Is Carl Henry a Modernist? Rationalism and Foundationalism in Post-War Evangelical Theology[1]

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Introduction: Post-War, Post-Fundamentalist Evangelical Theology

If the aftermath of the Scopes Trial witnessed a perceived decline in the public fortunes of fundamentalism,[2] the aftermath of the Second World War marked the meteoric climb to prominence of a post-fundamentalist movement, one whose immediate origins are traced to the establishment of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942, but which became most broadly identified with the work of evangelist Billy Graham.[3] This movement[4] was *post-fundamentalist* in that, while it sought to retain the essential theological commitments of such men as William Bell Riley and Curtis Lee Laws, it rejected the separatism and elitism characteristic of some of the fundamentalists and it longed for less dogmatism on peripheral theological issues, such as the nature of millennial expectations.[5]

Harold John Ockenga, one of the prime movers of the new coalition, was convinced that what was needed was "a progressive fundamentalism with an ethical message."[6] This became the passionate concern of the rising breed of conservative leadership. There soon followed respectable journals, such as *Christianity Today*, top-notch seminaries, such as Fuller and Trinity, and new forums for theological discourse, such as the Evangelical Theological Society. But one thing was needed in order for these to accomplish their purpose—the arrival of a new generation of intellectuals who could preserve the accomplishments of those who had gone before,[7] but who would not be restricted by the doctrinal eccentricities characteristic of the more intransigent and separatist fundamentalists. The one man who soon rose to the top of this new cadre of intellectual leaders was Carl F. H. Henry.[8]

Carl Henry began teaching at Northern Baptist Seminary in 1942, shortly after receiving his Th.D. degree from that institution.[9] Seven years later he would add a Ph.D., earned at Boston University. In the meantime he moved to the faculty of the newly founded Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947 and published his first influential volume, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. This book would identify him clearly as a member of historic American evangelicalism, but would at the same time call evangelicals to take a hard look at the problematic aspects of fundamentalism. Over the next four decades or so, few American theologians would make as many contributions in publishing (many books, including his *magnum opus*, *God, Revelation and Authority*), teaching (at Fuller, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and several guest professorships), editing (as editor of *Christianity Today* and various symposia), and as a statesman for evangelical missions, theology and ethical concerns (through

World Vision). Henry's multi-fold contribution to evangelical Christianity and his articulate resistance of theological liberalism and reductionism have become proverbial.

Carl Henry as the New Modernist

It has been fifty-eight years since the publication of Carl Henry's first theological book. One of the new twists in the discussion about and among post-fundamentalists is the allegation that some of the leading lights of the post-World War II evangelical theological renaissance are employing a theological method that is informed by or even governed by Enlightenment models of rationality and discourse. This is a rather remarkable indictment, since evangelicals have long claimed to reject most of Enlightenment epistemology due to its autonomous, humanistic, and non-theistic tendencies. It seems worth considering, then, whether evangelicals have been forthright in their claims to reject Cartesian or Kantian methods of inquiry or epistemology, or whether it might be the case that the demon they excommunicated through the front door was in fact allowed to return by the servants' entrance.

Oddly enough, Carl Henry has become the candidate of choice for critics seeking to implicate evangelical theology in this new *modernism*. He has been at the forefront of evangelicalism's attempts to carve out a scholarly theological alternative to the reductionist traditions that are current in Continental theology. This alone has made him a marked man. But more than this, Henry's tendency to write in a polemical fashion on the topics of revelation, anthropology, and the doctrine of God has resulted in more attention being paid to him than to those who have been less committed to apologetics in these sensitive areas.

One of the first thinkers to accuse Henry of being a modernist was Hans Frei.[10] He noted that theological typology and theological method cut across the ordinary lines of distinction between liberal and conservative paradigms. "For example, a contemporary liberal theologian like David Tracy of the University of Chicago will look more like a conservative and evangelical theologian such as Carl Henry than he will like many a fellow liberal in regard to the basic affirmation that theology must have a foundation that is articulated in terms of basic philosophical principles."[11] Since Henry's theological method incorporates many features of rational discourse, the Yale theologian categorizes him with others who deploy similar methodology, regardless of the actual content of their theological system. Frei observes that Henry criticized Karl Barth for his failure to submit his theological reflections to "the law of contradiction, the so-called congruity postulate, and the criterion that all propositions must be arrangeable in the form of axioms and theorems."[12] This sort of intellectual move constitutes sufficient grounds for Frei to lump the evangelical theologian with the revisionist Tracy.

Several evangelical scholars have also posited that Henry has made concessions to the modernist *Weltbild*. Stephen Spencer of Wheaton College wrote, "Carl F. H. Henry's writings display this recourse to modernist epistemology as the sole alternative to subjectivism and relativism (whether modernist or postmodernist), despite Henry's frequent criticisms of modernism and his call for us to reject both modernism and postmodernism."[13] Spencer then claims that evangelicals who

hold such views believe that "Christian [*sic*] have no right to proclaim Christianity universally true without first establishing its truthfulness—which seems to mean proving it [to] them [*sic*]."[14] In other words, such Enlightenment-influenced evangelicals equate the apologetic task of the church with its dogmatic task. In contrast to what he believes he sees in the methodology of Henry, Spencer proposes that "truth is not objective, if that means that it is self-existing or impersonal, abstract. Rather, truth is rooted in the triune God. Truth is what this tri-personal God knows and says. . . . Truth is personal because God is truth."[15] Spencer seems to be saying that "evangelical modernists," such as Henry, have forgotten this fact.[16]

Evangelical theologian Roger Olson notes that several conservative theologians, among them Carl Henry, believe that "in revelation God communicates information about himself in factual statements or in language the meaning of which can be expressed in factual statements."[17] He further, correctly, observes that Henry argues that the acts of God left to themselves would not provide an adequate basis for the knowledge of God since they would be ambiguous. What is needed is act plus interpretation. Olson finds this dissatisfactory, since, in his assessment, Henry is arguing that the "main purpose of revelation, so it would seem, is to communicate correct doctrine so that we humans will think right thoughts about God."[18]

Donald Bloesch insists that there is a rationalistic trajectory in much of evangelical theology. Modern theologians, under the influence of Enlightenment rationalism, have incorporated methodologies which are explicitly founded upon either "the logic of deduced conclusions . . . or the logic of evidential confirmations."[19] In this they often allow philosophical concerns to determine the form of their theological methodology.[20] Allowing that he agrees with Henry in his concern about arguments from empirical evidence and his warnings about biblical obscurantism, he insists that Henry reduces Christianity to a "logical system that rests on undemonstrated axioms (presuppositionalism) rather than a fellowship of faith whose witness is always reformable and open-ended."[21] Gordon Clark has called for a new evangelical rationalism in his various writings and is in some ways the pacesetter for this model.[22] For Clark, theology is a deductive enterprise, "deriving conclusions from given rational principles."[23] Norman Geisler, similarly, finds the law of noncontradiction reigning "sovereignly and universally over all thinking and speaking about God."[24] Bloesch argues that Carl Henry has provided real assistance to evangelicals in identifying the ontological immanentalism of modern theology and in warning the church about capitulating to the dangers of modernity, but he has not been circumspect enough to avoid *epistemological immanentalism* and he has in effect called the church to "a return to the rationalistic idealism of the early Enlightenment."[25] Further, Henry's strong focus on propositional revelation drives him to find the unity in Scripture in a "logical system of shared beliefs."[26] Bloesch insists that this places too much emphasis on the rational aspect of revelation. In Bloesch's opinion, other evangelicals could be added to this group of rationalists,[27] as could the work of certain thinkers out of a more liberal tradition, such as Pannenberg,[28] whose theology allows the world "to become another criterion for faith beside the God

of the Bible."[29]

The most wide-ranging indictment of Henry as a modern thinker has been offered by James William McClendon, Jr. This theologian argues that Henry's theological method fits neatly into the modern paradigm, as his "philosophical work" is characterized by the "four recurrent marks" of that epistemological paradigm: it is "human-centered, universalizable, reductionist, and foundationalist."[30] Modern thought is *anthropocentric* in that it makes human nature the measure of all things.[31] It tends to *universalization* by assuming that "what matters for anybody must matter for everybody."[32] This tendency assumes that one set of experiences will provide the norm for the rest of culture, and is, thus, "imperialistic" in its approach to knowledge.[33] Further, modern thought is *reductionist* in its tendency to reduce everything to its components in a manner analogous to the scientific tendency to reduce analysis to molecules, atoms and subatomic particles, (an approach found in Positivism),[34] rather than to widen the angle to a more expansive investigation.[35]

The fourth of McClendon's attributes of modernist thought requires a bit more comment. *Foundationalism* refers to the tendency of Cartesian and, to some extent, Lockean epistemologies to construct all of knowledge upon self-evident and indubitable foundations.[36] It is the attempt to find an Archimedean Point from which one's entire system can be recursively built. Descartes wistfully proffered, "I shall have the right to entertain high hopes, if I am fortunate enough to find only one thing which is certain and indubitable."[37] Descartes sought to ground his system in a set of rational first principles, principles which were, then, metaphysical

in orientation. An empiricist version of this passion for epistemological certainty is found in Locke.

> Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters without any ideas: How then comes it to be furnished? . . . First, our Senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey to the mind several distinct perceptions of things. . . . And thus we come by those *ideas* we have of *yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet*, and all those which we call sensible qualities.[38]

There does seem to be less of the indubitable triumphalism in this project than that which is proposed by Descartes, but certainly similar ideas are found here. The empirical form of foundationalism came to its most consistent expression in the logical positivism of such figures as Carnap, Ayer, and the early Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein began the *Tractatus* with the observation, "The world is all that is the case."[39] After spending seventy tortuous pages delineating what can and cannot be included in his theory of the declarative sentence, he concluded it with, "What we cannot speak about we must consign to silence."[40] Common to both the Cartesian and the positivist systems is the belief that philosophy is "largely an exercise in epistemology."[41]

The foundationalist enterprises of Descartes and of positivism constituted a search for a rational or empirical starting point which was clear, indubitable, and noninferential, a starting point whose delineation would then set the pattern for the philosophical edifice which each would then construct.[42] But this approach to epistemology has been dealt severe blows by recent thinkers, particularly thinkers in the Anglo-American tradition.

Early criticisms were offered by William James and Charles Sanders Peirce, each of whom contended in his own way that the purpose of philosophical inquiry was not the articulation of epistemological grounds for knowledge, but was that it be a tool for the clarification of thinking in order that habits of practical conduct could be reformulated.[43] Wittgenstein, though, delivered the most telling blow to the foundationalist project. Rejecting his earlier positivist conclusions, in which he believed he had solved all philosophical problems, the Cambridge professor now proposed that language was not a picture of reality, but rather that languages were local realms of discourse which had ultimately pragmatic purposes, and which must then be evaluated only within the limits of each such local discourse.[44] Since there is no metalanguage, with one universal key to determining all of reality, specific languages are only sets of social pragmatics marked out by specific communities of discourse.[45] *Philosophy*, now, for Wittgenstein, was the attempt to remove the bewitchment to understanding caused by language. This means that there is no such thing as final truth, construed as correspondence to reality, since each community of discourse does nothing more than attempt to mark out, in a coherent fashion, the language game[46] which is endemic to that community. At best, truth is judged by the coherence of the game, or perhaps only as that which works.[47] The search for indubitable and noninferential foundations to universal truth claims, it would seem, had now been permanently banished from the field of respectable intellectual inquiry.

For McClendon, these four matters constitute the criteria of the modernist epistemological *gestalt*. Exactly why he chooses just these issues as the essential crystallizations of modernism rather than others, such as specific conceptualizations of rationality or human epistemological autonomy over against revealed theology, is not clear from his presentation.[48] The exact constitution of the "modernist paradigm" is a matter about which there is no common consent among theologians and philosophers. The purpose here is to examine the manner in which he indicts Henry on these counts; and he does believe that Henry has committed himself to the modernist paradigm. "It is helpful to compare Henry with Descartes: though their thought is not identical, whether it be rationalism, dualism, the philosophical role of God, or the role of ideas that correspond to reality by divine guarantee, Henry will be ranked as a twentieth century *Cartesian*."[49]

McClendon accuses Henry of being anthropocentric in that he grants to the *imago Dei* a "central role."[50] Henry's philosophy is universalizing in the place he gives to the role of reason. Henry is also a reductionist, a fact that can be seen in his tendency to reduce "Scripture's content to rational propositions."[51] According to McClendon, he is a foundationalist, as can be seen in his commitment to "the architectonic [system] with its threefold foundation."[52] These thinkers have claimed that Henry is a modernist, a Cartesian, a Rationalist. Is such an asseveration justified?

Carl Henry on Reason, Truth, and Foundations

Henry's discussions of these issues is so expansive that one faces an impossible task to address the matter within the space limitations of a study such as this. But this section of the discussion will

attempt to summarize his views on the specific issues which have been raised: the nature of *truth*, the role of *human reason* in theology, and the problem of the *foundations* of Christian theology.

Henry uses the word *reason* to refer simply to "man's intellect, mind or cognitive powers."[53] It is not, however, to be widened to include everything that is not irrational. He views reason in theology as an instrument for recognizing truth, though not as a *source* of truth or as a tool for *constructing* models of cognition based on the autonomous reflection on empirical data or on universal principles not derived from Scripture. The very notion of revelation "gives no quarter to the idealistic illusion that human reason is intrinsically capable of fashioning eternal truth."[54] Reason is "man's logical capacity."[55] Again, "Christian doctrines are not derived from experimental observation or from rationalism, but from God in his revelation."[56] As a means of recognizing truth, reason can serve a verification role, a way of testing the truth claims of Christianity,[57] since it has the ability to "recognize and elucidate" truth, but even the divine image in humans does not enable them either to intuit or generate truth claims.[58]

The epistemological foundation of the Christian faith is divine revelation. This revelation is "rational communication conveyed in intelligible ideas and meaningful words, that is, in conceptual-verbal form."[59] Henry rejects the Kantian attempt to deny that humans can have knowledge of God or of doctrinal truths. He skirts the Kantian epistemological bifurcation, which claims knowledge *only* for that which is phenomenal and posits faith alone as the means of encountering the realm of noumena, by asserting that God,

in his divine condescension, has done what would otherwise be impossible—he has made true theological knowledge and true knowledge of himself available to humanity through Scripture.[60] This revelation is available to believing reason. For him, faith and reason are not to be divorced. "If reason is the precondition of all intelligible experience, then it will be necessary to avoid the divorce of faith and logic."[61] This is not the same, though, as saying that the Bible will allow a "total correlation of reality, reason, meaning and progress with the providence of empirical scientific methodology."[62] The mind can receive true knowledge through revelation in Scripture, though this knowledge will not be exhaustive or final. "Divine revelation does not completely erase God's transcendent mystery, inasmuch as God the Revealer transcends his own revelation."[63] It is also the case that every interpreter is potentially fallible. Every interpretation must be open to the reforming, correcting work of God's revelation in Scripture.[64] Henry has no sympathy with positivism, whether theological or scientific.[65]

Henry has repeatedly observed that the language of the Bible is clear and understandable and is in the form of "objectively intelligible statements."[66] He is not sympathetic with Barth's concern that human language is an inadequate vehicle for the communication of divine truth. "If language is the product of sin, conditioned by man's perverted nature and unsuitable even when revelation grasps it, there arises the question whether God would or could use it."[67] That does not mean that the "words we use are identical with the objects they designate," but rather that we can have some confidence that God would not deceive us by using language

that has no real correspondence to reality.[68] Furthermore, Henry observes that the Bible does not present us an "extended treatise" on religious epistemology, and does not endorse a "single correct system of epistemology," and so it would be "unjustifiable to identify any one scheme as biblical."[69]

Henry is convinced that theology can be constructed without appeal to a dialectical method and without conceding that doctrines contradict one another. He affirms that it may be difficult at times for theologians to understand the relationship between such doctrines as divine election and human responsibility, but he will not concede that they flatly contradict one another. He appeals to the law of non-contradiction, not to determine the truth of revelation, but only as a negative test for truth.[70] "Logical consistency is not a positive test of truth, but a negative test; if it were a positive test, logical consistency would accredit all views, however conflicting, that consistently follow from differing starting points."[71]

Is Henry, then, a rationalist? That would depend on what one means by the term. Henry did not reject the designation for himself, as long as he had the right to give his own definition of the term.[72] Certainly he was convinced that the biblical revelation was credible and reasonable, rather than incredible and irrational.

> The main issue for the intellectual world is whether the biblical revelation is credible; that is, are there good reasons for believing it? I am against the paradox mongers and those who emphasize only personal volition and decision. They tell us we are to believe even in the absence of good reasons for believing. Some even argue that to seek to give good reasons for the faith within us is a sign of lack of trust or an exercise in self-justification. This is nonsense.

> Against any view that faith is merely a leap in the dark, I insist on the reasonableness of Christian faith and the "rationality" of the living, self-revealed God.[73]

Henry then affirms that revelation is rational, but he denies that one can construct theology on positivist or rationalist grounds. Henry's rationalism is more in line with the Anglo-American tradition, in which reason functions as a means of coming to truth, but does not itself provide the content of truth, an approach one finds in the Continental tradition of Descartes and Kant. Reason is functional, not normative or teleological. Further, his presuppositionalism served as a counterpoint to his understanding of reason, a commitment on his part which further insulates him from falling prey to traditional forms of autonomous rationalism.

McClendon's paper raised one other important issue—Henry's use of the *imago Dei*. McClendon contends that Henry's repeated appeal to this makes humans the measure of all things. Henry contends that the universe has its ground in the divine Logos, which is the source of creation. The first chapter of John notes that the Logos is the creator and it also affirms that this Logos enlightens the mind of every person, making knowledge possible.[74] This guarantee of human rationality is most clearly detected in the Bible's teaching about the *imago Dei*. While the *imago* contains various elements—spiritual, rational, moral—it is the rational that holds priority. This means that humans come equipped with the formal realization that truth and error, right and wrong, and God and not-God are actual objective distinctions.[75] Anthropology, in Henry's opinion, is one of the most volatile areas of contemporary theology.

The contemporary view regards man's conceptual apparatus as a by-product of experience shaped by the evolutionary past. Moreover, it claims to derive all the content of human knowledge solely from empirical considerations. Ever since Darwin, man's reason has been routinely assigned an animal ancestry, and since Freud the deepest commitments of his psyche have been anchored in myth.[76]

It seems pretty clear that a major reason for Henry's detailed discussion of this issue arises from the place anthropology has assumed in contemporary thought, whether in the realm of theological discourse or sociological discourse. Carl Henry holds to a *form* of the correspondence theory of human understanding, but a form of correspondence that is modified by his presuppositionalism and by his understanding of divine revelation. What the human mind knows does have some correspondence to that which is real, for "if the human mind cannot know reality itself, but only what corresponds to it, the consequence would seem to be skepticism."[77] White concludes, "Henry offers a modification of the correspondence theory of truth, . . . [a] correspondence understanding in terms of divine revelation, which gives us reality in true correspondence."[78]

Critical Assessment: Is Carl Henry a Modernist?

Is Carl Henry a modernist? Is he a modern incarnation of Descartes? Is his theology anthropocentric, universalist, reductionist, and foundationalist? The charge of anthropocentrism is unfounded. One cannot read (or even skim, since few have actually read all of it) his six-volume *God, Revelation and Authority* and not come away with the impression that

God is majestic and sovereign and that this is a theology which sees God as high and lifted up. That Henry spends a great amount of time dealing with such issues as the *imago Dei* is not in itself proof that this is an anthropocentric theology. Few thinkers have accorded the image of God in humans as much attention as did Emil Brunner, who also construed the *imago Dei* as an apologetic point of contact, but McClendon does not paint him with the brush of "modernity." Henry makes it clear that his concerns over anthropology are apologetic and polemical, but it is pretty clear that his dogmatic project is not determined simply by such polemical concerns, and it seems certain that his methodology does not locate "morality and reality alike in *human beings*,"[79] but in the sovereign God.

Does Henry's approach to doing prolegomena and speaking directly to the question of truth reflect an Enlightenment model of Christian epistemology?[80] Several responses to this question seem to be called for. First, does it not seem rather that Henry's formulations reflect the need to reply to Enlightenment objections to Christianity? The "modern" situation has raised questions not broached in earlier times in the church. The rise of modern natural science and of historicism and positivism have created apologetical problems for the church not heretofore encountered. Henry's discussions of revelation and truth are a response to this scenario. And while this one set of concerns may be relatively new, it is not a novelty for the church to be forced to face deadly objections in the intellectual world, questions which may not be addressed specifically and straightforwardly by biblical texts. In the early church Athanasius stood for two-nature Christology, as this was the

area of Christian truth under attack at the time. There were Christian thinkers in his day who held that he was using improper methodology or that he was going beyond the explicit, didactic concern of the biblical text. He was later accused of displaying a greater commitment to Greek scholasticism than to the biblical narrative. Yet orthodox interpreters agree that Athanasius was right and his detractors were wrong.[81] Henry's work stands as testimony to the need to articulate the doctrines of anthropology, revelation, and theology proper in a climate in which these biblical teachings are being reduced by those with an alien worldview.[82] It might be the case that Henry's style and language of dealing with *axioms* and *postulates* is a little old-fashioned and off-putting to a post-modern generation, but style is not necessarily an indication that substance is rationalistic. It is possible, then, to read Henry's work as a continuation of a polemical tradition which has ancient roots, and not one which is modernistic in orientation.[83]

McClendon also claims that Henry is reductionist in that he reduces Scripture to only a set of propositional truth claims. This is patently not the case, as Henry notes the variety of genres in Scripture and concludes that the wealth of images in the text must be considered in constructing a systematic theology. Henry further recognizes the presence of narrative materials in Scripture and affirms that theology ought to give due attention to the Bible as a metanarrative.[84] What he is unwilling to do, however, is to allow those concerns to negate the need for a theology constructed on or woven out of the conviction that revelation is cognitive.

What of the foundationalist concern? Central to some of these assaults is the notion that revelation is essentially non-cognitive and that it involves self-referential language. McClendon asserts, "I can be strict in my knowledge-claims, it seems, only by remaining strictly at home."[85] In another place he notes,

> There is no essence of religion; religions are neither . . . all more or less true nor . . . all more or less evil. It follows that generalizations about religion are generally mistaken, since religions differ in kind, and only concrete, sympathetic historical and empirical study can tell us about any particular religion. We may call this the practical theory of religion . . . in the sense that its concern is the life shaping . . . practices religions embody.[86]

In a similar manner, Kenneson's essay in the volume, *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*, proposes that Richard Rorty offers an appropriate model for doing Christian apologetics today, a model which eschews correspondence and cognitive truth claims in favor of a coherence or pragmatic model of truth.[87] Both McClendon and Kenneson deny that they are relativists.[88] Yet, one is hard pressed to read their methodological proposals without concluding that the ghost of relativism is rattling its chains somewhere in the house.[89]

Is Henry a foundationalist? If one means by "foundationalist," the search for Cartesian certainty through the discovery of indubitable and noninferential truth claims arrived at through reason or reflection, then the answer is a resounding, "no." For McClendon, Spencer, and Frei to allege as much is surely itself a reductionist and impressionistic claim, one which can not be substantiated from an analysis of Henry's writings. It might be correct, on the other hand, to call Henry a scriptural foundationalist, a term used by

Nancey Murphy in her discussion of Donald Bloesch.[90] Henry is clearly a biblical foundationalist in that his entire edifice is founded upon a rock-ribbed conviction that the Bible is to be trusted, while all philosophical systems are suspect, even Platonism, Aristotelianism and, certainly, Cartesianism.

But it may be possible to push the description of Henry's foundationalism a bit further. He believes that the law of noncontradiction can be used as a negative way of assessing truth claims. McClendon, Bloesch, Frei, Olson, and Spencer do not. But one has to wonder, how can one do evangelical theology and reject some usage of noncontradiction? Many of these thinkers prefer the coherence theory of truth to the correspondence theory, but does not this itself entail the idea that A is not non-A in the same manner and at the same time? How can one hold to a belief in biblical inerrancy and reject this assertion?[91] How can one believe in cognitive revelation and not maintain a commitment to such a conviction?[92] How can one hold to a theology which makes ultimate truth claims and not agree that this simple rule of logic might in fact come from the *imago Dei*? Robert Audi has recently argued that foundationalism is not the great Satan of contemporary thought, but rather, that a certain form of foundationalism is virtually required of anyone who does not wish to fall into pure subjectivism and skepticism. Referring to Rorty's negative assessment of traditional Western epistemology, he writes,

> We may need a map, and not merely a mirror, of the world to navigate it, but if experience does not generally mirror reality, we are in no position to move to the abstract level on which we can draw a good map. If a mirror without a map is insufficiently discriminating, a map without a mirror is insufficiently reliable.[93]

A commitment to foundationalism, then does not necessarily imply a commitment to indubitable and noninferential truths. There is, for instance, such a thing as fallibilist foundationalism.[94] While Henry certainly believes the truths of Scripture are indubitable, he recognizes that human knowledge is always subject to error and revision. In regards to Scripture, Henry is certainly a firm, biblical foundationalist; in regards to the outworking of the theological implications of biblical asseverations, it appears that Henry is a soft foundationalist, one who is willing to admit that all our claims to understanding are subject to the eternal bar of God's judgment.

Conclusion

The postmodern evangelicals want to move in the direction of a narrative theology which exists *in der Luft*, with little or no commitment to a cognitive understanding of revelation. If theology is essentially a description of the intra-biblical rules for speaking about Christ, thus regulating the idiom and ensuring its consistency, one might raise the question of its relation to the world outside the narrative framework of Scripture. In other words, is it possible to make truth claims "in an ontological, rather than an intrasystemic sense"?[95] Bultmann assumed that the *kerygma* lay "beyond challenge or justification."[96] His students later rejected this as untenable and so inaugurated a new quest for the historical foundations of the Christian *kerygma*.[97]

Evangelicalism is flirting with danger when it takes its new gurus to be Wittgenstein, Frei, Austin, Lindbeck, and Rorty.

It seems better to hold, with Henry, that revelation comes to us in both narrative and cognitive forms, and that both narrative and cognitive revelation speak of the God who speaks and shows in a manner that corresponds to, though certainly does not exhaust, who he really is.

Carl Henry has resisted the move toward epistemological skepticism and rank fideism, without at the same time capitulating to Cartesian or Lockean foundationalism. This article has sought to demonstrate that fact. He is a biblical foundationalist who utilizes a modified form of the correspondence theory of truth in apologetics and who stands generally within the Anglo-American tradition of understanding rationality, while resisting the recent trend of that tradition to drift toward postmodernism. Rather than moving in the direction of modernism, Henry steers the church away from modernism and toward Scripture, which he claims can be trusted in all that it claims about God and the world. He affirms that its truth claims are extratextual as well as intratextual, in contrast to the exclusively narrative approach of many of his detractors, even those who identify themselves as "evangelical." Henry does in essence challenge theology to make two faith affirmations—one that Scripture is true and the other that Christ is the one hope for humanity—but he sees the two faith affirmations as part of the same indivisible package.[98] The allegations from McClendon, Spencer, Bloesch and others that Henry is a Cartesian evangelical simply do not bear up under the weight of scrutiny.

ENDNOTES

[1]This article originally appeared in *Trinity Journal,* n.s., 20 (1999): 3-21. It is used here with permission and has been slightly revised.

[2]This decline was only perceived. The decades after 1925 witnessed the flourishing of the fundamentalist institutions. Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 13-32; George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 193-95.

[3]Joel A. Carpenter, "The Fundamentalist Leaven and the Rise of an Evangelical United Front," in *The Evangelical Tradition in America*, ed. Leonard Sweet (Macon, GA: Mercer Press, 1984), 258-69; idem, "From Fundamentalism to the New Evangelical Coalition," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America,* ed. George Marsden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 11-16.

[4]That this evangelicalism can be construed as a unified "movement" is argued in George Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, ix-x; David Wells, "On Being Evangelical: Some Theological Differences and Similarities," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990,* ed. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 389. For a contrary view, see D. G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 16

[5]Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 203-4; William Vance Trollinger, Jr., *God's Empire: William Bell Riley and Midwestern Fundamentalism* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 151-57.

[6]Harold John Ockenga, "Can Fundamen-

talism Win America?" *Christian Life and Times* (June 1947): 14.

[7]The previous generation of anti-modernist conservatives included thinkers such as Warfield and Machen, who could in no wise be lumped with radical, anti-intellectual fundamentalists such as J. Frank Norris. David B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary. Volume 2: The Majestic Testimony, 1869-1929* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996), 77-236. It is also important to see the links between Machen and Warfield on the one hand, and the tradition that arose in the evangelical revivals in the early eighteenth century on the other hand. Chad Owen Brand, "Defining Evangelicalism," in *Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times*, ed. Millard J. Erickson, Paul Kjoss Helseth, and Justin Taylor (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 281-306.

[8]George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 53; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 191-209.

[9]Biographical data on Henry is most easily accessible in Richard A. Purdy, "Carl F. H. Henry," in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 260-62, and in Henry's autobiography, Carl F. H. Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian* (Waco, TX: Word, 1986).

[10]Hans W. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, ed. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 24-25. This volume was assembled from lectures given by Frei in 1983

and 1987. See also Hans W. Frei, "Response to 'Narrative Theology: An Evangelical Appraisal,'" *Trinity Journal*, n.s., 8 (Spring, 1987), 23-30. This is Frei's reply to Carl Henry's criticisms of narrative theology.

[11]Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, 24. Frei's estimate that classical liberal theology is non-foundationalist is subject to serious question. Murphy demonstrates convincingly that the liberal theological tradition associated with Friedrich Schleiermacher, Shailer Mathews, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and Gordon Kaufman is explicitly foundationalist. Nancey Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism: How Modern and Postmodern Philosophy Set the Theological Agenda* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1996), 22-28.

[12]Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, 24.

[13]Stephen R. Spencer, "'Evangelical Modernists'? Evangelical Responses to Postmodernism and Postliberalism," (unpublished paper delivered to the Southwest Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, March 21, 1997), 7.

[14]Ibid. He makes this claim after critiquing R. Albert Mohler's criticism of Stan Grenz on the grounds that he [Grenz] refused "to begin theology by establishing the role of Scripture in Christian theology." Ibid., 6. It ought to be noted, for the sake of accuracy, that Mohler does not use the word "begin" in his critique. He says, quoting from Grenz, that "Grenz . . . suggest[s] that efforts to establish the role of Scripture in Christian theology are 'ultimately unnecessary.'" R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "The Integrity of

the Evangelical Tradition and the Challenge of the Postmodern Paradigm," in *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Assessment*, ed., David S. Dockery (Wheaton: Victor, 1995), 80. It is one thing to believe in the need to "begin" (one assumes, both chronologically and apologetically) the theological project by establishing the foundational role of Scripture; it is quite another to contend that such a project is ultimately a necessary component of the theologian's task.

[15]Spencer, "Evangelical Modernists," 9.

[16]Charles Scalise offers a similar criticism, when he contends that Henry begins with an architectonic prolegomena and an elaborate doctrine of revelation, an approach which results in an "Enlightenment-fueled transformation of the doctrine of revelation from a secondary doctrine waiting in the wings to the primary doctrine on center stage." Charles J. Scalise, *From Scripture to Theology: A Canonical Journey into Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 37.

[17]Roger Olson, *The Mosaic of Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 84.

[18]Ibid., 85.

[19]Donald G. Bloesch, *The Holy Spirit: Works and Gifts* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 35.

[20]Donald G. Bloesch, *The Battle for the Trinity* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1985), 70.

[21]Donald G. Bloesch, *The Last Things: Resurrection, Judgment, Glory* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004),

193.

[22]Donald G. Bloesch, *The Evangelical Renaissance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 42; idem, "The New Evangelicalism," *Religion in Life* 41 (1972): 335.

[23]Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (2 vols.; San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 2:268.

[24]Donald G. Bloesch, *A Theology of Word and Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 57. See the discussion in James Emery White, *What Is Truth? A Comparative Study of the Positions of Cornelius Van Til, Francis Schaeffer, Carl F. H. Henry, Donald Bloesch, Millard Erickson* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 146-51.

[25]Bloesch, *A Theology of Word and Spirit*, 253; idem, *Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration and Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 81.

[26]Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* (6 vols.; Waco, TX: Word, 1979), 4:456, quoted in Bloesch, *The Holy Spirit*, 37. Bloesch sees this as embodying the logos of God in Scripture, and therefore rejects Henry's thesis. Ibid.

[27]Other contemporary (or recent) evangelicals whom Bloesch would designate as rationalistic are R. C. Sproul, E. J. Carnell, the early Clark Pinnock, John Gerstner, J. Oliver Buswell, Millard Erickson and John Warwick Montgomery. His criticisms of Carl Henry seem to relate primarily to Henry's later works (specifically his six-volume *God, Revelation and Authority*). Bloesch's earlier writings tend to praise Henry's contribution. See, for instance, Donald G. Bloesch, *Ground of Certainty* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 22, footnote 21; idem, *Evangelical Renaissance*, 26-28, in which he actually perceives Henry to be among those who resist "elevat[ing] the Bible unduly" in the move toward a strong doctrine of inerrancy. The list of rationalistic theologians from the past includes Clement of Alexandria, Abelard, John Locke, Francis Turretin, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield. Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 40, 65, 81; idem, *A Theology of Word and Spirit*, 252-53; idem, *Evangelical Renaissance*, 42; idem, "The New Evangelicalism," 335; idem, *The Holy Spirit*, 37.

[28]Avery Dulles, "Pannenberg on Revelation and Faith," in *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 187.

[29]Bloesch, *The Holy Spirit*, 43.

[30]James William McClendon, Jr., "Christian Knowledge in the Sunset of Modernity," unpublished paper delivered at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, February, 1998, 8. It ought to be noted that this is an unpublished paper. It must be read, therefore, in the context of McClendon's published opinions on these matters.

[31]McClendon contends that "post-medieval (i.e., modern) theology," both orthodox and liberal, moved in a conscientiously anthropocentric direction: "Instead, modern theologians located morality and reality alike in *human beings*—in a word, modernity was deliberately anthropocentric." James William McClendon, Jr., *Systematic Theology: Doctrine* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 49 (emphasis in original). There is some ambiguity in McClendon's use of terms. In personal correspondence with this author he indicated his preference for the term "modern" over the term "modernist" in referring to Henry. Yet, in his systematic theology book he also lumps conservatives with other advocates of "modernity" whom he refers to as "modernists." Ibid., 49-50. In his writings, then, he has not made clear the distinction he wishes to draw between these terms.

[32]McClendon, "Sunset of Modernity," 2. "It is not assumed (though it may be true) that the standards of adequacy appropriate in one community are appropriate in others. . . ." James William McClendon, Jr. and James M. Smith, *Convictions: Defusing Religious Relativism* (2nd ed.; Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1994), 43.

[33]Ibid., 8.

[34]Ibid., 20.

[35]For a thorough treatment of this idea, see Nancey Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity: Philosophical Perspectives on Science, Religion and Ethics* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997), 12-34; idem, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 58-78.

[36]McClendon, "Sunset of Modernity," 2.

[37]René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and the Meditations* (trans. F. F. Sutcliffe; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 95. Hegel hailed Des-

cartes for erecting a "metaphysics of understanding." Hegel believed he was destined to bring this project to completion. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (vol. 3; trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson; New York: Humanities Press, 1968), 220-30.

[38]John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 121-23 (emphasis in original).

[39]Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (trans. D. F. Peers and B. F. McGuiness; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 1.0.

[40]Ibid., 7.0.

[41]John E. Thiel, *Nonfoundationalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 6.

[42]There are vast differences in the types of foundationalism found in the Cartesian/Kantian system over against the logical positivist system, since logical positivism is attempting to limit the sphere of knowledge to that which can be established by physics or mathematics, while the Continental rationalists are attempting to build an indubitable basis for knowledge based on metaphysics. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 172-73.

[43]Thiel, *Nonfoundationalism*, 8-10.

[44]One school of interpreting Wittgenstein claims that his later views developed out of his earlier views quite naturally and consistently, not by radical disjuncture. Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1973), 229-38. The outcome of this dispute

in no way affects the thesis of this argument.

[45]Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe (trans. G. H. von Wright; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), 11-12, 125-40.

[46]McClendon prefers the phrase, "linguistic practices," to the more colorful Wittgensteinian designation, "language game." McClendon and Smith, *Convictions*, 42.

[47]Gertrude Ezorsky, "Pragmatic Theory of Truth," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 6:427-30.

[48]Nancey Murphy's work is more specific in this regard. See her *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 1-18; idem, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism*, 11-15.

[49]McClendon, "Sunset of Modernity," 8 (emphasis in original).

[50]Ibid. McClendon summarizes his own perceptions of what Henry believes—there are no citations from Henry in his paper.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid. It is not readily apparent what McClendon means by the "three-fold foundation," since he does not elaborate on this matter at this point in the paper. Likely, he is referring back to his earlier comment about Descartes's foundationalism, when he noted that human thought was built on the foundations of "the existence of [one's] own self or mind, backed by the existence of that mind's Cause, the mathematically infinite God." Ibid., 5.

[53]Walter E. Johnson, "A Critical Analysis of the Nature and Function of Reason in the Theology of

Carl F. H. Henry" (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989), 41.

[54]Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:225-6.

[55]Ibid., 1:377; idem, *Remaking the Modern Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 220.

[56]Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:223. "We cannot commit others to the truth of revelation simply by theoretical argument." Idem, *Remaking the Modern Mind*, 215.

[57]Christianity is distinguished by its "objective truth, and must adduce the method of knowing and the manner of verification by which every man can become personally persuaded." Ibid., 213; idem, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1990), 37. For a brief discussion of how the Bible employs such an approach to verifying truth claims, see David L. Wolfe, *Epistemology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 78-82.

[58]Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:226. Henry's views on the role of reason place him within the Anglo-American tradition, which sees reason as instrumental, rather than the Continental tradition, which views reason as teleological and normative. Reason in the Anglo-American tradition refers to the ability of persons to understand given data and might include the ability to adjudicate between claims to truth by use of canons of rationality, such as consistency, but does not itself determine what that truth is. It is, thus, an inherently skeptical approach to rationality. Henry differs from the Anglo-American

tradition, as seen, for instance, in Hume, in that he *does* believe in the possibility of knowing truth, a possibility dependent ultimately on seeing the world through the lens of Scripture.

59 Ibid., 1:12.

60 Carl F. H. Henry, *Notes on the Doctrine of God* (Boston: Wilde, 1948), 48; idem, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:44. See also Russell D. Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 170.

61 Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:233.

62 Ibid., 1:117.

63 Ibid., 2:9.

64 Ibid., 4:296-352.

65 He rejects the evidentialist notion that a person can infer truth from mere historical inquiry. Events such as the resurrection of Jesus will not yield their meaning to the historian. Ibid., 1:223. Rather than historical observation, "divine revelation is the epistemic source and Scripture the methodological principle of the Christian interpretation of history." Ibid., 2:320.

66 Ibid., 1:223.

67 Ibid., 3:287. Neither does sin affect human logic in any direct fashion. Its effect is on the will, not on the ability of humans to draw correct deductions. Johnson, "Reason in the Theology of Carl Henry," 47.

68 Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 3:289.

69 Ibid., 1:224. See also White, *What Is Truth?*, 94, for further treatment of this question.

70 Johnson, "Reason in the Theology of Carl Henry," 51.

71 Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:235.

72 Johnson, "Reason in the Theology of Carl Henry," 53-54.

73 Carl F. H. Henry, "The Concerns and Considerations of Carl F. H. Henry," interview in *Christianity Today* 13 (May 1976): 21, quoted in Johnson, "Reason in the Theology of Carl Henry," 55.

74 Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 1:387.

75 Ibid., 2:125.

76 Ibid., 1:152.

77 Ibid., 1:237. This appears to be another rejection of Kantianism, this time the Kantian *a priori* forms of cognition. Kant's "Copernican Revolution" in epistemology argued that the mind does not correspond to what is "out there," but what is "out there" is only perceived in accord with the *a priori* categories of cognition which are hard-wired into the human psyche. This, of course, produced, in the next generation of German philosophy, an intractable skepticism about the reality of the external world.

78 White, *What Is Truth?*, 104.

79 To use McClendon's phrase once again. McClendon, *Systematic Theology: Doctrine*, 49.

80 This claim is made by Scalise, *From Scripture to Theology*, 37.

81 At the purely biblical level the debate between Arius and Athanasius was very nearly (but not quite) a draw. The Nicene crisis instantiates the "need to transfer theological reflection from commitment to the limits and defining conditions and vocabulary of the New Testament itself, in order to preserve its commitment to the New Testament proclamation. The genesis of doctrine lies in the exodus from uncritical repetition of the narrative heritage of the past." Alister E. McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine: A Study in the Foundations of Doctrinal Criticism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 7. McGrath agrees with Henry here that narrative theology, left to itself, is not adequate to complete the doctrinal task. It is somewhat puzzling, then, when Murphy makes the claim that McGrath is "a narrative foundationalist rather than a scriptural foundationalist." Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism*, 19.

82 I have argued in another place that though left-wing evangelicals and theological reductionists accuse people like Henry of capitulating to alien philosophical models, the truth is that these critics are far more guilty of such compromises than conservative evangelicals. Chad Owen Brand, "Genetic Defects or Accidental Similarities? Orthodoxy and Open Theism and their Connections to Western Philosophical Traditions," in *Beyond the Bounds: Open Theism and the Undermining of Biblical Christianity*, ed. John Piper, Justin Taylor, and Paul Kjoss Helseth (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003), 43-76.

83 It has become popular among postmodern thinkers to eschew questions that broach the academic discipline of philosophy of religion. In a volume dedicated to McClendon, one contributor voices his appreciation to McClendon for leading the discussion away from ques-

tions of "truth" and in the direction of pragmatics. When considering the objection that this might entail relativism, he replies, "Perhaps one person will have to consider the 'proofs' and 'moral demands' of Tibetan Buddhism and Shi'ite Islam, and another those of Methodist Christianity and heathenism. . . . But it is possible that the practices we properly undertake in varied religious traditions are analogous enough so that we can come in different ways to different forms of eternal happiness and joy, even if not to the same belief." Terrence W. Tilley, "In Favor of a 'Practical Theory of Religion': Montaigne and Pascal," in *Theology without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Nancey Murphy and Mark Nation (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 73.

[84]Carl F. H. Henry, "Narrative Theology: An Evangelical Appraisal," *Trinity Journal,* n.s., 8 (1987): 3-19.

[85]McClendon, "Sunset of Modernity," 17.

[86]McClendon, *Systematic Theology: Doctrine*, 421. Though McClendon does argue for the convictional nature of religious affirmations in terms of speech-acts, he is not clear in indicating how this relates to revelation and he is further non-committal in how his theory of language can be employed to understand the nature of metatheological discourse. This is a quite serious omission. Millard Erickson, *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Postconservative Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 57.

[87]Philip Kenneson, "There's No Such Thing as Objective Truth, and It's a Good Thing, Too," in *Christian Apologetics in a Postmodern World*, ed. Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Ockholm (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1995), 155-70.

[88]McClendon attempts to position himself between relativism and "imperialism," (a designation he would likely assign to the methodology of Henry) in a position he calls "perspectivism." McClendon and Smith, *Convictions*, 9. Kenneson writes, "In short, because I have neither a theory of truth nor an epistemology, I cannot have a relativistic one of either." Kenneson, "There's No Such Things as Truth," 161. Mohler wistfully asks concerning this comment, "Are we to be relieved?" R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "'Evangelical': What's in a Name?" in *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, ed. John H. Armstrong (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 39.

[89]To his credit, McClendon rejects Deconstructionism and he is at least skeptical about the possibility of a thoroughly Wittgensteinian methodology, but his affirmation of Austin's Speech-Act theory of language combined with Imre Lakatos's proposal for articulating scientific research programs as the model for assembling method leaves him still with (at least) a soft relativism. See his discussion in McClendon and Smith, *Convictions*, 47-196.

[90]Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism*, 17, 19.

[91]Of course, not all of these "evangelicals" affirm inerrancy. McClendon, *Systematic Theology: Doctrine*, 473-

77; Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Foundationalism*, 16, 43. Spencer, on the other hand, does affirm biblical inerrancy, as is clear from the fact that he is a member of ETS.

[92]Here Donald Bloesch's approach is seen to be problematic, since he does affirm cognitive revelation, but will not affirm that the law of noncontradiction can be applied to theological construction. He contends, rather, that theological constructs must be formulated dialectically, in the absence of any philosophical or rational certainty. "Theological reasoning is dialectical in that it moves through thesis and antithesis toward a synthesis that is realized only in eternity. But at the same time, it is controlled by its original starting point, which determines the parameters of its reflection." Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 208. There does seem to be an inherent lack of coherence in this model.

[93]Robert Audi, *The Structure of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 163-64.

[94]Jürgen Habermas may be the best representative of this position in contemporary thought. He affirms that rationality is teleological, but he is unwilling to inhabit the edifices of macro-foundationalism that have been handed on by Descartes and Kant. Thomas McCarthy, "The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School," in *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, ed. Michael Kelly (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 251-52.

[95]Alister McGrath, "An Evangelical Evaluation of Postliberalism," in

The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals and Postliberals in Conversation, ed. Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Ockholm (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 36.

[96]McGrath makes this comparison. McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine*, 30. For comments by Bultmann which justify this depiction, see Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Scribners, 1958), 84.

[97]See, for instance, Hans-Werner Bartsch, "The Historical Problem of the Life of Jesus," in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, ed. and trans. Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville (Nashville: Abingdon, 1964), 106-42, esp. 117-23.

[98]In 1950 Union Theological Seminary sponsored a public discussion between C. H. Dodd and Paul Tillich. The two men discussed the role of historical investigation and biblical scholarship in reference to living faith. Tillich offered that he had been grasped by the power of the new being, to which the New Testament presented an "analogy," but that "faith did not guarantee any historical (i.e., historically reconstructed) picture or ground any historical assertions concerning this or that fact of the historical Jesus." F. W. Dillistone, *C. H. Dodd: Interpreter of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 242. He claimed that this made his faith superior to its alternative, since it required only a "single risk." Dodd rejoined that no risk of faith is possible unless it has a historical ground, for one cannot "move from an inner feeling in the present to any sort of affirmation (via historical inquiry or not) about a past event." Ibid. He agreed that his position entailed a "double risk," but went on to contend that the preliminary historical risk "was really not all that great." Ibid., 243.