

CHAPTER 3 **The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism: An Exposition**

3.1 **An Evangelical Renaissance**

The term “Neo-evangelicalism” was coined by Harold John Ockenga in the inaugural convocation address of Fuller Theological Seminary in October of 1947 in Pasadena, California. But like any word, it needs context for it to have meaning. It would be Carl F. H. Henry in the publication of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* that would give neo-evangelicalism meaning and context. The term was used “to represent the distinctiveness of the new viewpoint in contrast with liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, the old evangelicalism, and especially fundamentalism.”¹ Distinctive it would be. Ockenga would write of the new distinctive and Henry would be the one to give neo-evangelicalism its fullest expression.

¹J. A. Witmer, “Book Review. Neo-Evangelicalism by Robert P. Lightner,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 119, no.475 (July, 1962): 273. For a representative sample of the literature discussing “North American Protestant Fundamentalism.” See Stewart G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1963); Norman Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy 1918-1931* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954); Ernest Sandeen, “Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism,” *Church History* 35 (March, 1967): 66–83; Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970); LeRoy Moore, “Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen,” *Church History* 37 (June, 1968): 195–202, C. Allyn Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976); Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*; George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*; Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*; Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy*; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*; Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Nancy Ammerman, *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987); Alan Peskin, *God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist School* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Emmanuel Sivan, “The Enclave Culture,” eds. Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalism Comprehended* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Chap 1. For theological studies see James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia; Westminster, 1978); and Kathleen Boone, *The Bible Tells Them So: The discourse of Protestant Fundamentalism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989); Harriett A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

John Walvoord wrote a review of Henry's book, *The Uneasy Conscience*, and in that review highlighted what would be the book's major impact: "Dr. Henry's latest book may well prove to be one of the most provocative volumes to come from the evangelical press for some time. The thesis of the book is well expressed in the title-Fundamentalists have or at least ought to have an uneasy conscience in regard to their silence concerning the Christian answer to the political, social, and moral problems of our day."² Walvoord had an inkling, but could he have known what would be said of this volume in the years to come? Russ Moore, in presenting a paper to the Evangelical Theological Society in 2000, said this regarding *The Uneasy Conscience*, "The theological manifesto of the neo-evangelical "third way" was Carl F. H. Henry's *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, a book which called for political activity not because of a pragmatic need to 'save America,' but because evangelical theological convictions demanded such action."³ *The Uneasy Conscience* has been called "the manifesto of neo-evangelicalism."⁴ This volume of Carl Henry has also been recognized as the work that "set the agenda for the new evangelical theology."⁵ Gary Dorrien in *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* writes that Henry, following the critique of Ockenga, "published a manifesto for a new fundamentalism that echoed this perception of the fundamentalist crisis. *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* depicted an existing American

² John Walvoord, "Book Review-The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 104 (July 1947): 362.

³ Russell D. Moore, "From the House of Jacob to the Iowa Caucuses: Is There a Place for Israel in a New Evangelical Public Theology?" A paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society (Nashville, TN: November 16, 2000), 3.

⁴ White, *What is Truth?*, 87.

⁵ Anderson, "Carl F. H. Henry," 490.

fundamentalism as a marginalized retreat from the gospel mission to spread righteousness throughout the world.”⁶ In contradistinction to the fundamentalist tendency to withdraw and separate itself from the perceived evils of the world and a less than doctrinally pure church, Henry wrote that authentic fundamentalism would “reclaim the social mission of the gospel, discard those elements of contemporary fundamentalism that cut ‘the nerve of world compassion,’ and rethink the importance and nature of eschatological hope in Christian faith.”⁷ Bob Patterson in his biography of Carl Henry notes the importance of *The Uneasy Conscience*:

Better than anyone else, Henry articulated the weaknesses of fundamentalism, and firmly repudiated them. In 1947 he published a book, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, to point to the harsh treatment, a spirit of lovelessness and strife that had brought about the bankruptcy of fundamentalism. The fundamentalist had seen the heresy in liberal untruth but not in fundamentalism’s unloveliness. In this “manifesto” of the new evangelicals Henry did two things that the fundamentalists had been unwilling to do: he criticized the fundamentalist theological tradition and he pointed the conservatives in some new directions.⁸

3.1.1 A Theological Manifesto

Joel A. Carpenter said of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* that it was the “theological ‘manifesto’ of the nascent movement. Fundamentalism was in danger of degenerating into a nega-tivistic irrelevance. . . . Henry argued that ‘nothing is so essential among Fundamentalist essentials as a world relevance for the

⁶ Gary Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 53. Ockenga would had said in June of 1947 that fundamentalism as a movement was “fragmentation, segregation, separation, criticism, censoriousness, suspicion, [and] solecism.”

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry*, 39.

Gospel.”⁹ The lasting impact of the book would have had to have been surprising to Henry when he wrote the book, because in his autobiography, *Confessions of a Theologian*, he compared the book to one that Edward John Carnell had just written. Henry said Carnell’s book, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, was “durable,” and his own book “seemed but a tract for the times.”¹⁰ Henry’s work was not the first that called for a vigorous intellectualism. Wilbur Smith, a colleague of Henry’s on the faculty at Fuller, had in 1945 published a book entitled *Therefore Stand: A Plea for a Vigorous Apologetic in the Present Crisis of Evangelical Christianity*.¹¹ In Smith’s book he calls for “a new center of scholarship and academics that could turn out men for the powerful defense of the faith in the great citadels of unbelief in our country, and who would produce a stream of high caliber literature in defense of the faith.”¹² What made Henry’s book a “manifesto?” It is to the answer that this study now turns.

3.1.2 Evangelical Direction and Fuel

Timothy George, writing with the perspective of history, makes the evaluation that *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* gave direction and fuel for the fledgling evangelical movement. *God, Revelation, and Authority* may be the magnum opus of Henry’s literary and theological career, but it was *The Uneasy*

⁹ Douglas Firth, “Book Review: The Two Reformers of Fundamentalism: Harold John Ockenga and Carl F. H. Henry,” ed. by Joel A. Carpenter,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 33, no. 3 (September 1990): 414.

¹⁰ Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 121.

¹¹ Wilbur M. Smith, *Therefore Stand: A Plea for a Vigorous Apologetic in the Present Crisis of Evangelical Christianity* (Boston: W. A. Wilde, 1945), 498–507.

¹² Rolland D. McCune, “The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings,” 128.

Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism that breathed fire into a developing evangelicalism by “rejecting the failed theology of liberalism, discredited by the devastation of two world wars, but also calling on fellow conservatives to a positive engagement with society and culture.”¹³ George goes on to quote Henry as he looked back at the beginning of the evangelical movement:

What distressed the growing evangelical mainstream about the fundamentalist far right were its personal legalisms, suspicion of advanced education, disdain for biblical criticism per se, polemical orientation of theological discussion, judgmental attitudes toward those in ecumenically related denominations, and an uncritical political conservatism often defined as “Christian anticommunism” and “Christian capitalism” that, while politicizing the Gospel on the right, deplored politicizing it on the left.¹⁴

Joel Carpenter puts *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* into historical and theological perspective by noting with its publication and with the publication of *Remaking the Modern Mind*, Henry laid out a two-pronged agenda. This two pronged agenda “called for the rescue of western civilization through a powerful reassertion of an evangelical Christian ‘world and life view,’ and for the reformation of fundamentalism in order to equip it for that task.”¹⁵

Remaking the Modern Mind (1946) was a sweeping examination of modern thought fashioned somewhat after the grand surveys of contemporary sages Jacques Barzun, Arnold Toynbee, and Reinhold Niebuhr. In it Henry argued that western culture was in a state of collapse and that its foundational humanistic faiths could no longer sustain it. In the midst of this crisis, Henry asserted, orthodox Christianity faced a historic opportunity to show that the “controlling ideas of the Hebrew-Christian world-life view” could meet the cultural challenge. In *The Uneasy Conscience*, however, Henry argued that fundamentalism could not take up this challenge. It was more interested in curbing individual sin than combating social evil, more interested in divining

¹³ George, “Inventing Evangelicalism.”

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 199–200.

all the details surrounding the Second Coming than working to advance Christ's kingdom. Fundamentalism's ethical and social irrelevance was a scandal, for it trivialized the Gospel and abandoned the field of social reform to secularists and religious liberals. Yet fundamentalism could be redeemed, Henry insisted. If it recovered an evangelical social ethic and followed through on it, the world would witness another Reformation.¹⁶

3.2 Fundamentalist Flaws

Henry in *The Uneasy Conscience* levels his critical journalistic eye at the surface level weaknesses and inconsistencies of fundamentalism. He points out that fundamentalism rightly or wrongly was perceived as “anti-ecumenical spirit of independent isolationism, an uncritically-held set of theological formulas, and an overly-emotional type of revivalism.”¹⁷ Henry finds this perception all the more remarkable and lamentable given the attribution of “fundamentalist” was in light of doctrinal fidelity to the historic evangelical doctrinal fundamentals of modern orthodoxy. It was also seen in its historical context by the application made by the likes of J. Gresham Machen, whose articulate and vigorous defense of the relevance of the Christian message to world crises had so soon been forgotten.¹⁸

Henry recognized and argued for the consistent and realistic position that fundamentalism took in relation to the condition of man. In contradistinction to the vacuous and empty evaluation of mankind that liberalism offered, fundamentalism's answer that only the God of the Scriptures could rescue mankind from the disaster that imminently awaited him (especially in light of two world wars and now with the

¹⁶ Ibid., 200.

¹⁷ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 5.

¹⁸ Ibid., 5-6. Cf. J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923, 1972).

looming threat of communism that faced the west), it was beyond comprehension that fundamentalism abdicated its mandated responsibility to meet these issues head on and instead focused, almost exclusively, on individual sins rather than social evil.¹⁹

3.2.1 Fundamentalisms Failure to Address Societal Ills

Henry points out in the concluding first section of *The Uneasy Conscience* that as a result of fundamentalism's inability, or unwillingness to address social ills, it has left the modern on-looker with a perception that there is something inherently deficient in the world-life view of historic orthodox Christianity. Additionally, there is an ingrained perception of pessimism that pervades fundamentalism's view of humanity that renders any practical social remedy impractical. The consequence of this perception was that in 1947 there was to Henry's view a massive void in the struggle for the heart and mind of modern mind that needed to be addressed. Henry was convinced evangelical Christianity had the answer and the impetus to step into the vacuum created by the aloofness and militancy of present day fundamentalism. He would not stand by and witness the dismissal of this expression (historic orthodox Christianity) of the Great Tradition with the view that humanitarianism has evaporated from Christianity:²⁰

Those who read with competence will know that the "uneasy conscience" of which I write is not one troubled about the great biblical verities, which I consider the only outlook capable of resolving our problems, but rather one distressed by the frequent failure to apply them effectively to crucial problems

¹⁹ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 7-8.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

confronting the modern mind. It is an application of, not a revolt against, fundamentals of the faith, for which I plead.²¹

In chapter 2 of *The Uneasy Conscience* Henry starts to build the case for a vibrant expression of “The Great Tradition” that can readily meet societal ills. He is troubled by the mounting awareness that given the global issues faced during the last part of the 1940s how a “world changing message narrowed its scope to the changing of isolated individuals.”²² Henry calls for a return to the passion of the early Church:

A globe changing passion certainly characterized the early church, however much it thought within a redemptive pattern centering in Christ’s substitutionary death and bodily resurrection. Had it not been so, Christianity would not have been the religion of the then-known world within three centuries. Some sort of a world passion had made the Christian message pertinent enough for rulers to want to bring their subjects in subjection to it. A Christianity without a passion to turn the world upside down is not reflective of apostolic Christianity.²³

This situation is even more remarkable when one takes note of the fact that non-evangelicals operate with a misplaced and naïve confidence in man, growing out of a superficial view of reality. The evangelical believes that “the liberal, humanist, and the ethical idealist share a shallow sense of the depth of world need and an over-optimism concerning man’s own supposed resources for far reaching reversal even of admitted wrongs.”²⁴ And yet there was a despair and pall that hung over modern fundamentalism. It was despair that was rooted in the premillennialist and

²¹ Ibid., preface.

²² Ibid., 14. Father Richard John Neuhaus writing in *First Things* magazine noted that prior to the publication of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, the default position of fundamentalism/evangelicalism was that “the only way to change the world is to save individuals one by one.” Richard John Neuhaus, “While We’re at It,” *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* (August 1990), 90.

²³ Ibid., 16.

²⁴ Ibid., 15.

amillennialist view. It was a view that there would be no appreciable wide spread positive response to the Gospel. Henry writes:

It should be emphasized that this despair over the present world order grows, for contemporary Fundamentalism, not out of any lack of confidence in the ability of the super-naturalistic Gospel. Rather, it issues from the fact that the Scriptures, as interpreted by premillenarians and amillenarians, hold forth no hope for the conversion of the whole world, and center upon the Second Coming of Christ as crucial for the introduction of a divine kingdom. The despair over the present age, then, is grounded in the anticipated lack of response to the redemptive Gospel, rather than any inherent defect in the message itself.²⁵

Here was a problem that needed to be addressed, and Henry would address this duality within evangelicalism for many years. The problem was not resolved successfully by the early fundamentalists. However, the liberals had no better solution. Liberalism deprecated supernaturalism, enthroned humanism, and ushered in a thoroughgoing naturalism. In spite of its optimistic prognostications, liberalism/humanism was left in the debris of the destruction fostered in two world wars. Unfortunately for the fundamentalist, even though the inability of the liberal/humanistic view of man was awash in failure, fundamentalism had forfeited a golden opportunity to take center stage. “Fundamentalism became increasingly absorbed in resistance to non-evangelical humanism as a deceptive competitor for the commitment of the multitudes, and because of its prophetic cheerlessness about the present age came more and more to narrow its message for the ‘faithful remnant’ that would be called out of the godless world context.”²⁶ Ronald Nash’s observation in

²⁵ Ibid., 18.

²⁶ Ibid., 18-19. After WWII the leaders of the then fledgling evangelical movement realized that something more was needed than alliances against liberalism on the left, obscurantist fundamentalism on the right and a rising tide of secular humanism. Henry’s *The Uneasy Conscience*, therefore, insisted that a socially and politically engaged evangelicalism could not penetrate society as

The New Evangelicalism (1963) wrote that fundamentalism, while seeking to defend and preserve the orthodox message of the Scriptures from modernism, had failed to continue the Apostolic and historic evangelical emphasis of cultural engagement. As important as it was evangelicals to critique this weakness of fundamentalism, they were insistent that they were in no way departing from the “‘fundamentals’ of the faith.”²⁷

The main thesis of *The Uneasy Conscience* is, according to House, “disarmingly simple.”²⁸ House’s analysis of the strategic and visionary contribution of *The Uneasy Conscience* is very insightful:

Henry argues that Fundamentalism’s conscience is uneasy because it has neglected its God-given, biblically revealed mandate to engage the major cultural issues of the day in a biblically ordered manner. To support his thesis, Henry claims that Fundamentalism too often reduced ethical instruction to a list of “do’s” and “don’ts” such as “don’t smoke,” “don’t drink,” and “don’t go to the movies.” This approach left the movement voiceless on social matters like sexual ethics, labor concerns, and political integrity. He noted that an overly negative view of what the church could accomplish before Christ’s return partly fuelled this mentality, and claimed that concern for social ills had been illegitimately subsumed by the legitimate desire to win lost persons and

long as the movement itself was saddled with internal theological skirmishes. According to Moore, Henry clearly saw that second and third degree separation would undue the “fledgling evangelical movement” as it had the fundamentalist movement. Henry further saw that a major threat against evangelical cohesion were the skirmishes between Reformed and dispensational theologies: “This lack of cohesion was even more important given that the bone of contention between evangelical covenantalists and evangelical dispensationalists was the concept Henry identified in *Uneasy Conscience* as most fundamental to an articulation of Christian sociopolitical engagement: the Kingdom of God” (“The Neo-Fundamentalism of the Evangelical Left,” 4). Moore then goes to quote Sydney Ahlstrom, “[Dispensationalism] aroused strong resistance among American Protestants by denying what most evangelicals and all liberals firmly believed—that the Kingdom of God would come as a part of the historical process. They could not accept the dispensational claim that the all Christian history was a kind of meaningless ‘parenthesis’ between the setting aside of the Jews and the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom. This claim aroused violent reactions because it provided a rationale for destructive attitudes and encouraged secession from existing denominations. Especially objectionable was the tendency of dispensationalists to look for the Antichrist among the ‘apostate churches’ of this ‘present age.’” Moore, “The Neo-Fundamentalism of the Evangelical Left,” 4–5.

²⁷ Nash, *The New Evangelicalism*, 30.

²⁸ House, “Remaking the Modern Mind: Revisiting Carl Henry’s Theological Vision,” 8.

see them transformed. In other words, it was fine to help a drunkard get saved and sober, but it was not fine to take on the liquor trade as an industry or alcoholism as a social problem.

Most importantly, Henry claimed that Fundamentalism's belief in God's inerrant word compelled them to apply the scriptures to all of life. It is this point that takes Henry's indictment from the simple to the complex. Two points illustrate this complexity. First, his assertions about the Bible force fundamentalists and evangelicals to base their movements *completely* on biblical fidelity. Otherwise, criticizing liberals for biblical infidelity is a simple case of hypocrisy. Second, his approach forces believers into the difficult world of constantly forming a truly biblical worldview truly relevant to the times. Put another way, his claims make Christians become Bible saturated, theologically knowledgeable, applicationally adept, and socially committed individuals who want to build a better world, not just make a better life or small community. Claiming that the Bible both commands us to act and directs those actions takes Christians out of the realm of simplistic conversionism.²⁹

Henry's blueprint would be played out in for the next five decades as Henry gave full expression to his basic axioms of divine revelation and the true and living God with all its implications.

3.3 Agents of Change

Fundamentalists had withdrawn from society and in doing so abdicated their biblically mandated assignment of cultural change. Cultural change would come as individuals were changed by the power of the Gospel. The effect of liberalism with its optimistic humanistic foundation, now discredited by the smoking embers of two world wars, had been long opposed by those that stood on the solid foundation of supernatural revelation. Henry gave voice to a rising concern among those that clung to the fundamentals of the faith. In 1947 Henry sensed a "troubled conscience in the modern liberal, growing out of his superficial optimism. . . . But so is the uneasy conscience of the modern fundamentalist, that no voice is speaking today as Paul

²⁹ Ibid., 8.

would, either at the United Nations sessions, or at labor-management disputes, or in strategic university classrooms whether in Japan or Germany or in America.”³⁰

In *The Uneasy Conscience*, Henry insisted that the Christian message at its core is an ethical one. In chapter three Henry issues a provocative statement: “For the first period in its history, evangelical Christianity stands divorced from the great social reform movements.”³¹ Walvoord made the comment that Henry “intended this volume to provoke discussion and his purpose has already been fulfilled.”³² Henry desired more than just discussion. He was intent on seeing discussion move to a plan of action. He identified a foundational weakness that had manifested itself in the Fundamentalism of the 1940s. The fundamentalism of Henry’s day had divorced itself from any identification with “the humanistic moralism of modern reformers.”³³ And yet it was those very same “humanistic moralistic modern reformers” that were at the forefront of addressing the societal ills. This lack of engagement with the pressing issues of the day largely regulated “Protestant evangelicalism” to a

³⁰ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 25. Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957). In 1957 Henry would publish *Christian Personal Ethics* that would address in a more systematic and thorough treatment the implications of Christian social engagement. In this work Henry draws out the effect of “two convictions: that speculative ethics are impotent because segregated from revelation, and that Christian ethics are impoverished when unrelated to problems of secular morality (p. 16). Part I deals with speculative philosophy and shows its inadequacy. Part II systematizes Christian personal ethics,” C. C. Ryrie, “Review of *Christian Personal Ethics* By Carl F. H. Henry” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115, no. 457 (January 1958):84–86. Henry’s develops these two convictions in the following way: “Naturalistic ethics involve ‘the animalization of the moral life.’ Idealistic ethics involve its “deification.” The irrationalism of existential ethics merely intensifies the dilemma thus posed. The biblical ethic alone is able to resolve the ethical paradoxes without getting caught on either horn of this historical dilemma and without lapsing into irrationalism. This is due to its revelational origin as against the speculative origin of secular ethics.” Arthur Holmes, “Review of Carl F. H. Henry: *Christian Personal Ethics*” *Westminster Theological Journal* 20, no. 2 (May 1958): 223.

³¹ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 27.

³² Walvoord, “Review of Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*,” 362.

³³ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 28.

secondary or even more subordinate role when trying to “challenge the weaknesses of the prevailing cultural mood.”³⁴ The present situation was nothing less than shocking to Henry. He noted that it was only in the present day, unlike earlier periods of Christian history where the implications of the Gospel message was seen in active social engagement, that modern fundamentalism had nothing to say to the modern mind on the great social issues.³⁵ Henry believed that contrary to the fundamentalist tendency to separate, Christians were to engage culture with a passion. In light of the biblical revelation Christianity that does not possess “a passion to turn the world upside down is not reflective of apostolic Christianity.”³⁶ Henry maintained this position even when the attacks of the “militant fundamentalist” turned their sights on him and other “new evangelicals.”

Contrary to the separatist element in fundamentalism, Henry in *The Uneasy Conscience* said that regardless of “the details of one's eschatology, the Christian worldview impels believers out into the world for the cause of Christ, to bring truth and justice into every area of life. Henry believes that both ‘in Old Testament and New Testament thought there is but one sure foundation for a lasting civilization, and

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 30. Writing some years later Curtis Hutson, editor of the *Sword of the Lord* magazine, said, “Our responsibility is spiritual, not social; but the New Evangelicals have become increasingly enamored with the liberal line of a social conscience. . . . In the December 8, 1957, news release of Dr. Ockenga, he said, ‘The New Evangelicalism differs from fundamentalism in its willingness to handle the social problems which fundamentalism evaded.’ He went on to say, ‘Fundamentalism abdicated leadership and responsibility in the societal realm and thus became impotent to change society or to solve social problems.’ Purely social work is being given an unbiblical prominence in the New Evangelical circles. The church was never called to make the world a better place in which to live. We [fundamentalists] do not have a cultural or political mandate.” Curtis Hutson, *New Evangelicalism: An Enemy of Fundamentalism* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1984), 17.

³⁶ Hutson, *New Evangelicalism*, 16.

its cornerstone is a vital knowledge of the redemptive God.”³⁷ In that same vein

Henry continues to argue that societal change is exactly what Christians are called to do:

Hebrew-Christian thought, historically, has stood as a closely-knit world and life view. Metaphysics and ethics went everywhere together, in Biblical intent. The great doctrines implied a divinely related social order with intimations for all humanity. The ideal Hebrew or Christian society throbbed with challenge to the predominant culture of its generation, condemning with redemptive might the tolerated social evils, for the redemptive message was to light the world and salt the earth. No insistence on a doctrinal framework alone was sufficient; always this was coupled with most vigorous assault against social evils. . . . This theologico-ethical emphasis runs through the Hebrew-Christian outlook. The ultimate values of Biblical supernaturalism are unchanging. New Testament ethics was no more entirely new than New Testament doctrine. The moral, as well as metaphysical, concepts had their Old Testament foregleams, simply because the Biblical view as a whole was rooted in the creative and relational and regenerative God.³⁸

Groothuis puts this aspect of Henry’s thought into perspective when he says that “in order to recapture the mandate [the Christian life and worldview], Henry charts a course that steers between the social pessimism and sectarianism of fundamentalism and the desupernaturalized social gospel of liberalism.”³⁹

McCune comments on the essence of Henry’s thought at this point: “Henry derived his cultural agenda from the social comments of the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth, and the Apostle Paul. But more to the point theologically, Henry extracted his social imperative from the central message of Jesus

³⁷ Ibid., 31.

³⁸ Ibid., 30-31.

³⁹ Douglas Groothuis, “Review of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*,” Denver Seminary (accessed February 27, 2008).

Christ which concerned the kingdom of God.”⁴⁰ Henry understood Christianity that was faithful to the “faith once delivered to all the saints” was as concerned about individuals as it was about whole cultures. Henry rejected the view that fundamentalism had embraced the view of indifference to social evils. He would write:

if Fundamentalism is to express the genius of the Christian tradition it would need to reassert: (1) That Christianity opposes any and every evil, personal and social, and must never be represented as in any way tolerant of such evil; (2) That Christianity opposes to such evil, as the only sufficient formula for its resolution, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit.⁴¹

This viewpoint is demanded by the worldview contained in the Scriptures.

3.4 Dispensational Pessimism

In the next chapter entitled, “The Apprehension Over Kingdom Preaching,” Henry takes to task the dispensationalist view of premillennialism that had become the dominant eschatological view in fundamentalism:

In dispensational Fundamentalism, the keynote of the postponement theory is “no kingdom now, but rather a future kingdom.” Therefore modern Fundamentalism has not shared the sentiment for an immediate and forced bringing in of the kingdom. That mood, rather characterized modern liberalism, with its strategy for abolishing social inequities.⁴²

⁴⁰ McCune, “The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings,” 118.

⁴¹ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 40.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 42. According to the postponement theory, Jesus was to set up the Davidic kingdom at His first coming but, due to His rejection, the “mystery form” of the kingdom was introduced. As a consequence, the divine plan during this church age is concerned, it is said, only with “calling out” believers. This theory has gained wide support in the north during the past two generations; many persons automatically identify if not only with all premillennialism, but with all Fundamentalism. Johannes Weiss, Albert Schweitzer and others of the so-called “consistent school of eschatology,” contend that Jesus, viewed as a gifted human prophet merely, preached only a future eschatological kingdom—a view that has remote affinities to the postponement theory with its one-sided futurist

Consequently, Henry notes that this lack of kingdom preaching in fundamentalist pulpits has created a class of spectators rather than empowered ambassadors. In reaction to the kingdom now preaching of liberalism, that based their optimism on a new social order of human making, modern fundamentalism “increasingly reflects a marked hesitency about kingdom preaching.”⁴³ Henry records a warning that he received from a “Fundamentalist spokesman” when this book was first projected as a series of articles. The warning was “to stay away from the kingdom.”⁴⁴ The reason for this warning is that at the time the whole concept of the kingdom of God carried too much liberal baggage for most fundamentalists: “There is a growing reluctance to explicate the kingdom idea in fundamentalist preaching, because a kingdom now message is too easily confused with the liberal social gospel, and because a kingdom then message will identify Christianity further to the modern mind in terms of an escape mechanism.”⁴⁵ Henry believed it was his duty to call for a re-examination and re-study of the whole kingdom issue. This was in keeping with the teachings of Jesus Christ as the kingdom was frequently on his lips: “Yet no subject was more

emphasis, though of course there is here no thought of any offer of the kingdom to the Jews. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 47.

⁴³ Ibid., 43. In *Christian Personal Ethics*, Chapter 12 provides an excellent treatment of the Sermon on the Mount, its present literal relevance and its conflicting interpretations. The kingdom of God has both an individual and a social significance, in both the present and the future. Henry regards a premillennial eschatology as implied in the social significance of the biblical ethic and as mediating between the unwarranted optimism of postmillennialism and the pessimism of amillennialism. “A historical fall and a historical redemption would combine to suggest the reign of Christ at some point in history for a complete exhibition of his triumph.” There will be “a new spirit infused into family, labor and governmental relations, and into literature, music, the arts, and the whole domain of culture” Holmes, “Review of Carl F. H. Henry: *Christian Personal Ethics*,” 226.

⁴⁴ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 46.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

frequently on the lips of Jesus Christ than the kingdom. . . . It appears as the central theme of His preaching.”⁴⁶

Henry goes on to give a more detailed explanation and application of kingdom preaching and its import for the contemporary scene:

No study of the kingdom teaching of Jesus is adequate unless it recognizes His implication both that the kingdom is here, and that it is not here. This does not imply an ultimate paradox, but rather stresses that the kingdom exists in incomplete realization. The task of the Bible student is to discover (1) in what sense it is here; (2) in what sense it is to be further realized before the advent of Christ; and (3) in what sense it will be fully realized at the advent of Christ. . . . The main difference between the kingdom of God *now* and the kingdom of God *then* is that the future kingdom will center all of its activities in the redemptive King because all government and dominion will be subjected to Him. The difference overshadows the question, however important, whether the future kingdom involves an earthly reign or not.⁴⁷

It was also fundamentalism’s eschatology that had resulted in this class of spectators: “It was the failure of fundamentalism to work out a positive message within its own framework, and its tendency instead to take refuge in a despairing view of world history, that cut of the pertinence of evangelicalism to the modern global crises.”⁴⁸ Henry further criticized modern fundamentalism’s aloofness. Having already noted their indifference to social evils with a disproportionate emphasis on personal sins, identified through a “do’s and don’ts list,” he made a proposal that he hoped would redirect fundamentalism’s redemptive word into a proper temporal focus.⁴⁹ Henry closes this chapter with several recommendations:

Contemporary evangelicalism needs (1) to reawaken to the relevance of its redemptive message to the global predicament; (2) to stress the great

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 48–49.

⁴⁸ Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry: The Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, 43.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

evangelical agreements in a common world front; (3) to discard elements of its message which cut the nerve of world compassion as contradictory to the inherent genius of Christianity; (4) to restudy eschatological convictions for the proper perspective which will not unnecessarily dissipate evangelical strength in controversy over secondary positions, in a day when the significance of the primary insistences is international.⁵⁰

3.5 Cultural Engagment From the Cross

Following the exposition and applicaton of the import of a kingdom message, Henry then spends the next chapter entitled “The Fundamentalist Thief on the Cross” challenging the fundamentalist camp to re-engage culture with supernatural verities contained in the Scriptures. The reality is that man must come to terms with Jesus Christ. Henry gives a clarion call “to bring men everywhere to a knowledge of Jesus Christ.”⁵¹ After bringing a challenge that would resonate with fundamentalists, Henry then enumerates fundamentalist tenets that show how distorted it is to view fundamentalism in terms of eschatology only. Those tenets are:

- (1) purposive and moral as over and against a purely mathematical uinverse
- (2) a personal God as against an impersonal god
- (3) divine creation as over against a naturalistic evolution
- (4) man’s uniqueness as a divine endowment rather than human achievement
- (5) man’s predicament is not an animal inheritance nor a necessity of his nature but rather a consequence of his voluntary revolt against God
- (6) salvation can only be provided by God as against the view that man is comptent to save himself
- (7) the Scriptures are a revelation lighting the way to the divine incarnation in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of mankind, as against the view that they stand among many records of religious experience without a difference in kind
- (8) history is bound up with man’s acceptance or rejection of the God-man, rather than that history is primarily what happens among nations

⁵⁰ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 53–54.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

- (9) the future is not an open question, but that world events move toward an ultimate consummation in a future judgment of the race.⁵²

Having these foundational beliefs safe guarded and grounded in the Holy Writ, the fundamentalist is without excuse in not engaging culture with these transformational truths. In advancing themes found in *Remaking the Modern Mind*, in the chapter entitled, “The Struggle for a New World Mind,” Henry champions intellectual engagement with the secular world. This chapter would be played over and over in the ensuing years as Henry lays out a blueprint of intellectual engagement in theory and what he hoped would be practice. The first step is the development of competent literature in every field of study, on every level from grade school through the university that adequately presents each subject with its implications written from the perspective of the Christian and non-Christian view. Second, evangelicalism must prioritize the development of higher institutions of learning in order to counteract the indoctrination that occurs at state sponsored educational institutions. In order for this to become a reality, evangelical churches will have to redistribute on a massive scale the resources that God has entrusted to the church in the United States. The effect of this shift in educational paradigms will be that Christian expansion will find a more hospitable environment due to the impact of the spread of Christian convictions.⁵³

⁵² Ibid., 57–58.

⁵³ Groothuis, “Book Review: The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism,” web page. Groothuis in this review quotes from a J. Gresham Machen sermon entitled “The Scientific Preparation of the Minister,” which preceded Henry but foreshadows the thrust of this chapter: False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or the world to be controlled by ideas which . . . prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. (Published in *The Princeton Theological Review*, XI, 1913).

In the next chapter entitled “The Evangelical Formula of Protest,” Henry asserts that due to the confusion of non-evangelical thought of their vision for an utopian world the time was ripe for evangelical re-assertion of its supernatural answer to the foundational problem of mankind. Henry asserted, “No framework is really relevant today unless it has an answer to the problem of sin and death in every area of human activity.”⁵⁴ The evangelical options supplies that answer. But given the fact that evangelicalism has lost its prophetic voice to deal with all manner of society ills, how can evangelicalism reassert itself? Henry lays out a straightforward program to regain the platform that evangelicalism had in the nineteenth century:

The path of the evangelical action seems to be an eagerness to condemn all social evils, no less vigorously than any other group, and a determination (1) when evangelicals are in the majority, to couple such condemnation with the redemptive Christian message as the only true solution; (2) when evangelicals are in the minority, to express their opposition to evils in a “formula of protest,” concurring heartily in the assault on social wrongs, but insisting upon regenerative context as alone able to secure a permanent rectification of such wrongs. Thus evangelicals will take their stand against evil, and against it in the name of Jesus Christ the deliverer, both within their own groups and within other groups. To do this, is to recapture the evangelical spirit.⁵⁵

Henry was forthright in the concluding sentence of this section in that after having laid out a “formula of protest” he concludes by saying “just how to express such a protest in a positive way rather than a negative way, beyond a minority committee report, remains to be studied.”⁵⁶

The final chapter, “The Dawn of a New Reformation,” Henry puts on par the need for a new reformation with the need for the first Reformation of the sixteenth

⁵⁴ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 77.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

century. It is Henry's view that the need for a vital evangelicalism was proportionate to the need found in the world. Not only must evangelicals address man's spiritual need but also they must address the politico-economic and sociological need as well. An evangelicalism that ignores the totality of man's conditions is an evangelicalism that has lost its savor and is in danger of being cast out. Henry writes that the implications are clear:

The battle against evil in all its forms must be pressed unsparingly; we must pursue the enemy, in politics, in economics, in science, in ethics—everywhere, in every field, we must pursue relentlessly. But when we have singled out the enemy—when we have distangled him from those whose company he has kept and whom he has misled—we must meet the foe head on—gift in Gospel armour. Other may resist him with inadequate weapons; they do not understand aright the nature of the foe, nor the requirements for victory. We join them in battle, seeking all the while more clearly to delineate the enemy, and more precisely to state the redemptive formula.⁵⁷

Henry calls for action. Unlike non-evangelical options, which declare success when a resolution is passed or when a book was written, action is what Henry is calling for from the evangelical camp. The primary means is the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Man's problems, whether individual or social, are best met by the redemptive message that was declared and embodied in Jesus Christ. The answer for today's problems are just like the answer that was provided by the apostolic church for its society. When the message of Jesus Christ is "out-lived" in the twentieth century just as it was in the first century, "the modern mind will stop casting about for other solutions."⁵⁸

The problems that are faced by contemporary society are much more complex than the problems faced in the first century. Henry's assessment is insightful:

⁵⁷ Ibid., 86.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 89.

The great contemporary problems are moral and spiritual. They demand more than a formula. The evangelicals have a conviction of absoluteness concerning their message, and not to proclaim it, in the assault on social evils, is sheer inconsistency. But the modern mood is far more likely to react first on the level of Christianity as a life view, than at the level of Christianity as a world view. Obviously, from the evangelical viewpoint, the two cannot be divorced. But from the non-evangelical viewpoint, a baptism of pentecostal fire resulting in a world missionary program and a divinely-empowered Christian community would turn the uneasy conscience of modern evangelicalism into a new reformation-this time with ecumenical significance.⁵⁹

3.6 The Uneasy Conscience Revisited

When Henry finished writing *The Uneasy Conscience* in 1947, he had big dreams for what evangelicalism could become. The time was ripe. The message was exactly what was needed for the social and individual needs that were being faced. The message and challenge were bold. But what was the effect? For a more detailed look at part of the answer to the question the following chapter will address, but in 1988 Henry would take a look back in a chapter entitled “The Uneasy Conscience Revisited” in his book *Twilight of a Great Civilization*. In *Twilight of a Great Civilization*, Henry warns of coming barbarian invasion, in rejecting fixed truth based upon the God of creation as revealed in the Bible, that threatens the very foundation of Western Civilization.⁶⁰

Modernity deliberately experiences this new [pagan] morality as an option superior to the inherited Judeo-Christian alternative. What underlies the atheistic commitment to novel sexual and marital and political patterns is a stultification of Biblical conscience, an irreligious redefinition of the good, a profane will set. . . . A half-generation ago the pagans were still largely threatening at the gates of Western culture; now the barbarians are plunging into the . . . mainstream. As they seek to reverse the inherited intellectual and

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Carl F. H. Henry, *The Twilight of a Great Civilization* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988), 15–16.

moral heritage of the Bible, the Christian world-life view and the secular world-life view engage as never before in rival conflict for the mind, the conscience, the will, the spirit, the very selfhood of contemporary man. Not since the apostolic age has the Christian vanguard faced so formidable a foe in its claims for the created rationality and morality of mankind.⁶¹

It was in this setting of warning that Henry revisit *The Uneasy Conscience*.

His concern at the time was still a prevailing concern, and in light of the events of the ensuing decades, one that was more pessimistic than when he first wrote in 1947.

Ray S. Anderson provides an outline of *The Uneasy Conscience*: “Here he called for a renewed concern for social issues, serious interactions with science and culture, and above all, a renewed commitment to biblical theism as the basis of an apologetic which focused on the theological essentials on which evangelicals could unite, not on secondary issues on which they tended to divide.”⁶²

The Uneasy Conscience was not an angry diatribe on fundamentalism. Rather it was a call to action and re-dedication. In Henry’s words it “was a conscience troubled by the failure of American Christianity to relate Biblical verities to crucial contemporary events.”⁶³ Even forty years after the call to action in *The Uneasy Conscience*, evangelicalism seemed not have heard the call to action, much less did it proactively seize the moment:

Unless evangelical Christians break out of their cultural isolation, unless we find new momentum in the modern world, we may just find ourselves so much on the margin of the mainstream movements of modern history that soon ours will be virtually a Dead Sea Caves community. Our supposed

⁶¹Ibid., 27.

⁶² Anderson, “Carl F. H. Henry” *The Modern Theologians*, 490.

⁶³ Henry, *The Twilight of a Great Civilization*, 164.

spiritual vitalities will be known only to ourselves, and publicly we will be laughed at as a quaint but obsolescent remnant from the past.⁶⁴

Here was the startling situation that “Biblical Christianity, which had been historically the taproot of legitimate public concerns, was now often seen to be undevoted to human well-being. Christianity ought to be in the front of social reform by challenging social injustice, political humanism, and evils such as racial intolerance and the liquor traffic. We must oppose all more evils, societal and personal, and point a better way.”⁶⁵ It had to be disappointing to Henry, for he had labored faithfully and vigorously calling evangelicals to social engagement. And yet for all his labor, by any standard, by the time he died, the evangelical engagement with societal ills was paltry by comparison to the cultural engagement of the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ Another aspect of this call that was misinterpreted by many in the fundamentalist camp was that Henry was in no way endorsing the modernist agenda. In point of fact, Henry was calling for a rejection of the obscurantist position of the fundamentalist and return in cultural engagement that is based on the revealed word of God:

I had no inclination whatever to commend the modernist agenda, for its soft and sentimental theology could not sustain its “millennial fanaticism.” Discarding historic doctrinal convictions and moving in the direction of liberalism would not revitalize evangelicalism. Fundamentalism had a realistic view of man and an awareness of the dread of the cancer of sin. Only

⁶⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 165.

⁶⁶ Carl F. H. Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); *Evangelicals At The Brink of Crisis* (Waco, TX: Word, 1967); *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971); *The Christian Vision: Man In Society* (Hillsdale, MI: Hillsdale College Press, 1984); *Christian Counter Moves In A Decadent Culture* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1986); *Toward A Recovery of Christian Belief* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1990).

supernatural regeneration, I insisted, was adequate to cope with human wickedness.⁶⁷

In 1957 Henry published *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology* which cited the weaknesses of fundamentalism that he had touched on earlier in *The Uneasy Conscience*. He commended the fundamentalist defense of supernaturalistic Christianity in contradistinction to liberalism and its naturalistic and evolutionary based development of Christianity. But he pointed out the “inherent perils of fundamentalism.”⁶⁸ Those inherent perils include (1) concentration on the fundamentals to detriment of doctrinal responsibilities of the Church; (2) fundamentalism tended to narrow the “whole counsel of God” and felt little obligation to exhibit Christianity as a comprehensive world and life view; (3) it lacked theological and historical perspective; (4) fundamentalism neglected the production of great exegetical and theological literature; (5) fundamentalism veered at times to anti-denominationalism rather than to interdenominationalism; (6) Fundamentalism neglected the doctrine of the Church, except in defining separation as a special area of concern; (7) Many fundamentalist rigidly identified Christianity with premillennial dispensationalism.⁶⁹

The aforementioned “perils” would account for serious foundational problems on their own; however, these were not according to Henry, the cause of the real bankruptcy of fundamentalism. He states, “The real bankruptcy of fundamentalism has resulted not so much from a reactionary spirit-lamentable as this was-as from a

⁶⁷ Henry, *Twilight of a Great Civilization*, 165.

⁶⁸ Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology*, 32.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 32–36.

harsh temperament, a spirit of lovelessness and strife contributed by much of its leadership in the recent past.”⁷⁰ In light of the theological shortcoming and the temperament problem that plagued fundamentalism, Henry would make the following conclusion:

It is this character of fundamentalism as a temperament, and not primarily as a theology, which has brought the movement into contemporary discredit. Doubtless it is unfair to impute this mood of rancor and negation to the entire fundamentalist movement. Historically, fundamentalism was a theological position; only gradually did the movement come to signify a mood and disposition as well. Its early leadership reflected balance and ballast, and less of bombast and battle. Only later did a divisive disposition show itself, plunging the evangelical movement into internal conflict.⁷¹

Further cultural irrelevance of fundamentalism was displayed in the dissonance of personal and social ethics. Fundamentalism emphasized a list of do’s and don’ts (e.g., don’t smoke, don’t drink, don’t gamble, don’t patronize Hollywood films, etc). Instead of promoting a negative ethical system, evangelicals were challenged to confront and engage the culture with the redemptive message of the Gospel. In doing so, evangelicals also needed to have an eschatological system that motivated its adherents to social engagement instead of cultural isolationism. Henry called for “a new evangelical world-mind whose political, economic, sociological, and educational affirmations reflect the Christian world-life view. . . . [This] plea for ‘divinely empowered Christian community’ would turn the ‘uneasy conscience of

⁷⁰ Ibid., 43.

⁷¹ Ibid., 44.

modern evangelicalism in a new reformation,' as I put it (p.88ff.), seemed almost prophetic."⁷² In a sense it was prophetic. The Graham crusades would accelerate the advance of evangelicalism into a world-wide movement. Thirty years later in the United States alone there would be fifty million Americans who would classify themselves as born again. While there were areas that were not addressed in full as a consequence of the call of *The Uneasy Conscience*, there were also unexpected surprises of evangelical impact and growth that could not have been forecasted in 1948.

However in a very honest appraisal, Henry inventories some of the more prominent features of *The Uneasy Conscience*:

I have never considered *Uneasy Conscience* to be a divinely dictated blueprint for evangelical utopia. But I remain troubled that even at a distance of forty years and more some of its challenges remain unheeded. One these is the plea for evangelical unity. Evangelical cooperation still lags both outside, inside and even between the divergent ecumenical and/or non-ecumenical alignments. . . . The fact is that in 1900 there were under two thousand denominations and only one multi-denominational council, namely the World Evangelical Alliance. Since the twentieth-century pursuit of an ecumenical world church is faced by forty-five world confessional councils, three international councils of churches, and more than twenty thousand denominations. . . . Another major call in *Uneasy Conscience* was for evangelical academic and literary engagement. . . . *Uneasy Conscience* pleaded for quality literature from elementary through university levels. The remarkable gains in this area during my generation have been gratifying. . . . Secular humanism nonetheless remains the masked metaphysics of Western university learning. Its disbelief in supernatural realities undermines the creedal affirmations that evangelical orthodoxy trumpets to the world. . . . High schools and elementary schools are increasingly being sucked into this secular tailwind. Text book controversies are often settled by an openness to all religious faiths and the delegation of theistic belief to myth. . . . classrooms today avoid descriptive references to religion and suspend moral standards. . . . Meanwhile, secular humanism is drawn into irresistible concessions to uncompromising naturalism. Evangelical theists on the right and thoroughgoing naturalists on the left both declare the social imperatives of humanism to be powerless since it denies the

⁷² Henry, *Twilight of a Great Civilization*, 166.

personality and truth and morality are ultimate and fixed. . . . The loss of divine-command morality has eroded the transcendent ethical foundations of behavior. As G.E.M. Anscombe warns, if obligation statements are to make, morality must be recoupled with a divine-law conception of ethics. . . . Evangelicals unfortunately never established a national Christian university in a great metropolitan center. That forfeited opportunity is even now only partially compensated for by countermoves on the edge of influential secular campuses. . . . In its largest dimensions, therefore, the conflict today between theistic and naturalistic learning is even more acute than forty years ago.⁷³

Henry notes a couple more items that evangelicals have not answered in the affirmative in response to *The Uneasy Conscience*. Even when *Time* magazine declared that 1976 was the “Year of the Evangelical,” there were already open fissures in the evangelical theological landscape. Instead of their being a unified evangelical theological front, the questions about evangelical identity had already begun to surface. Additionally, when entering the political arena, there was a noticeable lack of a comprehensive political philosophy which degenerated into confrontational and single-issue politics. Evangelicalism was also faced with a noticeable lack of personal piety, an increasing materialistic bent, and an alarming lack of prayerlessness. The culture in which evangelicalism now thrives is increasingly being penetrated by alien religious influences. The West once designated these influences as pagan but now openly embraces them in the name of tolerance. Evangelicalism also faces the devaluing of human life and the increasing encroachment on religious freedoms.⁷⁴ The irony of the current situation is not lost on Henry. It was to be in the twentieth century that evangelicals would win the world for Christ in a single generation. And yet, it is the legacy of this current generation of evangelicals that religious atheism has “swept millions into its ranks and political

⁷³ Ibid., 168–71.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 171–76.

atheism now rules half the world's population and much of its landmass."⁷⁵ Henry concludes his revisit to *The Uneasy Conscience* in another call to evangelical action:

If evangelicals believe that the enduring corrective of modernity's badly-skewed ethical and epistemic compass is the self-disclosed God and His moral agenda, they had better say so and live so in this crucial turning-time in America. Otherwise they may soon find themselves aliens once in a once promised land. We may now live in the half-generation before hell breaks loose and, if its fury is contained, we will be remembered, if we are remembered at all, as those who used their hand and hearts and minds and very bodies to plug the dikes against the impending doom.⁷⁶

3.7 The Failure of Fundamentalism—Revisited

Why had American Christianity failed to relate biblical verities to crucial contemporary events? What were the events and positions that had resulted in failure of which Henry wrote. It is to these events that a brief survey is offered.

As is the case in today's world, labels can be confusing. One has to be careful and clearly articulate what one means by the use of the term. Even then there are those that would claim that words are so culturally laden and captivated by time that meaning is impossible, unless of course one happens to be reading them (e.g., Derrida, et al.). That being the case, fundamentalism has been and continues to be defined in a number of ways.

3.7.1 Fundamentalist Foundations

The first person to coin the term was Curtis Lee Laws. He was the editor of *The Watchman Examiner*, a Northern Baptist publication, who in 1920 wrote an editorial in which he coined the term. There had already been a controversy raging in

⁷⁵ Ibid., 176.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 181–82.

the Northern Baptist Convention and the Northern Presbyterian church. *The Fundamentals* had been circulated among millions of clergy and academics alike (more will be said of this work later). In a pre-convention conference entitled, “Fundamentals of Our Baptist Faith,” the conferees assembled “to restate, reaffirm, and re-emphaize the fundamentals of our New Testament faith.” At this conference sermons addressed the issues of the day. It would be William Bell Riley who would set the tone in a blistering sermon entitled “The Menace of Modernism,” where he defined three cherished beliefs that were under attack: an inspired Bible, the deity of Jesus, and the fact of regeneration.⁷⁷ This conference and later in a post-convention editorial Curtis Lee Laws wrote the following statement that forever labeled a certain part of the conservative Protestant church in the United States:

We here and now move that a new word be adopted to decribe the men among us who insist that the landmarks shall not be removed. “Conservatives” is too closely allied with reactionary forces in all walks of life. “Premillennialists” is to closely allied with a single doctrine and not sufficiently inclusive. “Landmarkers” has a historical disadvantage and connotes a particular group of radical conservatives. We suggests that those who still cling to the great fundamentals and who mean to do battle royal for the fundamentals shall be called “Fundamenatlists. By that name the editor of the *Watchman-Examiner* is willing to be called. It will be understood therefore when he uses the word it will be in compliment and not in disparagement.”⁷⁸

These two events now brought to a head a series of events that would now break out into open conflict the liberals and the “fundamentalists.” It is a little more than ironic that offering the term fundamentalists as a term that was free of baggage how quickly fundamentalism became identified with reactionary forces, a single

⁷⁷ C. Allyn Russell, “The Northern (American) Baptist Experience with Fundamentalist,” *Review and Expositor*, 79, no.1 (Winter 1982): 47.

⁷⁸ John Fea, “Understanding the Changing Facade of Twentieth-Century American Protestant fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Definition,” *Trinity Journal* 15, no. 2 (Fall 1994):187.

doctrine that was not sufficiently inclusive and a radical group. If Laws intended to find a bridge term it turned out to be a short lived one, as in just five years in the aftermath of the *Scopes Trial*, fundamentalism (according to popular understanding) was totally discredited. McCune makes the argument that it is only recently that defining fundamentalism has become difficult. He writes that “up until the 1970s fundamentalism was self-assured about its identity and direction. Historical fundamentalists rarely, if ever, quibbled over the boundary markers of their cause. . . . The most clearly observable distinctives of the movement are militancy and separation.”⁷⁹ Additionally fundamentalists themselves argue that they have remained true to the faith of historic Christianity. Beale writes that:

Both friends and foes have regarded Fundamentalism as the lenthened shadow of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and the apostles, of Augustine and Calvin, of the English Separatists and Puritans, of Wesley and Whitefield, of the German Pietists and the English Brethern, of London’s Spurgeon and Princeton’s Warfield-and of all who continue loyal to its principles and genius.⁸⁰

Beale along with McCune also marshal noted liberal Kirsopp Lake in supporting their contention that fundamentalism is nothing more than historic Christianity:

Kirsopp Lake, a liberal, wrote with historical honesty in 1925 when he said, “It is a mistake, often made by educated persons who happen to have but little knowledge of historical theology, to suppose that Fundamentalism is a new and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the kind: it is the . . . survival of a theology which was once universally held by all Christians. . . . The Fundamentalist may be wrong: I think that he is. But it is we who have departed from the tradition, not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who tries to argue with a Fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and the *coprus theologicum* of the Church is on the Fundamentalist side” (*The*

⁷⁹ Rolland D. McCune, “The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal 1* (Spring 1996): 10.

⁸⁰ David O. Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1986), 3.

Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1925], pp. 61–62).⁸¹

The attention that fundamentalism has received over the years continues to increase. The examinations have taken different methodological approaches in seeking to uncover the foundations of fundamentalism. Historians have looked at fundamentalism from social, cultural and intellectual aspects.⁸²

3.7.2 Competing Definitions of Fundamentalism

Stewart Cole wrote the first serious history of fundamentalism in 1931. His book was entitled *The History of Fundamentalism*. The next major work would not come until 1954, *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931* written by Norman Furniss. These two early works took the approach that Fundamentalism was mainly a reactionary movement. Cole wrote on the heels of the 1920, a very turbulent time in the history of the United States, and established what would be a common blueprint for researchers that followed him. Cole and Furniss examined fundamentalism as a reaction to modernity. Neither author was sympathetic to fundamentalism and consequently leaned toward caricature.⁸³ The traditional view of fundamentalism follows Cole and Furniss in describing it as “an obscurantist and bellicose reaction to

⁸¹ McCune, “The Self Identity of Fundamentalism,” 12. Cf. Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, 3–4.

⁸² John Fea, “Fundamentalism, Neo-Evangelicalism, and the American Dispensationalist Establishment in the 1950’s,” *Michigan Theological Journal*, 4, no.2 (Fall 1993): 115. Fea cites the following works as evidence of the rising interest in fundamentalism: These studies include Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*; Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Theological Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*; Joel Carpenter, “Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929–1942,” *Church History* 49 (March 1980): 62–76; and Carpenter, “The Fundamentalist Leaven and the Rise of an Evangelical United Front,” in *The Evangelical Tradition in America*, ed. Leonard I. Sweet (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984).

⁸³ Bill J. Leonard, “The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism,” *Review and Expositor* 79, no.1 (Winter 1982): 5.

modernity.”⁸⁴ Leonard observes that neither Coler nor Furniss did much to uncover the concrete evidence of the roots of the fundamentalist movement in American religious history.⁸⁵

Ernest Sandeen in his *Roots of Fundamentalism* set a new standard in researching fundamentalism according to Leonard. Sandeen uncovered what could be described as the misinterpretation of the fundamentalists dogma made by Cole and Furniss. Sandeen argued that millenariansim/dispensationalism and Princeton Theology gave shape to fundamentalism in the early twentieth century.⁸⁶ Sandeen’s position was that the issue of inerrancy served to unite Princeton theologians and dispensational premillennialists, thereby providing a coalition for what became American fundamentalism.⁸⁷ Leonard observes that Sandeen “suggests that Fundamentalism was comprised of an alliance of between two newly-formulated nineteenth century theologies, dispensationalism and the Princeton Theology which, though not wholly compatible, managed to maintain a united front against Modernism until about 1918.”⁸⁸

Sandeen’s thesis generated more than a little interest and LeRoy Moore was one of the first to answer the “Sandeen thesis.” LeRoy Moore differed with Sandeen

⁸⁴ McCune, “The Self Identity of Fundamenatlism,” 11. McCune believes that the approach of Cole and Furniss has been disproved (cf. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism*; and Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy*).

⁸⁵ Leonard, “The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism,” 6.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 6. Both these aspects of fundamentalism will receive greater treatment later in this chapter.

⁸⁷ Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 130–31.

⁸⁸ Leonard, “The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism,” 8. LeRoy Moore, “Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen,” 196.

in his estimation of the roots of Fundamentalism. Moore wrote that Sandeen overlooked “a complex range of historical issues. He continued by saying, “If Cole and Furniss failed to inform us of the true nature of fundamentalism because they discarded background, Sandeen is liable to failure for neglecting foreground. His linear study requires to be reinforced by horizontal studies.”⁸⁹ Moore focused on “doctrinaire fundamentalism,” Sandeen’s position and fundamentalism as a party movement-represented by an interdominational coalition aimed at stopping the rise of liberalism.⁹⁰

C. Allyn Russell answers the “Sandeen thesis” in his *Voices of American Fundamentalism*. He highlights the influence of charismatic personalities that led to the spread of the movement. Given the strength of the personalities that Russell chronicles, early descriptions of theological unity may have been overstated. Russell tempers Sandeen’s position in that he argued for a greater theological unity than may have been the case due to dispensationalism and Princeton theology.⁹¹

While not directly focusing on fundamentalists, Richard Quebedeaux in *The Young Evangelicals*, describes four types of fundamentalists: (1) Separatist Fundamentalists; (2) Open Fundamentalists; (3) Establishment Evangelicalism; (4) The New Evangelicals.⁹² Quebedeaux charts the gradual break with fundamentalism in this section, even though initially the Establishment Evangelicals (Ockenga, Carl

⁸⁹ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 8–9. C. Allyn Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism*.

⁹² Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1974), 19–41.

Henry, et al.) had no intention of leaving fundamentalism but rather reforming it. It has already been discussed, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, and as Mark Noll writes Harold Ockenga and others like him were not creating what would become known as evangelicalism from scratch. They believed they were getting orthodox Protestantism back on the right track. “Drawing on their nineteenth century evangelical heritage they sought to resurrect its temperament and vision.”⁹³

Following Moore, George Marsden responds to Sandeen. His initial response prompted further discussion between Marsden and Sandeen.⁹⁴ Marsden argued that Sandeen subordinated fundamentalism to millenarianism. Marsden’s point was that there was more to the story than just millenarianism as the “only root” which led to fundamentalism. Marsden defined fundamentalism as a multifaceted movement which at its most basic level was “organized opposition to modernism.”⁹⁵ Marsden has contributed several major works in analyzing fundamentalism.⁹⁶ In *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, Marsden expounds on his thesis that fundamentalism was a reaction and shaped by various forces in the American experience. Marsden goes beyond Sandeen in exploring the wider dimensions of fundamentalism both before and after the controversy of the 1920s. He also moves beyond Russell in looking at a

⁹³ Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 2.

⁹⁴ George Marsden, "Defining Fundamentalism," *Christian Scholar's Review* I (Winter, 1971): 142–43. Also see Ernest R. Sandeen, "Defining Fundamentalism: A Reply to Professor Marsden," *Christian Scholar's Review* I (Spring, 1971): 227–33.

⁹⁵ Leonard, "The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism," 9.

⁹⁶ George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) and the second edition came out in 2006. See also Marsden’s, *Reforming Fundamentalism and Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*.

broader collection of fundamentalist than just the “empire-builders” of Russell’s analysis.⁹⁷

Marsden describes fundamentalism as a “primarily a religious movement,”⁹⁸ when he states, “Fundamentalists were evangelical Christians, close to the traditions of the dominant American revivalist establishment of the nineteenth century, who in the twentieth century militantly opposed both modernism in theology and the cultural changes that modernism endorsed.”⁹⁹ Leonard provides a rather insightful analysis of Marsden’s thesis:

First, Marsden believes that revivalism, its evangelical dynamic, its sense of urgency, and its prominence in American Protestantism, gave Fundamentalism breath. The campaigns of the revivalists for souls, morality, and the preservation of American values provided a framework for the fundamentalist crusade against a modernism which would undermine that pious heritage. This crusade, personified early on in the great revivalist, D. L. Moody, a premillennialist and eloquent proponent of biblical infallibility, was taken up by a later generation less fearful of theological controversy than the Chicago evangelist. A post-Moody generation of revivalists, R. A. Torrey and others, united Moody’s themes with a system for confronting controversy. Second, premillennialism was linked with the system of dispensationalism through the work of John Nelson Darby and C. I. Scofield. The need for a scientific, intellectual formula was found in what Marsden calls the “Baconian Idealism” of Scottish Common Sense Realism. This was a method of rational analysis which began with the teachings of scripture and then sought to discover “some general law upon which these facts can be arranged.” An inerrant Bible provided the facts, which, like some sacred puzzle, needed only to be classified.

Third, Marsden notes that certain personal, spiritual influences on Fundamentalism came from the holiness movement of nineteenth century America and Britain. The Keswick meetings, so much a part of the British holiness scene, were particularly influential on dispensationalists moving toward Fundamentalism. In an insightful analysis he concludes that Keswick promoted a personal religious experience which helped validate the more

⁹⁷ Leonard, “The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism,” 9-10.

⁹⁸ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 3.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

objective, rational elements of evangelical faith. It also provided the promise of victory for individual lives in a world on the way to ruin and the millennium.

Fourth, the rise of modernism created a climate which united these forces in defense, not only of biblical faith, but of moral life and traditional Christian (and American) values. After tracing the coalescence of these forces Marsden tells the story of Fundamentalism as it appeared in the 1920s in conflict with religious modernism, political liberalism, and what today would no doubt be labelled “secular humanism.” He concludes with four interpretations for relating Fundamentalism to American culture. Was it a social, political, intellectual, or peculiarly American phenomenon, he asks. Marsden’s work is invaluable in establishing the broad heritage of Fundamentalism beyond Sandeen’s earlier focus.¹⁰⁰

Other historians of note including Marsden are Joel Carpenter, Nathan Hatch, Mark Noll, Harry Stout, and Grant Wacker. In an article by Leonard Sweet, these historians are described as setting the agenda for the interpretation of evangelicalism. The approach they are taking, according to Sweet, is that of observer/participant. Their method of doing history is “nonphilosophical, cultural historicism, that is, events as well as beliefs are perceived as socially, culturally, and philosophically conditioned. A more subtle assumption is that a proper description of a malady suggests its remedy.”¹⁰¹

James Barr a vocal critic of fundamentalism describes it as movement which places emphasis on biblical inerrancy, is hostile to toward modern methods of biblical and theological interpretation and concerned that those who reject fundamentalist doctrines are not “true Christians.”¹⁰² Harriet Harris, a student of Barr’s, in

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 10. James Barr provides a critique of fundamentalism in two of his books *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978); and *Beyond Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).

¹⁰¹ John D. Hannah, “Article Review: “Wise as Serpents, Innocents as Doves: The New Evangelical Historiography,” Leonard I. Sweet, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 56 (Fall 1988): 397–416,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 146, no. 584 (October 1989): 453–454.

¹⁰² Barr, *Fundamentalism*, 1.

Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism surveys the field and broadly follows Barr's view of fundamentalism. The influence that Harris cites is most prominent in fundamentalism is ideological and sociological. She takes a view opposite Marsden, Noll and Carpenter and rejects militancy, as the heart of fundamentalism and identifies its essence "as a particular, unnecessarily constraining and alien view of Scripture. . . . This realistic, rationalistic hermeneutic has four main components: (1) 'a commitment to *a priori* reasoning that Scripture cannot contain any error because it is inspired by God,' (2) 'an almost contrary commitment to demonstrating empirically that Scripture is indeed inspired because it contains no error,' (3) 'a feeling that in moving away from either is making concessions to modern scholarship,' (4) 'and a hesitancy to make such concessions lest they detract from the authority of the Bible and so threaten the very foundation of the Christian faith.'"¹⁰³

Donald Dayton provides an analysis that portrays fundamentalism/evangelicalism (before 1947) as a departure from the nineteenth century evangelicalism. Dayton's thesis in *Discovering An Evangelical Heritage* is that sociological, theological and historical currents preceding and following the controversy produced a movement that was in many ways the polar opposite of evangelicals of a previous generation. He writes, "What had begun as a Christian egalitarianism was transformed into a type of Christian elitism. Revivalistic currents

¹⁰³ Bernie A. Van De Walle, "Book Review: Fundamentalism and Evangelicals," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 2 (June 2001): 358.

that had once been bent to the liberation of the slave now allied themselves with wealth and power against the civil rights movement.”¹⁰⁴

Henry, in an interview that was reported in *Coversations With Carl Henry*, made this comment with respect to Dayton, et al. and the historiographical research into fundamentalism:

It has been argued by Dayton and others, that there is a discontinuity between the evangelicalism of the nineteenth century and the dominnat evangelicalism of the twentieth century. The divisons in the present situation go right back to those old days in the last century where the Princeton school of theology took clear stands against the abolitionist activities of the revivalist evangelicals. On questions of race, women, and economics, the Princeton school was on the side of the status quo, so much so that Hodge’s writings were used by pro-slavery apologists in the South to support slavery. Evangelicalism, as Dayton points out, is now dominated by those who root themselves in the line of that runs through the Princeton school.¹⁰⁵

Joel Carpenter describes fundamentalism in this way:

. . . evangelicalism was not a monolithic fundamentalism but rather a broad mosaic comprised of clusters of denominations and institutions with different ethnic and doctrinal heritages. One of this mosaic's most visible segments is rightly called fundamentalism, a movement of conservative, millenarian evangelicals who came mostly from Presbyterian, Baptist and independent denominations, such as the Evangelical Free Church. Other segments include the Holiness Wesleyans, such as the Church of the Nazarene; the pentecostals, including the Assemblies of God; the immigrant confessional churches, such as the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod and the Christian Reformed Church; southern-based conservatives, notably the Southern Baptists and the Churches of Christ; peace churches of Anabaptist, Quaker or pietist backgrounds; and black evangelicals of Methodist, Baptist, Holiness and pentecostal denominations. As the twentieth century progressed, the evangelicals cut a progressively wider swath through the ranks of the American churches. By 1960 they comprised an estimated half of the nation's sixty million Protestants. When the term fundamentalist is used to designate any or all of these churches, it becomes an ambiguous and derogatory term. But by precise

¹⁰⁴ Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering An Evangelical Heritage* (Peabody, MA : Hendrickson, 1976), 134.

¹⁰⁵ Henry, *Conversations with Carl Henry*, 9. Henry alludes to Dayton’s *Discovering An Evangelical Heritage* (1976).

and historical definition, fundamentalism is a distinct religious movement which arose in the early twentieth century to defend traditional evangelical orthodoxy and to extend its evangelistic thrust. The movement combined a biblicist, generally Calvinist orthodoxy, an evangelistic spirit, an emphasis on the higher Christian (Holy Spirit directed) life and a millenarian eschatology.¹⁰⁶

John Fea in analyzing the approach to historical inquiry into fundamentalism describes four phases of fundamentalism. In this approach Fea incorporates earlier approaches by other historians when studying fundamentalism. The first phase is Irenic Fundamentalism (1893-1919); Phase Two: Miltant Fundamentalism (1919-1940); Phase Three: Divisive Fundamentalism (1941-1960); Phase Four: Separatist Fundamentalism (1960-Present).¹⁰⁷ Fundamentalism had generally been described as a reaction to the social changes that confronted them. The rise of modernism, Darwinism, German biblical higher criticism, and the Social Gospel forced conservative Protestants into a reactionary position.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism 1929–1912," 63–64. Carpenter is aware of the problems of definition and cites other works that give greater attention to the problem of definition: "The problem of defining fundamentalism is discussed in Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism", 66–83; Moore, "Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen," 195–202; Marsden, "Defining Fundamentalism." 141-151; Sandeen, "Defining Fundamentalism: A Reply to Professor Marsden," 227–33; Sandeen, "The Fundamentals: The Last Flowering of the Millenarian-Conservative Alliance," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 47 (March 1969):55–73, 64.

¹⁰⁷ John Fea, "Understanding the Changing Facade of Twentieth-Century American Protestant Fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Definition," 184–94.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 184. In a footnote Fea lists the following authors to substantiate his contention: "See W. R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Marsden, *Fundamentalism*; Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*; M. Szasz, *The Divided Mind of American Protestantism, 1880–1930* (Montgomery: University of Alabama Press, 1982)."

Martin Marty looks at fundamentalism as a social phenomenon.¹⁰⁹ Nancy Ammerman continues that particular approach to the study of fundamentalism when she writes, “. . . fundamentalisms are self-proclaimed restorationist movements in conscious, organized opposition to a previously dominant traditional orthodoxy.”¹¹⁰

Two scholars who are themselves fundamentalist deserve mention as this examination of historiography comes to a close. David Beale locates the beginnings of fundamentalism in the great urban revivals in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century.¹¹¹ George W. Dollar, a professor at Bob Jones University, has written extensively on fundamentalism. In his *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, Dollar approaches the study of fundamentalism by providing a catalog of facts (dates, places and events) and the strength of his approach is “supplying dozens of thumbnail sketches of the past great leaders, preachers in particular, and most helpful of all, tracing into the present day of the most important of the great movements and churches of the 20s and 30s.”¹¹²

3.7.3 Fundamentalism Reacts

The study up to this point has given a description of the various approaches to the study of fundamentalism, now it turns to a look at its derivation. It can be fairly stated that fundamentalism was a reaction against 1) the doctrine of divine

¹⁰⁹ Martin Marty, “Fundamentalism as a Social Phenomenon,” *Review and Expositor* 79, no.1 (Winter 1992): 19-29.

¹¹⁰ Nancy T. Ammerman, “North American Protestant Fundamentalism,” 1–65.

¹¹¹ Beale, *The Pursuit of Purity*, chapter 2.

¹¹² D. Clair Davis, “Review of George W. Dollar: *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1973),” *Westminster Theological Journal* 36, no.3 (Spring 1974): 397.

immanence; 2) evolutionary theory (Darwinism); and 3) Higher Criticism. Henry described this theology in his *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*:

The theology which captured the seminaries and universities, which seized the initiative in the publication of religious literature and the presentation of its viewpoint in the scholarly societies and journals, which came increasingly to control the machinery of the large denominations, and which was projected by many of the most active enthusiasts for world church unity, was rooted in the philosophies both of immanence and evolutionism, and rejected the objective authority of the Scriptures, the necessity of and possibility of miraculous revelation, and with these the biblical pattern of sin and redemption. Walter Marshall is surely right when singles out the period from 1849 to 1919 as “the great age of liberalism.”¹¹³

Thorne writes, “Liberalism is a term used to describe a religious tradition in America distinguished by its opposition to regnant orthodoxies in the name of intellectual integrity.”¹¹⁴ Thorne gives a brief synopsis of the major issues at play:

Originating with the critical rationalism of the Boston Unitarians and influenced by the American transcendentalists, liberalism became a powerful force in the Evangelical denominations toward the end of the nineteenth century, through the seminal work of men like Newman Smyth (1902), William Newton Clark (1898), Henry Churchill King (1901), and William Adams Brown (1902, 1906). Proponents of a new reconstructed, or progressive theology, these self-described “Modernists” were convinced that the old orthodoxies needed to be modified to incorporate modern insights. Generally speaking, they imbibed the optimistic views of evolutionary progress current within post-Darwinian culture and applied them to theology. God was viewed as immanent, and his activities were often identified with the progress of nature and culture. Protestant Orthodoxy’s doctrine of revelation came under severe criticism, and Scripture was often interpreted as an historically conditioned report of religious experience.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Carl F. H. Henry, *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology* (Boston, W.A. Wilde Company, 1950), 30-31.

¹¹⁴ Phillip R. Thorne, *Evangelicalism and Karl Barth* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1995), 6.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. cf. Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology 1805-1900*; Dorrien’s, *The Making of American Liberal Theology 1900–1950*; Steven Mark Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Bruce Kuklich, *Churchmen and Philosophers from Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press,

Henry cites evidence of the inroads of liberalism as early as an address by Augustus H. Strong in 1899 entitled “Fifty Years of Theology” as a prime example of the new theology:

Strong hailed as a remarkable achievement of contemporary theologians “the rediscovery of the immanent God,” by which he meant an immanence so much more concentrated than that of traditional Biblical theism that he now referred to the latter as ‘deism.’ The theological gains from 1850-1900, Strong held were (1) heightened divine immanence, which annulled the distinction between nature and the supernatural, (2) the evolutionary development of God’s method and (3) the higher critical view of the Scriptures.¹¹⁶

In spite of the growing excitement and confidence that the new theology (Liberalism) could answer modern man’s questions about his environment while keeping intact traditional orthodox doctrines, there were signs of caution. J. Vyrnwy Morgan was the editor of *Theology at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*. In that volume he wrote that, “The entire edifice of traditional religious conception has undergone a most remarkable transformation.”¹¹⁷ As Morgan saw it, the belief in the Immanent Divine Will, coupled with the belief in the hypothesis of evolution, had so drastically altered the traditional understanding of man’s origin, destiny and God’s method in creation and redemption, that it was barely recognizable in relation to its

1984); Martin Marty, *The Modern Schism: The Three Paths to the Secular* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 23. As Henry notes Strong still held onto the belief in the ontological Trinity and a concept of the atonement that even with modifications still posited substitutionary expiation and eternal punishment of the lost. Henry chronicled the change in Strong’s thought, principally the accommodation in Strong’s theology of the liberal influence, in his Ph.D. dissertation *The Influence of Personalistic Idealism on the Theology of Augustus Hopkins Strong*. Strong believed that in adopting the liberal paradigm that he found a workable solution to the problem of reconciling the Bible to science.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 24.

orthodox antecedent.¹¹⁸ The other leg of the stool of liberalism was Higher Criticism. The effect this approach had toward Scripture emphasized the human element over against the Divine aspect of inspiration. Consequently, there was no one creed that was authoritative. God was viewed as indwelling all human life and society.

By 1900 liberalism was a single movement that had manifested in many different expressions. Henry wrote:

In Germany, on the British Isles, in the United States, and elsewhere as well, it busied itself along identical lines; evangelical theology was proclaimed to be obscurantist and outmoded; liberalism had the scholarship and genius to restate Christianity definitively in modern categories. Biblical theology was being “remade” in terms of the modern mind. The determinative principles, inherited from the nineteenth century, were those of immanent and evolutionary philosophy, with their rejection of special revelation, miracle, the unique deity of Christ, and a divinely ordered redemption, or in a summary word, the trustworthiness of the Bible.¹¹⁹

This is where Henry’s keen insight developed under the tutelage of Gordon Clark begins to surface. Henry is able to cogently and perceptively dissect where the “modern mind” left its sure moorings based on the revelation of God, the Holy Scriptures, and charted for itself an uncertain course based on man’s empiricism most clearly manifested in the Enlightenment.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Henry quotes Morgan in n. 10, “What exact place this doctrine is likely to occupy in the religious thought of the twentieth century, it would be difficult to forecast, both on account of the different views which at present exist concerning it, and the fact that the doctrine is, as yet, in its infancy. This much, however, can be safely said: It has come to be the central doctrine around which all thought, religious and secular, is at present revolving.”

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 32–33.

¹²⁰ See Ronald H. Nash, *The Word of God and The Mind of Man* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1982) for a concise description of the philosophical developments that impacted the theology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

3.7.4 Shifting Paradigms

In chapter 5 the epistemological challenge that Henry offers to the “modern mind” will be examined more thoroughly. At this juncture, a brief excursus into the beginnings of liberalism will provide a basis for a more detailed understanding of the fundamentalists reaction that resulted in the publication of *The Fundamentals* and the rise of the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy. For this brief excursion into the foundations of liberalism a return in part to the three of Henry’s foundational books is necessary. Those foundational books are *Remaking the Modern Mind*, *The Protestant Dilemma*, and *The Drift of Western Thought*. *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* was a call to action, for a re-engagement with the culture following the example of the eighteenth and nineteenth century evangelicals—evangelicals like Whitfield, Wesley, Edwards, Wilberforce, Chalmers, Finney, Moody and Spurgeon who engaged their culture and did not separate from it.¹²¹ The three early theological works of Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind*, *The Protestant Dilemma*, and *The Drift of Western Thought* set the theological and philosophical basis for a re-engagement with the culture. Henry in these three works not only identifies the breakdown (his view) in man’s philosophical thinking but also provides a corrective that will find fuller expression in *God, Revelation and Authority* (to be examined in chapter 5).

The “durable divides” of mankind are ideological and not geographical. The divides can be seen in the division of mankind’s history: ancient, medieval, and modern. Henry writes, “Each epoch is distinguished from the others by a diverse way

¹²¹ See Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*; Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*; Wolfe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism*.

of discerning facts and of accessing their importance.”¹²² Henry noted that that mid-twentieth century was a time of confusion that may have been unparalleled in the history of mankind as it related to contrast of ideologies and their offerings for answering the major questions of life—the meaning of life and man’s destiny. Henry offers a solution that was to be found in a satisfying rationale. However in doing so, Henry notes that there “are *kinds of rationale* each based in different ways on the assumption that reality is somehow intelligible and interpretable in terms of mind” that distinguish the ancient, medieval and modern mind.¹²³

The ancient mind was idealistic. Logical priority was given to the supernatural realm. Man was qualitatively superior to the animals because of his rational link to the supernatural. Moral distinctions are objective and eternal, not merely relative and arbitrary.¹²⁴

The medieval mind was shaped by the appearance of the founder of Christianity. The line of demarcation that results in the tripartite division of history is seen as a consequence of the marked difference or contrast between the ancient and modern world views. The medieval mind refuses any self-reduction to the ancient or modern minds. The medieval mind embraced Hebrew-Christian to special revelation.

The view expressed that

one eternal and sovereign God created the world and all things by divine fiat; that man was created in the divine image, and hence possessed a distinctive dignity, being made for personal fellowship with Deity; that man by voluntary revolt, fell from original righteousness into a state of moral and spiritual

¹²² Henry, *The Drift of Western Thought*, 11.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

revolt; that salvation is impossible of attainment by human effort but is a provision of the God of holy love, who through His prophets promised a vicarious mediation from the divine side; that the provision of salvation is to be realized within history itself by the God who in a special way reveals Himself to His chosen people—what are these but affirmations that stand at the core of the Old Testament, no less than of Biblical Christianity?¹²⁵

The Hebrew-Christian view formally aligned itself with Greek idealism as over against naturalism, but at the same time it opposed the classic emphasis on rational competence in the “realm of metaphysics, of the natural man in his state; to the dualistic reduction of evil from a moral to a metaphysical problem; the failure to identify the moral realm with the will of God; to the emptying of history or redemptive significance. Christianity was opposed to naturalism as it embraced the revelational view of men and things which also countered idealism.”¹²⁶ The essence of the Christian view involved elements from the biblical outlook which emphasized its uniqueness as opposed to the naturalistic position.

The medieval genius worked itself out in a constructive spirit which, in contrast with modern cultural disunity, creates constantly in subsequent centuries a longing for its reincarnation, even if in a purified form freed of the perversions of Roman ecclesiasticism. That synthesis was, in intent, theological rather than philosophical; it centered in the conviction that the self-revealing God had rescued mankind from both hell and pagan savagery. The medieval spirit was dominated throughout, as expressed by one scholar, whose sympathies were not with the past, by the conception of a supreme harmony subordinating the natural to the supernatural order, a harmony in which all the activities of the soul, religion, philosophy, art, science, and conduct were united in the realization of the ideal of the City of God. The Christian thus had, in the last analysis, little need for a philosophy—the questions which really interested him and the problems which were of supreme importance for his destiny were all answered, and his needs all satisfied, by his theology and its concrete manifestation in his personal religious life. Nothing can be clearer than the medieval mind related to Christ, at least in intention, not only theology and worship, philosophy, government,

¹²⁵ Ibid., 25–26.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 27–28.

art music and literature. “It did so not in the name of speculation, but in the name of revelation; not in terms of human initiative, but of divine disclosure; not in the spirit of groping for God’s forgiveness, but rather of expressing its gratitude for the divinely provided gift of salvation, and of an awaiting of the complete vindication of Gods’s promises.”¹²⁷

In transitioning to the modern mind, the medieval mind unwittingly paved the way. The modern mind denied the supernatural whether on speculative or revelational grounds. Henry notes that it was the great Thomastic synthesis of the thirteenth century that provided the bridge over which modernism would obscure the inner genius of Christianity—the revelational view of the world. The Reformation was in part a reaction to this unsatisfactory way of presenting Christianity to the modern world to the Thomastic synthesis of reason and faith.¹²⁸

Henry makes the note that phrases like “the modern culture” and the “scientific era” stand for “an inner spirit which has forced Christianity to fight for its very life.”¹²⁹ This inner spirit arose as a result of emphases which appeared sporadically in the ancient world became a foundation upon which modern thinkers attempted to erect culture. The turn to naturalism as this foundation stands in stark contrast with the ancient and medieval views.¹³⁰

Henry goes on to say, “The central postulate of the modern mind, in its final expression, has been the ultimacy of nature.”¹³¹ In declaring this central postulate, the modern mind stands against the ancient and medieval minds. The modern mind

¹²⁷ Ibid., 33–34.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 35.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 35–36.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 37–38.

¹³¹ Ibid., 41.

denies the reality of the supernatural and with respect to the biblical view, it denies special revelation.¹³²

In its final mood, the modern mind, sometime implicitly, sometime explicitly, declared against the reality of the supernatural. That the world of nature is the prime reality, that the solution of all crucial problems will come by making the space-time universe, inclusive of man, the legitimate center of speculative interest, that it is the natural order above all with which a modern man must be familiar—what are these but characteristically modern notions, which came by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to serve as the unexpressed ultimates presupposed in the educative centers of western culture . . .¹³³

Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, launched the new era “with a species of theism that was far removed from biblical Christianity. While in Henry’s view the rupture with biblical Christianity that began with medieval scholasticism, modern philosophy retained notions of biblical theism, its speculative nature would choose a course that move further and further away from biblical elements.¹³⁴ This rejection of supernaturalism would serve as the defining characteristic of the modern mind. In making this denial of the supernatural its cardinal tenet, the modern mind reached back to the suppressed naturalism of the Greco-Roman. In response and in distinction from biblical theism, idealism was presented as a viable alternative:

No scholarly survey of the modern period can afford to slight the distinction between an idealism unable to sustain itself, and a direct attack upon the priority of the mind; the former may descend finally to naturalism, but that surely is not its original intention. And modern philosophy, from its beginnings in Descartes, can hardly be regarded as intentional naturalism. Even if the early rationalistic systems passed from their source in Cartesian

¹³² Ibid. Henry distinguishes between the biblical view and the medieval view at this point with respect to special revelation. Henry interprets the Thomistic synthesis of the Aristotelian cosmology as an undermining of special revelation. Due to this synthesis the existence of God was arrived at philosophically in such a way as to conceal entirely the point of special revelation. This particular view will be examined further in chapter 5.

¹³³ Ibid., 42.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 45–46.

theism through Spinozistic pantheism, to Leibnizian monadism, and even if Lockean empiricism passed by the way of Berkleyan idealism to Humean agnosticism, the Kantian synthesis retained a salute —however grounded—to supernaturalism, and the philosophies of Fichte and Hegel and their idealistic successors have for two centuries stood out as the avowed enemy of naturalism. This must at least be said about much about the intention of the modern idealisms.¹³⁵

While idealism may have been a rival of naturalism even as biblical theism is, idealism was no ally of supernaturalism. Naturalism attacked Christianity from the side of naturalistic monism, idealism attacked from the side of spiritual monism. The effect of both philosophies was that man was moved from his biblical status at the center of the world of nature and spirit. It was at this juncture of nature and spirit that man found himself as a creature of sin, but with the hope of redemption. The effect of this period of philosophical history is that man found himself deprived of personality and freedom.

3.7.5 Philosophical Shadows

It is at this point that Henry takes particular note of the importance of two German idealists that not only affected philosophy in general but also affected for the purposes of this study their effect, in particular, on Protestant theology. The names of Immanuel Kant and George Hegel are watershed names in the history of philosophy. It would be the influence of their writings that would drastically affect and influence Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Troeltsch. Men following Schleiermacher, the father of liberalism, would then chart a course that an ocean away would eventually lead to the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 47–48. Henry gives an insightful study into pre-Christian and post-Christian idealism on page 49ff.

Before taking up Kant and Hegel, a brief digression into the writings and influence of David Hume are in order. Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* are monumental in the development of liberalism.¹³⁶ Hume's *Dialogues* was so controversial that his friends persuaded him to release it after his death. Hume has been misunderstood for centuries and for a summary of these conceptions and his contributions to philosophy and his impact on theology the reader can consult Ronald H. Nash's *The Word of God and The Mind of Man*.¹³⁷ The import of Hume for this study is Kant's attribution to the role that Hume played in this thinking: "I openly confess my recollection of David Hume as the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy a quite new direction."¹³⁸ Hume in his writings was attacking the supremacy of human reason, a cardinal tenet of the Enlightenment. Hume was able to show the limits of reason and it was when man went beyond the limits of reason that he became "involved in absurdities and contradictions and become prone to the disease of scepticism."¹³⁹ Hume's point was that most of the things in which man believes are not arrived at on the basis of reasoning. These beliefs are not supported by experience. These are experiential beliefs, pivotal beliefs, and are derived from something other than reason and experience. His position was that these pivotal beliefs are based on instinct, habit

¹³⁶ David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Nelson Pike (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970); *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Eric Steinberg 2d ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993).

¹³⁷ Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man*, 17–24.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

and custom. A non-rational force compels an individual to accept these pivotal beliefs. As Hume applied this concept to ethics, metaphysics and religion he believed that man's moral judgments are not based on reason but on non-rational human nature. In essence Hume's position was that man cannot know the transcendent.¹⁴⁰

Skepticism is generally attributed to Hume. But Hume was not a skeptic in the sense that he doubted the existence of the world. Hume thought that kind of skepticism was absurd because it contradicted common sense, nature and man's instinct. He believed that investigation should be limited to areas where knowledge is possible (i.e, mathematics). Speculative inquiry into metaphysics, theology and ethics should be avoided and accepted by faith, not knowledge.¹⁴¹ As related to the knowledge of God, man cannot know God. But faith in God is entirely natural. In fact, the same compelling that man has with pivotal beliefs leads man to believe in the existence of God.¹⁴² Theological claims are to be dismissed when they go beyond the limits of human knowledge. Hume argued that a reasoned argument for the existence of God, supported by the miraculous must be rejected because it exceeds the limits of human knowledge. The legacy of Hume's position is the rejection of the possibility of a rational knowledge of God and objective religious truth. Belief in God was grounded in man's non-rational nature. It was a matter of faith. Faith was divorced

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. According to Nash, Hume was not an atheist. He believed in the existence of a divine mind that in some unknown way was responsible for the order of the universe. Hume was not a Christian in the New Testament sense of the word. As for his famous attack on miracles, Hume's position was the assertion that no one could ever reasonably believe that a miracle had occurred.

¹⁴² Ibid., 21.

from reason. And this divorce is one that Henry will address and will be examined in depth in chapter 5.

Kant will take the work of Hume and develop it and in so doing become the watershed philosopher of the modern era. It is to Immanuel Kant that the inquiry into liberalism will now turn.

Henry writes, “The two illustrious names in German idealistic philosophy at the beginning of the nineteenth century were Kant and Hegel. By the end of that century, their thought had left its mark, along with the later evolutionary philosophy, upon Protestant theology on the both sides of the Atlantic.”¹⁴³ But what was it about Kant’s and Hegel’s thought that so left its mark on both sides of the Atlantic? In answering this question Henry in his early works commented on the effect of Kant and Hegel’s work but would wait until the publication of *God, Revelation and Authority* to treat the issue in more detail. At this point, the study will sketch the outlines of Kant and Hegel’s thought, leaving the more thorough treatment until chapter 5.

Following Nash, “Kant sought to go beyond both rationalism and empiricism by making human knowledge a composite of two factors, form and content.”¹⁴⁴ The content would be supplied sense experience and form supplied by the mind. Kant stressed that all human knowledge begins with sense experience, but it does not follow that it arises from experience. Kant would express his assertion this way:

Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something

¹⁴³ Carl F. H. Henry, *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, 15.

¹⁴⁴ Nash, *The Word of God and The Mind of Man*, 26.

in regard to them a priori, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge.¹⁴⁵

What Kant means is that sense experience is necessary for human knowledge but is not a sufficient condition for knowledge. Something else must be added to the content added by the senses. That something else is the form or categories of the mind. The effect of his position is that Kant has erected a wall. Unless the content is mediated by the forms of the mind man cannot know anything. Man does not know the world as it really is but rather as it appears. Nash continues his explanation of Kant, “according to Kant, human knowledge never brings us into contact with the real world, what he called the noumenal world. All we ever know is the phenomenal world, the world as it appears to us after it has been modified by the categories of our understanding. Since our knowledge is always perceptually modified by the a priori categories of the mind, the real world (noumena) is not only unknown, but unknowable.”¹⁴⁶

Now is not the time for a full treatment of the epistemological ramifications of Kant’s position, it is appropriate to see Henry’s critique as it leads into the development of American Protestant Liberalism. Henry would write in *God,*

Revelation and Authority that:

Kant forcefully contended that Humean sensationalism leads to skepticism. An empirical basis of knowledge, Kant stressed, not only sacrifices all norms, but universally valid reason as well, and it cannot rationally vindicate its own position. His influential *Critical Philosophy* defended intuition of a special kind-senous intuition rather than intellectual intuition. Human knowledge

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 27.

does not include innate truths, he contended, but it does presuppose innate categories of thought and forms of perception, which confer on sensually given objects the status of cognitive knowledge.¹⁴⁷

It is worth noting at this point that while writing to contend for aprioric affirmations in *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, Henry points out the inconsistency in Kant's epistemological system: "Kant, for example, did not derive his transcendental forms of thought through his epistemic theory, which identified all knowledge as a joint product of sens content and a priori forms. Since the a priori forms were not sense perceptible, Kant must have postulated them independently of the theory."¹⁴⁸

As for Hume, Kant had a role for God. Belief in God was a matter of faith. There is no cognitive content to this belief in God. Its main emphasis is one of pragmatism. Belief in God should be based not on theoretical but moral and practical considerations.

In Henry's estimation the major contribution of Kant's theory of knowledge is that it gave the "palm of victory" to Empiricism. If Kant gave the victor's wreath to the empiricists, Hegel, according to Henry, would give it to the pantheists. Hegel's

¹⁴⁷ Henry, *GRA*, 1:75.

¹⁴⁸ Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 46. This declaration followed on the heels of a discussion of the legitimacy of assuming without proof a philosophical axiom or postulational principle as in initial basis of reasoning. Henry cites Democritus as having never demonstrated from sensory data that all substance consists of indivisible and imperceptibly small particles. Likewise Plato never demonstrated from sensory data the independent existence of the invisible world of Eternal Ideas. "No rational basis exists for limiting credible propositions to only those that involve evidence of the kind that specifically impresses physicists or anthropologists" (45). Later in the chapter entitled "The Axioms of Biblical Theism" Henry artfully shows the inconsistency not in Kant's epistemic theory but also that of Logical Positivism: "Empiricism cannot empirically justify its governing premise. From sense experience, to which he professed to limit the content of all knowledge, Kant could not derive information about the innate forms of thought. Since Logical Positivism cannot sensually verify its own verifactory thesis, it cannot exempt itself from meaninglessness" (65).

major fault was that man and the universe are parts of deity.¹⁴⁹ Hegel attempted to overcome the metaphysical limitations of Kant's view. However, in doing so and in part due to his profoundly unbiblical exaggeration of equating the reason of man into the very mind of God, he failed to offer a system that would stand. Hegel's theory insisted that man immediately intuits concepts rather than truths. Human reasoning then combines these concepts into propositions and mediates knowledge. Truth is then expressed only in a system, for knowledge is conceptually systematic:

But, by equating the Absolute with the reflective self-consciousness of human minds, Hegel obscured any real created existence. For mankind in the image of God he substituted God externalized as the universe, so that the destruction of man and the world would obliterate divine being and life. Hegel made God an inescapable reality by divinizing man, and thereby he caricatured both.¹⁵⁰

Hegel asserted that only the Absolute is real. The effect on man is that his personality is but a moment in time in the infinite life. Henry summarizes the effect of Hegel's thought, "The Spirit who is the subject of history is no longer human, and only ambiguously personal. Human freedom and moral responsibility were minimized, since whatever took place was somehow what the Absolute was doing."¹⁵¹ The influence of Hegel on theologians was that Biblical once-for-all revelation was obscured. For them, the universal movement of history provided the most significant of the Absolute.¹⁵² The influence of the two monumental

¹⁴⁹ Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma*, 35.

¹⁵⁰ Henry, *GRA*, 1:76.

¹⁵¹ Henry, *The Drift of Western Thought*, 53.

¹⁵² Henry, *Fifty Years of Protestant Thought*, 16.

philosophers was immense, especially in theology as theologians applied Kant's and Hegel's views to their understanding of religion in a myriad of ways.

As Henry had noted in *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, theology was being “remade” in terms of the modern mind, and Friedrich Schleiermacher took the lead in remaking theology in light of the modern mind. The major contribution of Schleiermacher, in developing what would become Protestant Liberalism, was his insistence that essence of religion is man's feeling of dependence. Henry makes note of Schleiermacher's import: “The most influential neo-Protestant theologian of nineteenth century; Friedrich Schleiermacher, readily based Christian commitments wholly upon religious experience rather than upon revelation.”¹⁵³ Schleiermacher's approach to theology was nothing less than revolutionary. Instead of starting with God, as had been done traditionally with a metaphysical definition of God and a demonstration using proofs of his reality, Schleiermacher started with human experience of whatever religious significance to people and then defines theological concepts only tentatively in view of these considerations.¹⁵⁴

Schleiermacher thought he had found an answer to Hume's skepticism. He identified that the empirical method was an adequate way to deal with religious concerns. He changed the locus of religious experience from cognition to feeling. In doing so, Schleiermacher believed he was rescuing Christianity from irrelevance and mere dogmaticism. He rejected the historical evangelical emphasis that the truth of revelation rests on an authority higher than science. He also broke with the

¹⁵³ Henry, *GRA*, 1:79

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

supernatural miraculous claims of Christianity, asserting that all events must adhere to empirically verifiable laws of nature. He shifted the center of Christianity, God as a metaphysical object to a correlation of God with inner spiritual experience.¹⁵⁵

Following Hume and Kant, Schleiermacher's God is unknowable by the human mind but can only be felt by the unique experience of absolute dependence.¹⁵⁶

The next major influence is Albrecht Ritschl. In protesting against Schleiermacher's subjectivism—the essence of religion is religious experience—Ritschl sought to establish Christianity on more sure footing. Ritschl turned to history to provide this sure foundation for Christianity. However, Ritschl was heavily influenced by Kant, and it was reflected in two of his controlling presuppositions. As Henry noted that “God is for Kant only a transcendental postulate: he conceived metaphysical relationships in terms of ethical ideals for fully experiencing selfhood.”¹⁵⁷

In following Kant, Ritschl excluded metaphysics from theology. God was not knowable as he was part of the noumena—the unknowable world. Consequently, the Jesus that Ritschl found in history was like a liberal of Ritschl's time. Questions regarding the ontic significance of the cardinal doctrines concerning the life of Jesus Christ (e.g., deity of Jesus, relationship between human and divine natures, and his relationship to the Father) were of no concern to Ritschl.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 80.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 82. Henry writes that Schleiermacher insisted that God is originally experienced in feeling, and never directly apprehended, but is always mediated by some finite element of the world, so that we have no strictly objective cognitive knowledge of him.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., *G.R.A.*, 3: 278.

¹⁵⁸ Nash, *The Word of God and The Mind of Man*, 32.

The second effect that Kant had on Ritschl was that what ultimately mattered in religion was ethics. Religion should be concerned with moral, value judgments and not theoretical concerns. Ritschl made a distinction between two kinds of judgments: value and theoretical. Theoretical judgments are objective and analyzable, while value judgments are not. Ritschl wrote that to “strive after a purely theoretical or ‘disinterested’ knowledge of God as an indispensable preliminary to the knowledge of faith. To be sure, people say that we must first know the nature of God and Christ ere we can ascertain their value of us. But Luther’s insight perceived the incorrectness of such a view. The truth rather is that we know the nature of God and Christ only in their value for us.”¹⁵⁹

One last name deserves a brief mention before turning to the American Protestant Liberal scene and then the fundamentalist reaction: the great German church historian Adolf Harnack. Harnack was a prolific author.¹⁶⁰ Henry observes that for Harnack the essence of the Christian faith is not faith in God in his revelation. The proper object of faith is “man believing himself as divine.”¹⁶¹ As will become more important in later chapters, Karl Barth was a student of Harnack. Barth reacted

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 33. Peter Toon writes of Ritschl in *The End of Liberal Theology*, “Ritschl in his major work restating the Protestant doctrine was *The Christian Doctrine of Justification of Reconciliation* (published in three volumes between 1870–1874). The first volume was a historical survey of Christian doctrines, the second volume was an exposition of biblical material and the third volume attempted a reconstruction of the doctrines in terms of Christian experience and the grace of God. Christian’s do not know God as God; they only know his blessings and the benefits his presence brings. The purpose of the Christian religion is not to enjoy a mystical communion with God (who is unknowable) but rather to overcome by divine grace and with moral virtue the contradictions that run through human existence” (51–52).

¹⁶⁰ Adolf Harnack, *The History of Dogma* 7 vols. trans. Neil Buchanan (London: Williams and Norgate, 1896-9); *What is Christianity?* trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

¹⁶¹ Henry, *GRA*, 2:120.

strongly against Harnack's interpretation of Christianity, so strongly in fact that he broke with it and launched what would be known as the "theology of crisis" or neo-orthodoxy. One of the major things that Barth reacted to, as would fundamentalists, was the deprecation of the Scriptures. Harnack employed the "so-called objective historical-scientific criticism of Scripture with philosophical idealism and insisted that a primitive nonsupernatural Jesus had priority over the supernatural Pauline Christ."¹⁶²

Henry provides a concise and descriptive analysis of the reaction to Harnack and liberalism by Barth, and with certain qualifications one could begin to see the differences that fundamentalists would have with liberalism as well.¹⁶³ In a section that addressed hermeneutical presuppositions Henry makes the following observations that say well what fundamentalists would say to Harnack even if coming from the pen Barth:

[He] assailed this popular critical view and launched a strikingly different approach to biblical interpretation and New Testament exegesis. While Barth agreed with Harnack's insistence that as a corpus of historical records the Bible should be open to critical investigation, he emphasized that historical criticism had not in fact achieved consensus on a single authentic portrait of Jesus of Nazareth. Barth labeled Harnack's supposedly neutral historical exegesis and nonsupernatural Jesus as in actuality a reflection of Harnack's personal theological prejudices; liberal theology, observed Barth, neglected the primary theme of revelation by its one-sided historical interest that eclipses revelatory relationships between God and man.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Henry, *GRA*, 4:297.

¹⁶³ The author equates the differences with liberalism by Barth and fundamentalist with great hesitation and an inordinate amount of qualification and clarification.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

3.7.6 The Great Age of Liberalism

In a summary statement on this period Henry writing in *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology* said that the theology which captured the seminaries and the universities from 1849 to 1914, known as “the great age of liberalism,” was rooted in “immanentism and evolutionism, rejected the objective authority of the Scriptures, the necessity of the miraculous revelation, and with these the Biblical pattern of sin and redemption.”¹⁶⁵ In a footnote on page 31 of the *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, Henry’s observation of the changing of the theological tide is of interest:

The Evangelical Revival, dating from 1858 in the United States and 1859 in Great Britain, began a movement that provided leaders for fifty years of evangelical expansion; men like Dwight L. Moody, William Booth and Hudson Taylor were a part of it, as were activities in home missions, faith missions, rescue missions, and the Keswick movement (J. Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain* [London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1949]). Orr points out that Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*, written in 1859, began a counter movement. World War I punctuated the vital memories of the revival, for those who had remembered it were now gone, whereas the enthusiasm for evolution was at its peak. It is a significant fact that when among the intelligentsia evolution had its greatest fillip, and liberalism was making its triumph, figures like General Booth (1829-1912) of the Salvation Army and Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) were wielding a mighty influence for evangelicalism upon the masses.¹⁶⁶

By 1900 Liberalism had become a single movement and had as its biggest foe orthodoxy. Whether in German, Great Britain, or the United States, evangelical theology was declared to be obscurantist and outmoded. Liberalism had the scholarship with the genius to restate historic Christianity in modern terms:

Biblical theology was being re-made in terms of the modern mind. The determinative principles, inherited from the nineteenth century, where those of immanent and evolutionary philosophy, with their rejection of special revelation, miracle, the unique deity of Christ, and a divinely provided

¹⁶⁵ Henry, *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, 30.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

redemption, or, in a summary word, the trustworthiness of the Bible. The pattern of liberalist expansion was largely the same, whether on the Continent, in Britain, or in America.¹⁶⁷

The United States, just as the theological landscape across the Atlantic Ocean, was drastically affected as well. At the beginning of the twentieth century idealistic immanentism was the reigning philosophy. Whether it was the influence of Hegelian absolute idealism at Harvard (represented Josiah Royce), or Lotzean personalism at Boston University (taught by Borden P. Bowne), the familiarity with Continental speculative philosophies had increased due to more Americans studying in Germany. What became a characteristic feature of this period was the marginalization of conservative theology to the periphery of academic life, while being regarded as unspiritual, mechanical and legalistic. Another key feature was that of “continuity.” The biblical separations between God, man and nature were dimmed.¹⁶⁸

Idealistic philosophy did not carry the day long. Pragmatist such as James and Dewey led the charge and led the way that influenced the American religious scene. The University of Chicago was particularly influential. The influential chairs of Philosophy and Religion were held by humanists such as Shailer, Matthews, Edward Scribner Ames, Gerald Birney Smith, Eustace Hayden, Shirley Case Jackson and Henry Nelson Wieman, were major voices on the religious landscape in America.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 32–33.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 60–61. Henry cites as supportive evidence the works of Walter G. Muelder and Frank Hugh Foster. Walter G. Muelder and Laurence Sears, *The Development of American Religious Philosophy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940); and Frank Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 61. Cf. Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American of Liberal Theology 1805-1900*; and *The Making of American of Liberal Theology 1900-1950*; and Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism*.

While they preferred to be called empirical theologians, Henry notes that “they never rose beyond the requirement of a naturalistic philosophy and were preoccupied with impersonal cosmic process rather than with a personal God.”¹⁷⁰

In *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture* written in 1957, Henry observes that at its best liberalism reflected the invasion of the secular spirit; “It exaggerated God’s immanence, minimized man’s sinfulness, concealed Christ’s supernaturalness and the centrality of his redemptive work; attached utopian expectations to history, ignored the task of evangelism.”¹⁷¹

Edward John Carnell, describes the foundational premises of liberalism in his work *The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr*:

Modernism boasts of no Summa, no Institutes of the Christian Religion. Its coordinating genius lies in its method. Modernism is an attitude toward life. It is a mode of free thinking. Modernists are unified by their approach to theology, not by their theological conclusions. Modernism is not a philosophy but a group of philosophies reflecting no single controlling principle, whether metaphysical, methodological or ethical.¹⁷²

As the scientific method carried the day during the rise of the Enlightenment, men abandoned a priori logic in favor of the empirical method. Carnell notes that modernists disdain authority. They cast off authority, whether ecclesiastical or revelational. In its desire to follow the empirical method come what may, modernism courts as a cardinal tenet, criticism. Quoting Shailer Matthews, Carnell shows the extent that this spirit of criticism has permeated the mind of the modernists:

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, 29.

¹⁷² Edward John Carnell, *The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 13.

“Modernists are Christians who accept the results of scientific research as data with which to think religiously.”¹⁷³

Rejection of authority and a spirit of criticism, modernists rejected the views of the world handed down from the past. Traditional ideas began to fall one after another on the “assured results of scientific inquiry.” A view totally foreign to study of the Scriptures, destructive higher criticism, was quickly accepted. This view approached Scripture with the presupposition that “the Bible is essentially a record of man’s past religious experience, reflecting at each stage the fallibilities and limitations of his outlook as well as his dominant loyalties, ideals, and needs.”¹⁷⁴ J. I. Packer underscores this point in *Fundamentalism and The Word of God*:

The proper study of theologians after all is man. The Bible is a record of human action and reflection within which is embedded an experience of God, and our task is to dig that experience out. Scripture must be viewed, not as a divinely given record of a divinely given revelation, but as a by-product of the religious experience of the Hebrews; a record not so much of what God has said and done as of what some men thought He had said and done. The Bible is thus a memorial of the discovery of God by a nation with a flair for religion—that and no more.¹⁷⁵

Coupled with this new view of Scripture was the unknowability of God as already discussed under the influence of Kant. Modernism had eliminated the possibility of knowing God, had placed the Bible on the same level with other books of antiquity, and now it “refurbished the Ancient Greek concept that God, like the Logos of Heraclitus, is an immanent principle that runs through the changing process

¹⁷³ Ibid., 14.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 16.

¹⁷⁵ J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 148.

of history, but which itself somehow remains unchanged through time.”¹⁷⁶ Hegel then provided the added element of the inevitability of human progress. Added to Hegel’s positive view of the progressive role of man, Darwin’s hypothesis of evolution, provided all the needed elements for the full blown doctrine of divine immanence to be brought together.¹⁷⁷ The combining convergence of the aforementioned factors brought liberalism as a new theological force that resulted in two different reactions: the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy and Neo-Orthodoxy (Neo-Orthodoxy will be discussed later in this work).

3.8 Fundamentalism—Movement and Mentality

In writing of fundamentalism Edward John Carnell gives some sage advice: “When we speak of fundamentalism, however, we must distinguish between the movement and the mentality.”¹⁷⁸ Carnell goes on to give a short synopsis of the rise of fundamentalism:

The fundamentalist movement was organized shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. When the tidal wave of German higher criticism engulfed the church, a large company of orthodox scholars rose to the occasion. They sought to prove that modernism and Biblical Christianity were incompatible. In this way the fundamentalist movement preserved the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Its “rugged bursts of individualism” were among the finest fruits of the Reformation. But the fundamentalist movement made at least one capital mistake, and that is why it converted from a movement to a

¹⁷⁶ Carnell, *The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr*, 16.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 17. Carnell discusses in concise fashion the rise of the doctrine of divine immanence. Liberalism was that theological synthesis between Christian dogmatic tradition and the philosophical idea of immanence dissolved the Christian concept of divine revelation. This synthesis combined with evolutionary theory lead to a view of the world that accepted the all pervading presence of the divine being. Consequently, with God everywhere, the liberal saw no difference between the supernatural and the natural. Following Schleiermacher, the liberal saw every day functions as miraculous, emanating from the view of divine immanence, miracles as presented in the Bible were explained away (17–19).

¹⁷⁸ Edward John Carnell, *The Case for Orthodox Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), 113.

mentality. Unlike the Continental Reformers and the English Dissenters, the fundamentalist failed to connect their convictions with the classical creeds of the church.¹⁷⁹

Henry has one of the classic summaries on fundamentalism in chapter 2, “The Fundamentalist Reduction,” of his *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*. Henry’s analysis is as follows, “Liberalism has been called a perversion of Christiainity.”¹⁸⁰ On the other side, fundamentalism has been labeled a Christian heresy. Henry then poses the question: Can historic Christianity be identified with either liberalism or fundamentalism? In answering this question Henry, in chapter 1, “The Modernist Revision,” of his book *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culutre* in relation to liberalism answered in the negative. His final assesment is thus stated; “Evangelical theology on the grounds of Scripture, logic, history, and experience must repudiate it [Liberalism] as a perversion of essential Christianity . . .”¹⁸¹ In answering the question with regard to fundamentalism Henry gives a thoughtful and thorough response, one which the major themes of the

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. In addition to the many texts that have been mentioned in this chapter relating to fundamentalism its identity and distinctives, the following is a list of journal articles that contribute to the discussion: Morris Ashcraft, “The Theology of Fundamentalism,” *Review and Expositor* 79, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 31–43; George W. Dollar, “The Early Days of American Fundamentalism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 123, no. 490 (April 1966): 115–23; John Fea, “Understanding the Changing Façade of Twentieth-Century American Protestant fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Definition,” 181–99; Bill Leonard, “The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism,” 5–15, Rolland D. McCune, “The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism,” 9-34: “A Call to Separation and Unity: D. Martyn-Lloyd Jones and ‘Evangelical Unity,’” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 3 (Fall 1998); 3–62; “The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings,” 109–50; Gerald L. Priest, “A.C. Dixon, Chicago, Liberals, and The Fundamentals,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Spring 1996); 113–34, C. Allyn Russell, “The Northern (American) Baptist Experience with Fundamentalism,” 45–59.

¹⁸⁰ Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, 32. On this see J. Gresham Machen *Christianity and Liberalism*, 2–7; and Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of the Word of God, Vol 1, Part 1* (New York: Scribner’s, 1936), 36ff both agree!

¹⁸¹ Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, 31.

Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy are highlighted and the role that *The Fundamentals* played in that controversy.

As has been mentioned before certain basic biblical essentials had come under attack during the development of modernism (in this case Henry uses as synonymous for liberalism). Those essential doctrines were: the authority of Scripture, the deity of Christ, his virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection and literal return. Fundamentalist used these doctrines a test of belief or unbelief. The modernist tendency to use evasive declarationis bout the Bible and the supernaturalness of Jesus Christ, were tried and tested in light of the declaration of basic doctrine.¹⁸²

Unfortunately there was a negative consequence as Henry saw it by concentrating solely on the essentials of the faith. He writes, “These fundamentalist features—neglect of the organic interrelations of theology, of the bearing of the Christian revelation upon culture, and social life, and of the broader outlines of the doctrine of the Church—exactd a costly historical toll.”¹⁸³ In reacting against modernism, fundamentalism became a distinctly twentieth-century expression of Christianity that lost its bearings in light of the shadow of historic Christianity. Fundamentalism’s mood, temperment and theological emphasis were reactionary and corrective. Fundamentalism held onto the biblical mandate for evangelism and mission, but narrowed “the whole counsel of God,” and felt little or no obligation to express Christianity as a comprehensive world and life view.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Ibid., 32.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 33-36.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 33.

Following a stream of Pietistic influence there was a belittling of the intellect. The Christian experience was mainly expressed through emotional and volitional aspects of life. Fundamentalism lacked historical and theological perspective. It neglected the production of great exegetical and theological literature. And at times, fundamentalism emphasized anti-denominationalism rather than interdenominationalism. Neglect of the doctrine of the Church, except in defining separation as a key characteristic of fundamentalism was a key tenet of the movement as well as a rigid identification of Christianity with premillennial dispensationalism.¹⁸⁵

Henry marks the historical point, not with a little bit of irony, that at one time in its history, fundamentalism showed a depth and breath of theological acumen and scholarship that was no longer present of the movement after World War I. The twelve volume set entitled, *The Fundamentals*, that was published by the Stewart brothers over a five year period beginning in 1910 and ending in 1915, was just that fundamentalist expression and cultural engagement for which Henry had argued for in *The Uneasy Conscience*.

The Fundamentals was the brainchild of Milton Stewart. Fifteen years before the first publication in 1910, Stewart had attended the 1894 Niagara Bible Conference. At this conference, Stewart heard some of the most well known early fundamentalist preachers of the day. In particular he heard James H. Brookes, editor

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 36. Henry observes in this context that “doubtless” the premillennial spirit was already in evidence at the beginning of the movement when the Niagara Bible Conference (1895) first proposed the five-fold test to determine attitudes toward the fundamentals. The five fold test consisted of correct belief in the following: (1) the inerrancy of the original manuscripts of Scripture, (2) the virgin birth, (3) the vicarious atonement of Christ, (4) the bodily resurrection of Christ, (5) the reality of biblical miracles (cf. McCune, “The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism,” 22).

of *The Truth*, a highly influential fundamentalist magazine. He read the magazine and realized how valuable it was as a teaching tool in making known the dangers of liberalism. Fifteen years later, Stewart hears A. C. Dixon indict the liberal views of George Foster, who taught at the University of Chicago and had published *The Finality of the Christian Religion* (1906). In this book Foster described Christianity not as a supernatural religion but as a naturalistic religion. In Foster's view, Christianity was based on ideals rather than divine revelation. At this point, Stewart shared with Dixon his idea of producing a series of booklets that would set forth the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. Stewart wanted to send copies to ministers, evangelists, missionaries, theological professors and students, Sunday school superintendents, YMCA and YWCA in the English speaking world, if their addresses could be obtained. By the end of the project in 1915 and after approximately \$200,000, three-million volumes have been sent out in an effort to combat liberalism on its very foundation—a historical critical examination of Scripture.¹⁸⁶

Sixty-four authors wrote ninety articles covering topics that ranged from higher criticism of the Bible to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Henry would write of the period of early fundamentalism in the following manner: “At one time fundamentalism displayed a breadth and concept of theological and philosophical perspective and devotion to scholarly enterprise not characteristic of the present movement.”¹⁸⁷ Henry cited *The Fundamentals* as an example of the type of engagement for which he called in *The Uneasy Conscience*. Another shining example of which Henry wrote was the inclusion of various types and stripes of scholars that

¹⁸⁶ Priest, “A. C. Dixon, Chicago Liberals, and The Fundamentals,” 126–27.

¹⁸⁷ Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, 37.

worked on the project. Inerrancy had long been considered a non-negotiable tenet of fundamentalism (it will be addressed in later chapters), but included in the roster of scholars who were contributors to *The Fundamentals*, were men who did not insist on inerrancy. James Orr is the chief example of this type of inclusion that Henry called for in the renaissance of conservative orthodox doctrine, but he would model this type of inclusion as well in his role as the founding editor of *Christianaity Today* and the numerous books where he served as editor. In writing of Orr's contribution as well as that of B. B. Warfield, Henry remarks that many American fundamentalists certainly preferred Warfield's position with respect to the inspiration as opposed to Orr's "yet none doubted the positive evangelical principle of Orr's theological approach."¹⁸⁸

While Henry affirms inerrancy, as will be seen later, the pairing of Orr and Warfield, et al. was for Henry a sign that the fundamentalist response to liberalism did not have to insist on separatism (from other evangelicals) when matters of second or third tier doctrines were discussed. Again writing of the approach and value of *The Fundamentals*:

The contributors to *The Fundamentals*, in their mutual dedication to supernatural Christianity, retained creative liberty to expound the witness of Scripture to its own inspiration. Moreover, this attached no legal constraint to conform every detail of these formulations to the conclusions of each other. . . . The message of *The Fundamentals* centers in the great affirmations of the creation narratives. Its support for Christian supernaturalness is wary of whatever threatens biblical theism, and it is certainly not pro-evolutionary. At the same time the writers are neither suspicious nor distrustful of science. They are open to the facts but unconvinced that all the facts have been introduced."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. Cf. B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948). Later in this paper the influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism and its impact on Princeton Theology will be examined. Also see James Orr, *Revelation and Inspiration* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1910).

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 38, 41.

J. Gresham Machen, when he published *Christianity and Liberalism* in 1923, followed in *The Fundamentals* line of theologically astute and scholarly critique of evaluating the opposing views. In light of the growing effect of reactionary tendencies within fundamentalism, Machen and others preferred to be called evangelicals and not fundamentalists due to the rising negative connotations of being associated with the word fundamentalist.¹⁹⁰

Rolland McCune sets the context for this period succinctly and insightfully in his article, “The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part One): Historical and Theological Antecedents.” In this article he quotes a writer for the *Christian Century* who understands just what was at stake during the controversy:

The differences between fundamentalism and modernism are not mere surface differences, which can be amiably waved aside or discarded, but . . . they are foundational differences, structural differences, amounting in their radical dissimilarity almost to the differences between two distinct religions. Christianity according to fundamentalism is one religion. Christianity according to modernism is another religion. [The antithesis implies] that the differences which characterize fundamentalism and modernism are so broad and deep and significant that, if each group holds its respective views consistently and acts upon them with conscientious rigor, they find an alienating gulf between them. . . . There exist in present-day Christianity two structurally distinct religions, irreconcilable not alone on the side of apologetics but of churchly function and ideal and of missionary propagation. Two worlds have crashed the world of tradition and the world of modernism. The God of the fundamentalist is one God; the God of the modernist is another. The Christ of the fundamentalist is one Christ; the Christ of modernism is another. The Bible of the fundamentalist is one Bible; the Bible of modernism is another. The church, the kingdom, the salvation, the consummation of all things—these are one thing to the fundamentalists and another thing to modernists. But that the issue is clear and that the inherent

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 43.

incompatibility of the two worlds has passed the stage of mutual tolerance is a fact concerning which there hardly seems room for any one to doubt.¹⁹¹

Fundamentalists predictably responded. For a time fundamentalists waged the battle on the scholarly front. But after the Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tennessee, where the fundamentalist side was excoriated and caricatured in the press as obscurantist and of a back woods mentality, the fundamentalist mood changed and became militant and then separatist.¹⁹² Again Henry insightfully writes of this period of fundamentalism:

The real bankruptcy of fundamentalism has resulted not so much from a reactionary spirit-lamentable as this was-as from a harsh temperament, a spirit of lovelessness and strife contributed by much of its leadership in the recent past. One of the ironies of contemporary church history is that the more fundamentalist stressed separation from apostasy as a theme in their churches, the more a spirit of lovelessness seemed to prevail. The theological conflict with liberalism deteriorated into an attack upon organizations and personalities. This condemnation, in turn, grew to include conservative churchmen and churches not ready to align with stipulated separatist movements. . . . It is this character of fundamentalism as a temperament, and not primarily fundamentalism as a theology, which has brought the movement its contemporary discredit.¹⁹³

As Henry so characteristically does, he not only diagnoses the problem but also he provides a prescription for the remedy of the problem. So if modernism stands discredited as a perversion of the scriptural theology, [and] fundamentalism in this contemporary expression stands discredited as a perversion of the biblical spirit; what is the answer as how to engage the contemporary culture with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Henry answers this question and in doing so rejects the neo-orthodox answer

¹⁹¹ McCune, "The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part One): Historical And Theological Antecedents," 23.

¹⁹² Ibid., 20-34.

¹⁹³ Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, 43-44.

to the question of how to re-engage the culture.¹⁹⁴ His answer calls for the reclamation of the Augustinian-Calvinistic conception of the relation of revelation and reason.¹⁹⁵

Henry as one of the major drafters of the contours of neo-evangelicalism lays out the broad parameters in the remaining chapter in *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*. The first step in re-engaging culture with the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to return to biblical theology. Evangelical theology must make central again a passionate concern for the reality of special divine revelation. Second, evangelicals must move beyond a simple delineation of external negations. Concern for the whole of life must be reasserted. A third step must be a hearty and robust Christological proclamation that conforms to the biblical witness. No Christological reduction can be sustained if evangelicals are once again to herald the *Evangel*. A fourth step of action must be the willful and joyful obedience to loving one's neighbor as oneself. A passionate obedience to the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37-40) must once again become synonymous with Christianity. A more developed view of this step is a holistic concern for the individual. Every sphere of the believer's life must come under the sway of the biblical record. To merely reduce the biblical mandate to a specified number of do's and don'ts is a caricature of the Christian life. A fifth step prescribed by Henry is that evangelicals develop a more fully developed doctrine of the church. Combating the principle of separation insisted upon by fundamentalists, necessitates a deeply reflective interaction with Scripture and culture to overcome the

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 48–63.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 64–65. This topic will receive greater treatment in chapter 5.

needlessly restrictive and rigid formulations of the recent past. Sixth, Evangelical Christianity must identify, with precision, the term evangelical. Too often it is limited to a restricted number of those who have identified with a number of existing movements. Evangelicals must answer, “What does it mean to be an evangelical?”¹⁹⁶ This question served as a basic outline for the direction that neo-evangelicals would take in the immediate years following 1947. It is to the development and growth of the evangelical movement that this study now moves.

3.9 Conclusion

Chapter 3 provides a more extensive and in-depth look into *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. Henry had written three very important books around the time the 1940s were coming to an end. On either side of *The Uneasy Conscience*, Henry wrote books that employed the apagogic method of his mentor Gordon Clark. Clark in this methodology relies extensively on the law of non-contradiction to show the inferiority of competing claims to the historic, orthodox position of the Church. Henry follows Clark in *Remaking the Modern Mind* and *The Protestant Dilemma* in the use of the apagogic method to show that liberalism and the surging neo-orthodoxy were inferior in their attempt to claim the throne as legitimate expressions of Christianity. From these two works, Henry would expand and expound basic themes that would receive their most complete treatment in his magnum opus, *God, Revelation and Authority*.

The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism has been called the, “manifesto of neo-evangelicalism.” This small little book, only 89 pages in length,

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 67–86.

served to call fundamentalists from their cultural retreat to a fully engaged and robust expression of Great Commission Christianity. Henry identifies the weaknesses and inconsistencies of fundamentalism and then challenges his brethren to right the wrong that had been, up to that point, the contemporary expression of fundamentalism.

Henry identified temperament as one of the wrongs of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism's pessimism (due to dispensational pre-millennialism), its commitment to separation (as a means of keeping doctrinal purity), and its exclusive focus on the individual to the neglect of the larger society (as a reaction against the "Social Gospel") were wrongs that Henry found incompatible with the biblical mandate. Henry writes eight short chapters that level the charge at fundamentalism and then prescribing a remedy to correct the wrong direction that fundamentalism had taken. Henry wrote *The Uneasy Conscience* as a call to arms. He believed that those who held to the fundamentals of the faith had the only corrective for contemporary problems, but they had withdrawn from cultural engagement. In Henry's estimation, now was the time for re-engagement:

Those who read with competence will know that the "uneasy conscience" of which I write is not one troubled about the great biblical verities, which I consider the only outlook capable of resolving our problems, but rather one distressed by the frequent failure to apply them effectively to crucial problems confronting the modern mind. It is an application of, not a revolt against, fundamentals of the faith, for which I plead.¹⁹⁷

The benefit of looking back into history is that one can see what events did or did not come to pass. Henry writes in 1957, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology*. In this work, Henry examines the decade that had just passed since writing *The Uneasy Conscience*. He concludes that while

¹⁹⁷ Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, preface.

fundamentalism has defended supernaturalistic Christianity against the attack of liberalism and withstood the existential orientation of neo-orthodoxy, it still was weakened by its “inherent perils.” As serious as those weaknesses are with respect to fundamentalism, the greatest problem that fundamentalism face was its “harsh temperament, a spirit of lovelessness and strife.”¹⁹⁸ Picking up on this fundamental tenet of fundamentalism, as identified by Henry, the remainder of the chapter gives a brief survey of the rise of fundamentalism in the United States of America. At its core, fundamentalists sought to maintain fidelity to the Bible and the epistemology and metaphysics that the Scriptures expressed. Liberals, as viewed by the fundamentalists, incorporated alien epistemologies (Kantain) with their variations that undermined the authority of God’s Word. Fundamentalism became the expression of some of those who held fast to direction set by the Apostolic Church and the Reformers. Henry wanted to affirm and build on that foundation, and so-keeping articulated what he believed to be the faithful cultural expression of those that held to the “Fundamentals.”

¹⁹⁸ Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology*, 43.