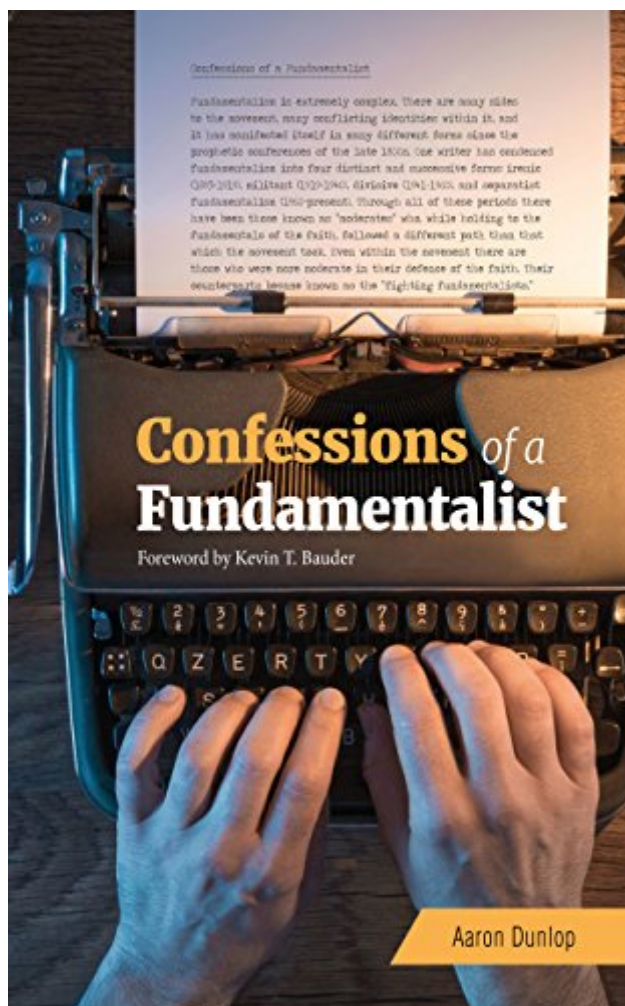


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Confessions Of A Fundamentalist



Synopsis

"Bold and necessary" and well written. Dr. Michael Barrett (Vice President for Academic Affairs/Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary) is doing fundamentalism a service by publishing this book. We will be stronger with it than without it. Specifically, this volume will help us in four ways. First, in this book, Aaron reminds us of some of our highest ideals. While much of what he says is critical, he writes as a committed fundamentalist who wants to see all of us—himself included—live up to our best lights. He repeatedly brings us back to what ought to be our highest aspirations. Second, the book expresses a widely-held perspective on fundamentalism. Even if that perspective is mistaken at some points—and I think it is—it's shared by many of Aaron's generation. It shapes their vision of and commitment to fundamentalism. To attempt to suppress the expression of this perspective is both foolish and futile. To ignore or dismiss it is simply to wish away most of Aaron's generation—a generation that fundamentalism needs. What the perspective of this book requires is thoughtful response, the kind of response that can be offered only after respectful and careful listening. So I encourage readers to listen to Aaron, not so that they can disagree or refute him, but so that they can grasp his genuine concerns and understand why they are so important to him. His concerns are the concerns of a generation, and understanding him will help us understand his peers. Third, this book will help older fundamentalists to know what they need to clarify. Its author has grown up within fundamentalism. He has been reared in fundamentalist churches and trained in fundamentalist schools. He pastors a fundamentalist congregation. If we think that his understanding of fundamentalist history, fundamentalist thinking or fundamentalist current events is skewed, we have no one to blame but ourselves. If we think he is wrong, then it is our responsibility to offer, or even re-offer, publicly-accessible explanations that are better than the ones he has been given. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, a book like Aaron's will help us to remember how accountable we are. As Christians—as fundamentalists—what we are doing is not gamesmanship, posturing or partisan politics. It is deadly serious. A million years from now we will look back on our mortal lives, and we will see how our conduct in this present world influenced eternal destinies, including our own. As we read this book, we may sometimes wonder whether we aren't being held up to an unfair standard of judgement. Let us remember, however, that a day is swiftly approaching when we will face a Judge who knows our every deed and motive. I seriously doubt that his standard of judgement will be less strict than the one represented here. Fundamentalism has attracted its share of destructive critics. I do not believe that Aaron Dunlop is among them.

Whatever wounds Aaron's book inflicts will be the wounds of a friend. We should hear him out, carefully and thoroughly. When we reply, we should remember that we are conversing with someone who actually has our best interests at heart. Such a conversation is necessary, not only for Aaron and his generation, but for the future health of fundamentalism as a whole. Kevin T. Bauder
Central Baptist Theological Seminary of Minneapolis

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