byterians about a proposed liberal revision of the "Confessions of Faith". Bible schools had sprung up, as had evangelists such as Billy Sunday — "I don't know any more about theology than a jack-rabbit knows about ping-pong, but I'm on my way to glory".

Marsden says that the Great War sharpened this conflict. Some premillennialists knew it to be the prelude to the Armageddon that had been prophesied. Bolshevism (1917) was another sign that the Prince of Darkness was at hand. The liberals, on the other hand, feared that such detachment would undermine the war effort. The social upheaval of demobilization, the financial crisis of 1919, the rise of gangsters and even the spread of cigarette smoking confirmed the premillennialists in their gloomy diagnosis. By 1920, both the Baptists and the Presbyterians were at loggerheads among themselves. The Fundamentalist crusade to purge the denominations of soft theology made the Scopes trial inevitable.

What explains the intensity of this dramatic conflict, centred, to begin with, in the north and not the south? Partly it was the nostalgic response to the final passing of the world order, signalled by the War. But Marsden persuasively explains how the tightly-knit immigrant communities of the early decades could have sensed each unfamiliar idea or unexpected event as a threat to the Protestant society they thought they had joined.

Politically, Fundamentalism was conservative (which is not the same as Republican) and fearful of an outside world seemingly rife with Bolshevism and Socialism. On balance, Marsden argues, Fundamentalism was not anti-science as such: indeed, it claimed to be the only scientific interpretation of the facts (the Bible). But evolution, "A string of guesses strung together", was a different kettle of fish. Marsden agrees that in the 1920s Fundamentalism was, for several interesting reasons, largely an American phenomenon. Perceptively, he asks what is to be made of the Fundamentalism now emerging in Islam and (in a footnote) in Ulster.

Marsden's history throws some light on those recent events in Arkansas even though 1981 is well outside his period. It explains why evolution is a unique challenge to Fundamentalism, and why Fundamentalism persists. For you cannot expect such a strong and recent tradition simply to melt away after a few set-backs in the courts. What Marsden does not for me sufficiently explain is why, in a republic in which church and state are constitutionally so separate, so many people have for so long invested so much energy and passion in such fierce and pointless arguments. "The God of your choice", it seems, demands a hard sell. □

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IMAGE
UNAVAILABLE
FOR
COPYRIGHT
REASONS

Cartoon from *The King's Business*, a premillennialist journal, May 1925. At this time the Fundamentalists saw Bolshevism, evolutionism and modernism as part of the same basic threat to Bible belief.

Expressing science

Maeve O'Connor

Writing a Scientific Paper and Speaking at Scientific Meetings, 5th Edn. By Vernon Booth. Pp.48. (The Biochemical Society: 1981.) £2.50, \$6.

WRITING [maketh] an exact man, wrote Francis Bacon. How exact does it make scientists, already expected to be the most exact of men and women? And do they learn through writing to become not only more exact thinkers but, in turn, better writers?

Most editors would agree that although some scientists are superb writers and many are adequate, many more are imprecise, obscure, wordy or just plain careless. This is why journals tend to call for accuracy, simplicity and conciseness in their instructions to authors and why some editors devote hours to showing authors how to reach these goals. Editors and their requests for brevity are nevertheless often blamed for squeezing the life out of the so-called "literature". If blame must be assigned, however, we should direct it instead at educational systems that seem hard-pushed to produce literate graduates, never mind literate school-leavers. Yet scientists in particular, who must communicate their thinking successfully to other people if they are to help either society or their own careers, need some training in the art of presentation. Even in this age of cash crises, universities therefore ought to arrange appropriate courses. At present these are rare, but the return on the small investment needed could be enormous.

Until more courses become available, individuals could help themselves by studying one or two books on writing. Among these, Vernon Booth's booklet probably packs in the most good advice per square centimetre. This began life in 1971 as the Koch-Light Laboratories prize-winning essay. Dr Booth has revised and amplified the fourth edition (1977) and added eight pages on speaking at meetings. He does not claim to provide a complete text on how to write but simply to show readers how to avoid the mistakes he has met in scientific papers. He tells us what to do before writing, when to begin ("early") and how to get going ("Begin with the easiest section"). He gives useful hints on handling the various parts of a paper, and he covers all the commonest problems of literary style and punctuation in 12 succinct pages. In the section on speaking at scientific meetings he continues to administer sound advice, though little of this is particularly new. Like the rest, however, this section is pithily put and should be invaluable to busy scientists. □

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