

Truth vs. Error

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NEO-EVANGELICALISM AND BILLY GRAHAM

In our last installment Ecumenical Evangelist Billy Graham was shown to be one who loves to be a great mixer with modernists and church liberals. He is one of the great spokesmen for the new evangelicalism, one of the greatest compromise movements the world has yet seen. Moses had trouble with the equivalent movement of his day. When he led the children of Israel through the wilderness, he had to face the opposition not only of the Edomites and the Moabites, but also of the mixed multitude that came with them out of Egypt. There were the Edomites on the one hand, the Moabites on the other and the Inbetweenites. Some of the Fundamentalists, however, think that this compromise position arises from faulty eschatology, namely, from post or a-millennialism. These particular errors are thought to have opened the door to neo-evangelicalism. This rather bizarre notion, not even remotely connected with fact, is dangerous because it casts suspicions upon the Reformed churches which have ever in all their history been a-millennial. As Protestant Reformed, the implication would be, we must paralogically open the doors to this and undoubtedly many other errors because of our a-millennialism. But we have nowhere, either in our doctrinal or practical life, assumed a compromise position. The Protestant Reformed position is not a compromise position. It is a position based on scriptural principles of exegesis, upon a biblical theology, upon unimpeachable hermeneutics and founded on the great Reformed confessions. The compromise of the neo-evangelicals does not stem from any eschatological position maintained, but from a spirit motivated by concession to ecclesiastical liberalism and the modern world. Neo-evangelicalism pretends to have a more respectable and more comprehensive theological and philosophical position than Fundamentalism that *it* more closely approaches to having a *weltanschauung*, a Christian world-and-life view. In this connection it charges Fundamentalism with setting up a “dichotomy between the personal gospel and the social gospel.” Now we, as Reformed, have never accepted either the concept or the expression “social gospel” as anything but anti-American, anti-scriptural and anti-Christ. For the “social gospel” is no gospel at all and Galatians 1:7-9 and its curse apply to it. However, the gospel, the true gospel, is not antithetical to man’s social problems. The Word of God provides for man’s social as well as his spiritual needs. The Reformed Faith is a comprehensively well integrated system of truth embracing of the whole of reality, nothing excepted, but everything having its ordained place and God-given interpretation.

The father of neo-evangelicalism and inventor of the term itself, is said to be Harold John Ockenga, pastor of Park Street Congregational Church, Park and Tremont Sts., Boston. He tells us that the strategy of neo-evangelicalism differs from that of Fundamentalism, which is that of separation, in that it adopts the tactic of infiltration. This is the tactic of permeation, the aim being to capture from within. This concept, “infiltration,” has a bad connotation. It sounds too much like the strategy of the Unitarian, which is to infiltrate the Protestant denominations, “like breaking a hole in the Chinese wall”, or like “grafting new thought.....on the older churches....by indirection a large part of the finest and subtlest work is accomplished....the purpose of its very existence is.....undoubtedly capturing strongholds that we could never carry by direct attack....the modernists of Protestantism....are working from within the fold....we want more of them and we want them where they are.” “What could Unitarianism hope to achieve? To permeate other churches with liberal tendencies.....to leaven the lump

of...Christianity.” They “work from the inside....doing it successfully and the gradual permeation of the orthodox denominations with liberal ideas disseminated by trusted leaders of their own appears to them the best procedure.” Within the body of the Christian church they gradually “sow the seeds of liberalism and wait until the time was ripe for more aggressive agitation.” (From Unitarian writings quoted in “The Leaven of the Sadducees”). Not only is such “infiltration” the strategy of Unitarianism, but the neo-evangelicals open their doors to the Unitarians. At the 150th anniversary of Park Street Church, Feb. 28, 1959, included among the speakers beside Ockenga were Rev. Dana McLean Greely, president of the American Unitarian Association and Erwin D. Canham, editor of the Christian Science Monitor. Now let no one charge us with “smearing” by association. Not we, but the neo-evangelicals have made their own sullied associations.

Neo-evangelicalism does not, as Fundamentalism, make an “attack upon error”, but rather proclaims “the great historic doctrines of Christianity”. The implication is that Fundamentalism is largely negative, while neo-evangelicalism is more positive. The same reasoning would make the Protestant Reformed Churches negativistic because they maintain the *Rejection of Errors* appended to the Canons of Dort, whereas the Reformed churches omitting these “Rejections” would be deemed more positive in approach. But the Bible, the Ten Commandments, the Reformed Faith, the Reformation theology, Calvinism-however you wish to refer to the Christian truth, is both negative and positive. The Word of God thunders NO to sin and YES to righteousness. There is in the gospel no dichotomy between the negative side and the positive side of the gospel. Both sides belong to the true Christian faith.

Says Ockenga, “The New Evangelical is willing to face the intellectual problems and meet them in the framework of modern learning.” Some make the mistake of looking for a common ground where the Christian and the non-Christian may meet. The area of “common grace,” they say, is such a ground and meeting place. But the Word of God affords the non-Christian no place of refuge anywhere except in Christ. He cannot find a refuge in any neutral or common ground. But there are other men who do much worse, in standing on the enemy’s ground. The only safe position is on the ground of Scripture truth, the doctrine of God and that as exemplified in the Reformed confessions. Otherwise, the church soon ceases being the church and conforms to the world.

A further criticism neo-evangelicalism makes of Fundamentalism is that the latter has failed because it is really not *fundamental*, it is rather peripheral and taken too much with subsidiary elements of the faith. This is true. Fundamentalists, despite their vaunted name, have really never been as fundamental as a true adherent of the Reformed Faith. For they have always omitted the most basic fundamentals of the faith, the absolute sovereignty of God, the eternal counsel of God, the doctrine of Predestination, election and reprobation, in fact, the Five Points of Calvinism without which the fundamentals are sterile. In this connection, one failure of Fundamentalism is that although it has consistently fought modernism, it has never exposed Arminianism, which, unless uprooted, invariably leads to modernism. Arminianism is incipient modernism. There is simply no effective antidote against the plague of modernism without taking steps to eradicate the deadly germ of Arminianism. But in all the above respects, worse than Fundamentalism, neo-evangelicalism has failed. For it is even less fundamentally supported upon biblical and spiritual bases. These ecumenical neutralists are permeated with pious platitudes, pragmatic religion and Arminian theology.

Neo-evangelicalism kicks against the goads (Act. 9:5). Especially does it do this with regard to such arrows of the Almighty as 2 Cor. 6:14-19! They struggle like a dove in a snare to

avoid the force of such barbs. Billy Graham claims such texts do not apply to him on the ground that he is an evangelist. It is the calling of an evangelist to separate from sin, but not from sinners; to reprove and rebuke as an evangelist, but not to reprove as an apostle, a prophet, an elder or a watchman on the walls of Zion. It is his calling to lead those who ought to come into the church, not to expel those who ought to be removed from the church. Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, when he defected to neo-evangelicalism similarly (mis) interpreted this passage, referring it exclusively to the idols of the Corinthian temples. According to this casuistry, the Bible loses its force, not applying to any man in any age following the period in which it was written. The Word of the Judge of all the earth set aside by a potsherd of the earth whenever he deems it convenient! But God is not mocked. He needs only a worm to prove this. (Joel 1:4). One of our own former ministers went so far as to defend heresies in the church. He thought he had Scripture grounds for his contention (corruption) in I Cor. 11:18, 19, Gk. But one text is perverted when it is twisted and forced to fly in the face of other texts. See, e.g. Titus 3:10.

Consider the maudlin defense of this ministry of compromise, namely that no one is perfect; we are not always at all times as consistent and faithful as we ought to be; our hearts are not pure enough to qualify us as irreproachable critics. Then judge not, lest ye be judged. Valid and acceptable will be your judgment when you become as successful a servant of God as Billy Graham, preach the gospel as widely as he and have the concern for souls he has. This is the erroneous principle that results prove a doctrine. If this were true, the magicians of Egypt must have borne a divine imprimatur, for they too, obtained results. But Isaiah had much more discernment. He said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (8:20). Still, we do concede that we are not to judge according to appearance, but to judge righteous judgment (Jn. 7:24), especially when God's honor and the cause of the true church are at stake. Love for souls demands that we unflinchingly heed the divine directive, "Cry aloud! Spare not! Lift up thy voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1). That love for whose sake the Word of God is put to the stake is cursed!

For a long time, many people have had their doubts about Billy Graham. For a long time, thousands have had their doubts about the false ecumenical, one-church movement. Now Graham has been adopted by the ecumenists, modernists, Romanists and Jews to disarm the die-hards in the multitudes. No wonder they take him under their wing! The Graham crusade, after the Nashville meetings donated about \$65,000 toward a stadium at Vanderbilt University, "an extremely liberal Methodist institution on whose faculty the blasphemous Nels Ferre was then serving." As a result of the New York crusade the Graham organization presented a gratuity of \$67,000 to the N.Y. Protestant Council of Churches. The *New York Times*, Oct. 25, 1963, reported, "Dr. Graham...recalled that during a recent Graham crusade in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the Roman Catholic bishop stood beside him and blessed the converts as they came forward. Protestant leaders protested that such a display should not be permitted, Dr. Graham said he told them: 'He's the bishop here. You go ahead and stop it.'" If anyone has ever made a terrible affront upon the Protestant Christian conscience, Billy Graham has done it in this act and in these words. It is not unlike the heartless answer of the Jewish hierarchy to Judas, "See thou to it!" It is not a figment of our imagination that Graham openly cooperates not only with the worst modernist liberals of apostate Protestantism, but also with Christ-hating Jews and with Roman Catholics, to whom all history witnesses were the greatest enemies of the Lord and His people. These staggering facts, signs neither of reformation nor revival, are upon us and of the

approaching kingdom of Antichrist, not among the least culpable precursors of which is Billy Graham.

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