Source of all LIFE) and there is the wrong kind of revival that comes from MAN. What we are considering in this section is the WRONG KIND of revival.

DEADNESS has been a very real problem throughout the centuries of church history. The religion of man is often very dead and lifeless. People gather in a church building and they follow a dead ritual. They go through the motions without any meaning. They stand up and sit down and light candles and repeat phrases, but none of it has anything to do with reality and life. The reason for the deadness is that there is no real and right relationship with the God of life.

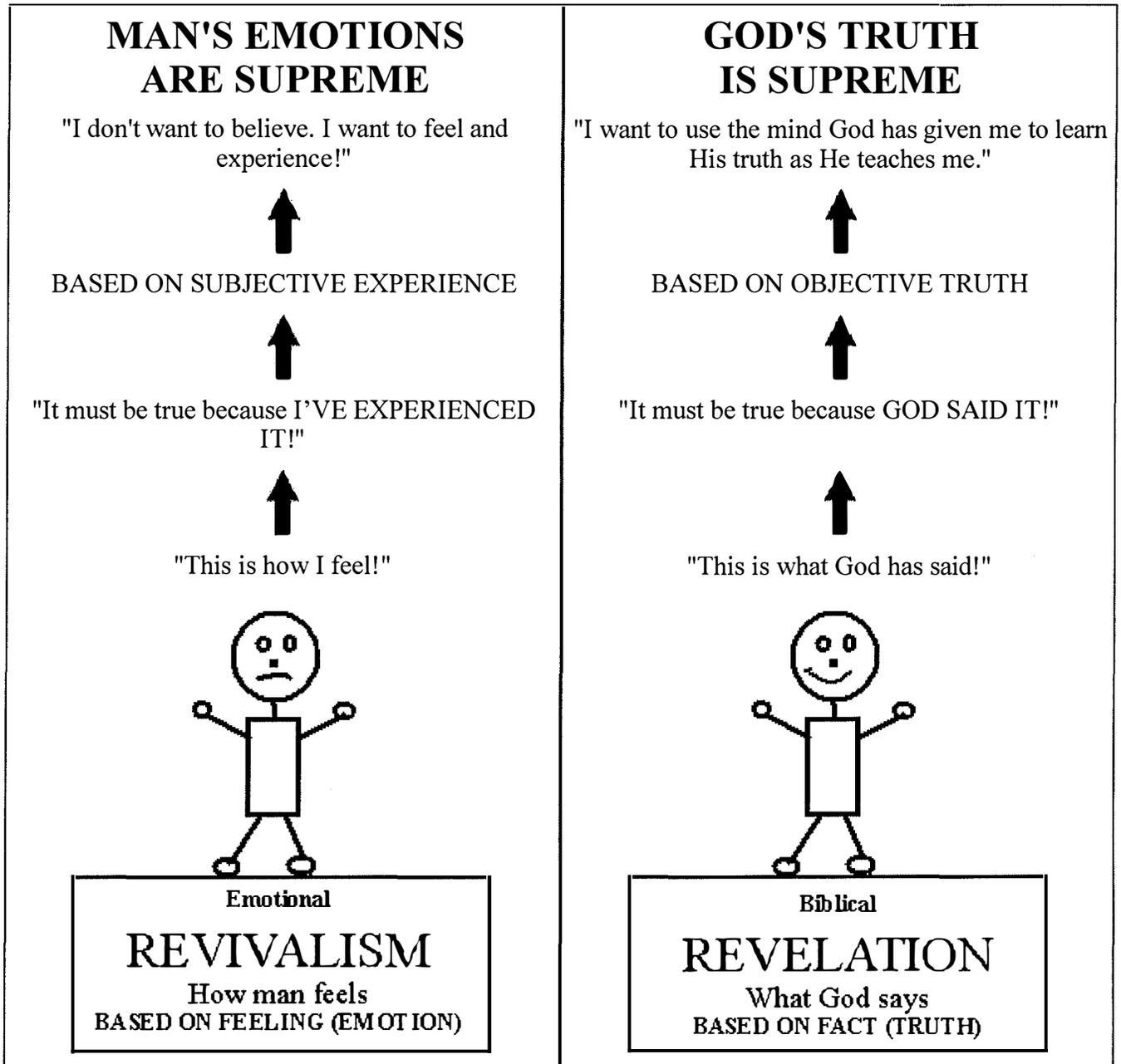
Many people throughout the years of church history have recognized the deadness and have cried out for something more. They got tired of sitting in the middle of a dead and impersonal church building and going through the weekly ritual. They wanted a religious experience that would be real and exciting and meaningful and personal. What they needed was a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with Christ, but often what they looked for was a PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. They wanted something that they could touch or feel or sense. The emphasis was not on BELIEVING but on FEELING.

This wrong kind of revivalism is seen in many groups throughout church history such as the Quakers (with their emphasis on the "inner light"), the followers of Edward Irving in 19th century England (with their many prophets and prophecies) and the Pentecostal/Charismatic

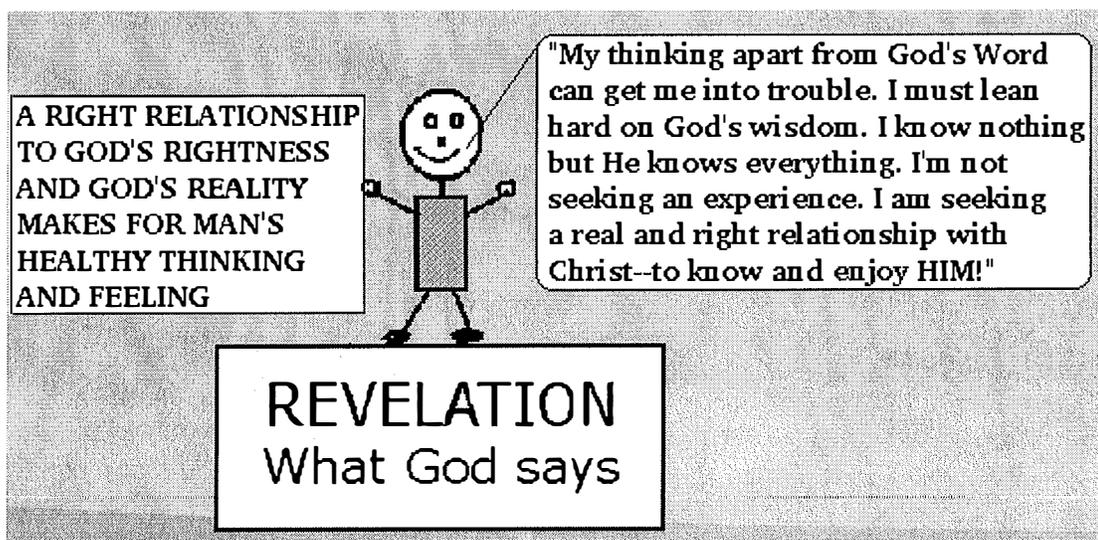
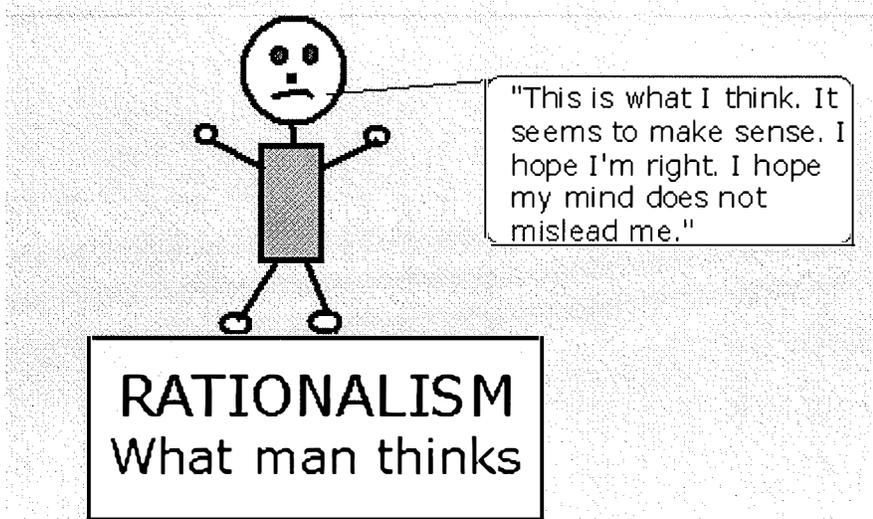
movement of today (with the emphasis on experiencing the gift of tongues, and having dreams, prophecies, added revelations, miracles, healings, etc.).

Where are you standing? Consider the chart on the following page:

WHERE ARE YOU STANDING?



Let's compare all three of these foundations (only one of these three foundations is ROCK SOLID):



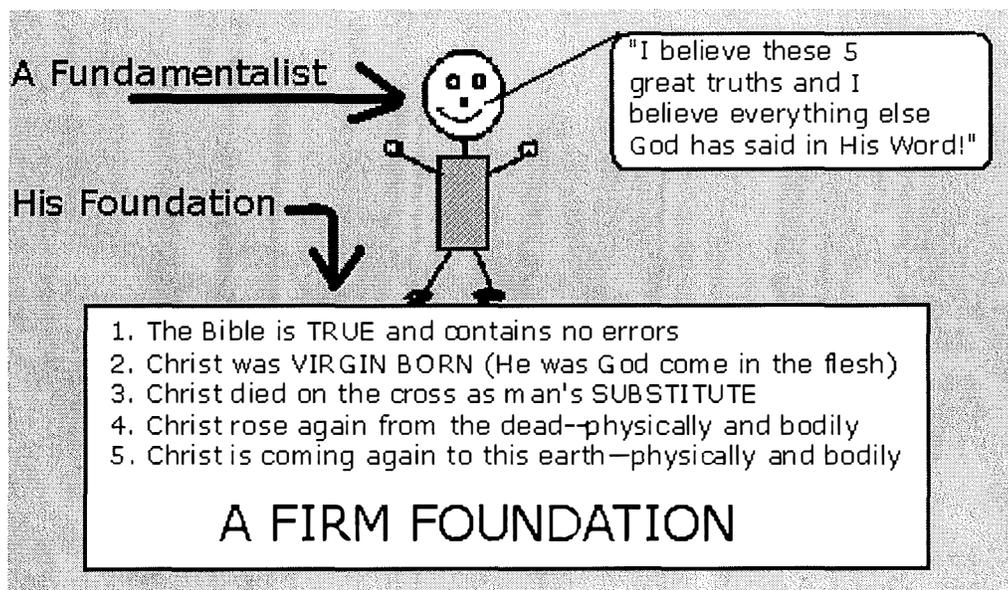
FUNDAMENTALISM

What is a FUNDAMENTALIST? A fundamentalist is a person who stands firmly upon the solid foundation of God's Word (like the person on the diagram above).

The word "fundamental" is related to two Latin words:

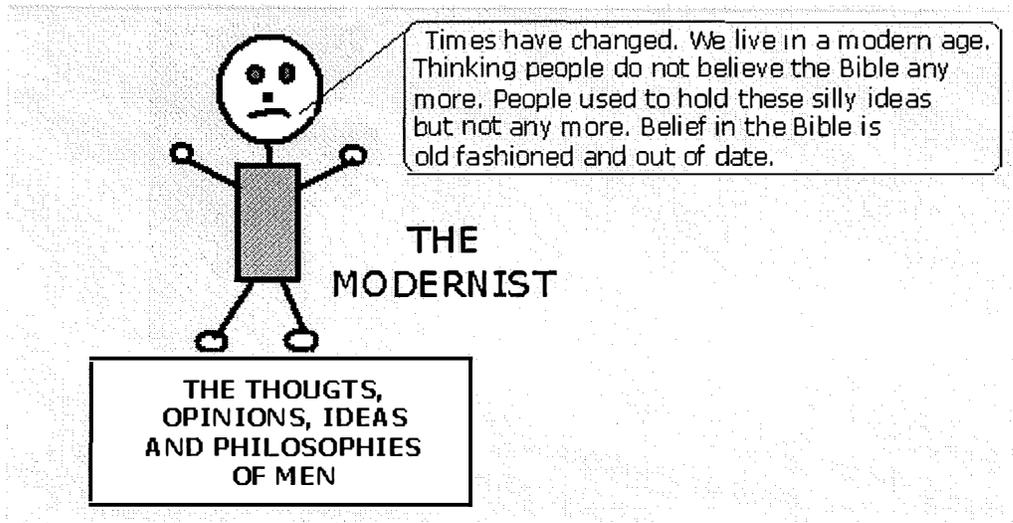
1) **fundus** (ground, the bottom or base of anything) and (2) **fundamentum** (a foundation, basis). Thus when you think of the word FUNDAMENTAL you should think of the word FOUNDATION. A fundamentalist is a person who stands firmly upon the fundamentals. A fundamentalist stands firmly upon THE SOLID **FOUNDATION** of God's Word, the Bible.

During the 20th century there has been a great battle raging between those men and churches who believe the Bible and those men and churches who do not. In 1910 a very important set of books was published by a group of Bible believing men called **THE FUNDAMENTALS**. These books contained many articles which presented the truth of God's Word and urged men to stand firmly upon rock solid foundational truths of the Bible such as these:

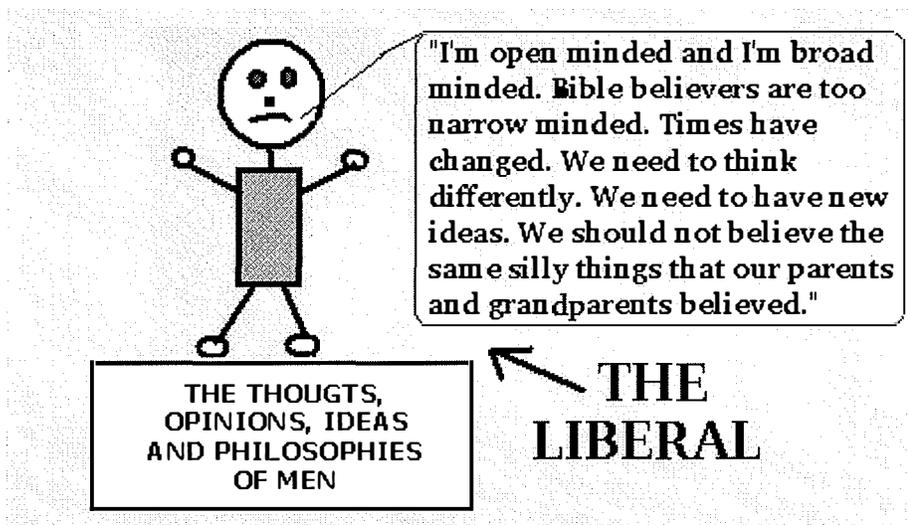


THE PROBLEM OF MODERNISM AND LIBERALISM

Modernism and Liberalism are two names which basically describe the same thing. Both of these movements could be described by another term: UNBELIEF! Both of these movements deny and disbelieve the Word of God. This is illustrated on the following page:



Liberalism is just another name for modernism. The modernist and the liberal are really one and the same:



Are there some things that never change? Does the Lord Jesus Christ ever change (Hebrews 13:8)? Does God's Word ever change (Matthew 24:35)? Do the thoughts, opinions, ideas and philosophies of men ever change? How solid a foundation does the liberal stand upon?

On the following two pages there is a helpful chart which shows the differences between LIBERALISM (Modernism) and TRUE CHRISTIANITY (Fundamentalism).

CONCLUSION

Where are you standing? On what are you standing? What is your FOUNDATION? How solid is your foundation? Is your foundation a ROCK SOLID foundation such as we studied in chapter 1 of these notes? How firmly are you standing on this foundation? In these lessons on church history we have seen some of the many problems that arise when men refuse to stand on the solid foundation. May we not repeat the mistakes of the past. May the God of truth and the truth of God be our sure and safe and solid foundation now and forevermore!

The Difference Between LIBERALISM and TRUE CHRISTIANITY

Liberalism (Modernism)	True Christianity
<p>"they have REJECTED the Word of the LORD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <p>what WISDOM is in them?" (Jeremiah 8:9; Proverbs 1:7)</p>	<p>They have RECEIVED the Bible not as the word of men but as it is in truth, the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13; John 17:17) and they possess the WISDOM OF GOD (1 Cor. 2:13-14; Eph. 1:17; Prov. 1:7)</p>
*The Bible CONTAINS the Word of God. We can subjectively pick and choose what parts of the Bible are true.	The Bible IS the Word of God. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (1 Timothy 3:16 and compare 2 Peter 1:20-21)
*Jesus Christ was a GOOD MAN , probably the BEST MAN that has ever lived.	Jesus Christ is the GOD-MAN , the CREATOR , the blessed Son of Man, the eternal Son of God (John 1:1,2,3,14,etc.).
*The birth of Jesus Christ was NATURAL (see Isaiah 7:14 in the Revised Standard Version)	The birth of Jesus Christ was SUPERNATURAL (Matthew 1:20-23 and Luke 1:37).
*Jesus Christ died as our EXAMPLE	Jesus Christ died as our SUBSTITUTE (Isaiah 53:6 and 2 Corinthians 5:21).
God is the FATHER OF ALL MEN (the universal Fatherhood of God)	GOD'S CHILDREN are only those who have put their faith in Christ (John 1:12). Many people have the devil as their father (John 8:44).
All men are BROTHERS (the universal brotherhood of man)	Not everyone belongs to the same family. There are TWO FAMILIES (1 John 3:10).
*Man is the product of EVOLUTION	Man was CREATED directly by God (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7 and Matthew 19:4).
*Man is the unfortunate VICTIM of heredity and environment, but through self-culture and self effort, he can save himself.	Man is a SINNER , fallen from original innocency, and unless he receives the Lord Jesus Christ, he is eternally lost (John 3:16-21; Rom. 3:23-24).
*Man is justified by WORKS in following Christ's example. The result: natural development from WITHIN	Man is justified by FAITH in the atoning blood of Christ. The result: supernatural regeneration from ABOVE (John 3:3; Rom. 5:1,9; Tit. 3:4-6).
There are MANY ROADS that lead to Heaven	Jesus Christ is the ONLY WAY (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
ALL MEN WILL EVENTUALLY BE SAVED (UNIVERSALISM)	ONLY A FEW WILL FINALLY BE SAVED (Matthew 7:13-14), although God's salvation is freely offered to all (Rev. 22:17).

Those sections marked with an asterisk () are taken from or adapted from the excellent tract by Franklin G. Huling entitled Fundamentalism vs. Modernism--What is the Difference?

Liberalism (Modernism)	True Christianity
Concerning HELL : A loving God would never condemn anyone to hell.	Those who reject Jesus Christ are condemned already (John 3:18). HELL is very real.
The LOVE OF GOD is over-emphasized and the judgment and wrath of God is rarely mentioned.	The judgment and wrath of God is carefully taught (Rom. 1:18,32; 2:3,5,16; etc.) and the love of God is presented in full view of Calvary's cross (Rom. 5:8; John 3:16; etc.).
NO WARNING is given about false doctrine, false teachers, etc.	Warning is a key part of a faithful ministry (Acts 20:28-31).
The liberals recognize and tolerate " MANY FAITHS " and "many faith expressions"	Bible believers recognize that there is only ONE TRUE FAITH (Jude 3 and Eph. 4:5,13).
ECUMENICAL --they seek the compromising UNION of all churches and all faiths	SEPARATISTIC --they separate from those churches and individuals who deny the "doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9-11; Rom. 16:17-18; etc.).
SOCIAL GOSPEL and social action	CHRIST-CENTERED GOSPEL and missionary zeal
Seek to meet man's PHYSICAL NEEDS (food, clothing, medicine, etc.).	Seek to meet man's SPIRITUAL NEEDS (salvation from sin) <u>first and foremost</u>
Concerning the RESURRECTION : "the influence and example of Jesus lives on"	The Lord Jesus ROSE AGAIN BODILY from the grave and is exalted at the right hand of God (1 Corinthians 15; Eph. 1:20-23)
There is an avoidance of and a disregard for PROPHETIC TEACHING especially concerning the second coming of Christ	The prophetic statements of Scripture are accepted at face value and the Bible has much to say about the blessed hope that Jesus is coming again (John 14:3; Titus 2:13)
<u>Key Message</u> : " LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR " "Do unto others" "Obey the Golden Rule" etc. (MAN-CENTERED)	<u>Key Message</u> : " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31; and see 1 Cor. 2:2 and 1 Cor. 15:1-4) (CHRIST-CENTERED)
<u>Emphasis</u> : The emphasis is placed on the Gospels--the earthly life and ministry of Christ (Jesus as a FELLOW HUMAN).	<u>Emphasis</u> : The emphasis is placed on the crucified, risen, exalted, heavenly Lord who is coming again! (Jesus as GOD WITH US and GOD FOR US!)
<u>Note</u> : In Acts through Revelation there are 183 verses on the death of Christ; 97 on the resurrection; 162 on the heavenly life and ministry of Christ; 203 on the second coming and only 5 verses on the earthly life and ministry of Christ (Acts 20:35; Acts 2:22; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Tim. 6:13 and 2 Peter 1:15-18)!	

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF LIBERAL CHURCHES: The people meet for worship on Sunday morning only. Most liberal churches do not have an evening service or a mid-week prayer meeting service. The people rarely carry Bibles to church and Bibles are not usually found in the pews. The "clergy" always pray and the people in the pew are never called upon to pray. The "minister" (often called "minister" rather than "pastor") will never preach verse by verse through a book of the Bible. The sermons are usually based, not so much on a Bible text (although verses will be referred to during the course of the sermon) but on some event that was recently in the news, some political happening, something that was seen on television, etc. An invitation for salvation will never be given from the pulpit. The terms "saved" and "unsaved" are rarely used. **NOTE:** This chart describes those liberals in the "Protestant" tradition. However, some of these liberal characteristics may be found and noticed among certain Catholics as well.