Fundamentalism, unlike the proverbial rolling stone that gathers no moss, has gathered several accretions to its definition with the passage of time. Even when the term’s usage is limited to modern Christianity, its meaning shifted quickly from the doctrinal scheme (in so far as there was one) expounded in the original twelve volumes of *The Fundamentals*, published from 1910 to 1915. Quite rapidly they became associated with dispensationalist premillennialism, but also with a literalist biblical hermeneutic, fiercely hostile to higher criticism. Whilst the practical implications of the latter are pretty clear, those of the former are less so. From the 1920s to the 1950s those who wished to work within existing church traditions to combat what they regarded as ‘modernism’ began to differentiate themselves from those who preferred ecclesiastical separation as the only path. With these variations in meaning it is not therefore surprising that there should have been a substantial research project on fundamentalism under Martin Marty at the University of Chicago, leading to the publication of five volumes between 1991 and 1995, the words of which considerably exceed those in *The Fundamentals*.

How far did fundamentalism become part of Christianity in the United Kingdom? This is the question tackled in this volume of eighteen essays with a reflective introduction and conclusion by the editors. In some ways it can be seen as a critique of Harriet Harris’s *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (1998). Nevertheless the book should stimulate some fresh thinking about the relationship of contemporary evangelicalism to the Churches.

About a quarter of the essays in *The Fundamentals* were written by British scholars, including Bishop Handley Moule of the Church of England, Professor James Orr of the United Free Church of Scotland, and Dr G. Campbell Morgan, who as well as being a popular Congregational preacher, was also Principal of Cheshunt College, Cambridge. Each of the British contributors exemplified the moderation of many of the original volumes, which tends to justify the view that, however much the volumes may be the origin, they should not too readily be identified with their outcome. Geoffrey Treloar discusses this dimension of the story in the first substantive essay. There follow six essays on the period up to the Second World War, four of which are on particular churches – the Church of England, Methodism, Baptists and Brethren. (There is no reference to Congregationalism, either before or after the war.) Two others are on women and men in relation to fundamentalism, and on anti-Catholicism in English
evangelicalism, though the latter has more about Anglo-Catholicism than Roman Catholicism. Part III has four essays on the later twentieth century; and in Part IV there are separate essays on Ulster, Scotland and Wales. Finally, in Part V there are three theological reflections, including one on ‘Pentecostalism and Fundamentalism’.

The general conclusion is that, although there were quasi-fundamentalist strands in Britain, they are better understood as the extreme end of a spectrum of conservative evangelicalism – with a distinguishing feature being a preparedness to agitate for that position. For the most part, the distinctive elements are very much minorities within their respective traditions. In some ways this is not surprising. There was little appetite for the possible conflicts involved in any formal changes in the articles of belief (or their equivalents) of any of the Churches; and in any case it could be argued that (with the exception of dispensational pre-millennialism) the principles which ‘fundamentalists’ defended were already embodied in the creeds and the Reformation confessions. Frustratingly, therefore, ‘fundamentalists’ were not arguing for change, and ‘modernists’ were not arguing for change in the opposite direction: in that sense it was a shadow battle. Furthermore, in the main groups, which did formally embrace a more dogmatic position, principally the Christian Unions in higher educational institutions, it was only officers, rather than members, who were required to declare their acceptance of the Statement of Faith; and many ordinary members were blissfully unaware of it. What is also striking is the tremendous influence wielded by only about half a dozen individuals, such as Basil Atkinson and J. I. Packer, in the Inter-Varsity Fellowship for the best part of half a century. The mention of such names immediately makes it clear that a mainstream Anglican evangelical, such as John Stott, was very much in the moderate camp. Similarly, for all the fervour of his preaching and the loyal following he had in Wales, Martin Lloyd-Jones, despite a large congregation at Westminster Chapel in London, effectively had no significant influence within Congregationalism because of his separatist attitude. The contrast with a preacher like Billy Graham is striking.

Ultimately, the conclusion to the book is slightly disappointing. One can readily acknowledge that there were ‘fundamentalizing’ tendencies within many, if not all, of the UK Churches. But, although the editors acknowledge that it is not sufficient simply to appeal to British theological ‘moderation’, there might have been more reflection on why fundamentalism was so much less significant than in the USA, especially in view of the ‘common sense’ anti-intellectual attitudes found in both countries. A key element here must surely be the determination of leading Anglican evangelical clergy not to leave the Church of England; together with the fact of establishment. (Attitudes here