

**The Church at the Beginning of the 21st Century:
Remembering Francis Schaeffer on Inerrancy and Evangelical Identity.**

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As one begins to explore the thought of Francis Schaeffer on the matter of inerrancy, it is easy to see that Dr. Schaeffer dealt with the subject on multiple fronts. Firstly, from his personal life, having come to faith from Agnosticism by deciding to read the Bible for the sake of intellectual honesty. Then also, having met his future wife Edith, at a youth gathering, where the speaker was presenting on the topic of "*How I know the Bible is not the Word of God.*" From these stories, from his early years, to his ongoing writings, and his involvement with the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI) in the closing years of his life, it is safe to say that Dr Schaeffer dealt with the matter of inerrancy his entire life.¹

Dr. Schaeffer's ministry largely dealt with countering what was phrased at the time as "the new modernism." This term included such movements as secular and religious Liberalism, Existentialism and Neo-orthodoxy. Among these, more specifically, religious Liberalism and Neo-orthodoxy, who generally seek to integrate secular thought in religious context, have largely held compromised views of the Bible. Thus, at the core of countering those worldviews, Dr. Schaeffer constantly affirmed the notions of truth and absolutes based on the foundation of Scripture. Quotes regarding scriptural authority are peppered throughout his works. Due to this fact, there are numerous places where we could start.

Dr. Schaeffer perhaps writes the most directly on the matter of the reliability of the Bible in in the second volume of his *Complete Works*, which has the subtitle of "*The Christian View of the Bible as Truth.*" Within this volume there are now compiled, several significant books such as *Genesis in Space and Time* and *No Final Conflict*, that give a wonderful response to Biblical skepticism related to the historical nature of *Genesis*. Dr. Schaeffer's *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History*, gives us some solid Biblical-historical analysis, wherein he constantly draws our attention throughout to the relevance of the Bible and the standards of truth, through the story of Joshua. Yet, beyond this volume, in the fourth volume of his *Complete Works*, "*A Christian View of the Church*," we find Dr. Schaeffer constantly holding the Church to the Biblical standard. Herein, we find titles, on Evangelical identity, such as his works, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, *The Church Before the Watching World*, and *The Great Evangelical Disaster*. All of which are full of broad source material.

¹ These were covered at in an earlier lecture in 2013 by the author entitled *Francis Schaeffer and the Historical Adam*.

So considering all of this, in order to be concise regarding Dr. Schaeffer's views, the goal in this paper shall be to outline where these two subjects meet. Thankfully, I believe there are several segments, in both the aforementioned books and also in some forgotten places, that do a wonderful job with this for us. So while we will cover some of the significant quotes from these various works, we will specifically focus on the prominent areas.

The first segment I would like us to briefly consider is outside of the aforementioned volumes. It is a section in an early work called *Death in the City*, entitled, *The Man Without the Bible*, which gives a prescription for speaking to our generation who have lost the Biblical context. This will be of great value to us as apologist, but I believe this brief glimpse will prove even more valuable to the subject at hand, as we seek to understand both the meaning of Dr. Schaeffer's stance on scripture and how Dr. Schaeffer's view remained consistent throughout his life.

The Man Without the Bible

In this interesting chapter, "the man without the Bible," Dr. Schaeffer explores the areas of scripture where the apostle Paul ministers to people without the Biblical context. Dr. Schaeffer sees these encounters as examples that we can use as guides to give answers to modern man, who has truly lost the Biblical context. What will be surprising to many, is that Dr. Schaeffer first emphasizes and focuses on the wrath of God as spoken of in Romans 1:18. In the following quote from *Death in the City*, in the segment, *The Man Without the Bible*, Dr. Schaeffer directs us to where the apostle starts:

The first thing Paul says to the man without the Bible is this: "You're under the wrath of God because you hold the truth in unrighteousness." Notice that he immediately begins to preach the wrath of God. Think now of this man without the Bible (he is no different then than now). If you merely say what Paul said in 1:16 and 17, "Here's salvation," he will shrug his shoulders and say, "Why do I need salvation?" Or if modern man thinks he needs salvation, it will be some twentieth-century psychological salvation. But Paul says, "No. What you need is moral salvation. You are guilty. You have true guilt in the presence of God."²

Now this might be surprising to some, who recall that Dr. Schaeffer regularly taught the principle of "truth and love." Yet, here he is quite emphatic. This is what he believes scripture teaches is the proper way to address modern man. Yet, what should be noted is that what Dr. Schaeffer is speaking of is not a mere fire and brimstone proclamation, but rather, with the context of the proper heart attitude. It is in the context of Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, pleading and shedding tears for his culture. This is the broader subject matter of *Death in the City*, of which

² Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Four, A Christian View of the Church (Book: Death in the City)*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. 266.

this remark in couched. So we will find that Dr. Schaeffer's application of this passage is rather unique.

To that end, let us consider an additional caveat. Get ready for this! Dr. Schaeffer does not advise we start with the Bible in this endeavor! Now, before you panic, let's read from the summary of this chapter, where he makes this remarkable statement (again, reading from *Death in the City*):

Paul speaks in a special way to the man without the Bible. The man without the Bible has not suppressed special revelation (that is, the revelation in the Bible), but the general revelation given by the manhood of man and by the external world. It is then plain that the man without the Bible holds the truth in unrighteousness; he holds some of the truth about himself and the universe, but he does not follow it to its reasonable conclusions. Thereafter, a breakdown in morality occurs.³

Thus, we can now understand this quote from his book, *The God Who Is There*:

The truth that we let in first is not a dogmatic statement of the truth of the Scriptures, but the truth of the external world and the truth of what man himself is. This is what shows him his need. The Scriptures then show him the real nature of his lostness and the answer to it. This, I am convinced, is the true order for our apologetics in the second half of the twentieth century for people living under the line of despair⁴

You see, what Dr. Schaeffer, being true to Paul, is advising is that we first let the light of general revelation speak, by leading them to consider the truth of what is. For then, when man comes to acknowledge the tension he is in, we can then introduce him to Biblical truth, which meets his despair and need. Dr. Schaeffer was known to have done this in practical ways, sometimes in discussion and answering questions, but sometimes even more literally. One of our group members on Facebook, Douglas James, told me of his personal encounter with Dr. Schaeffer on this. After long hours of talking into the night, Dr. Schaeffer stopped him at one point and asked him if he would do something. He asked him to go outside and look at the stars and come back in when he was ready to talk about what he had seen. We can only imagine the majesty of the starry night that he must have seen in the high mountains of Switzerland. As Douglas stood outside looking at the stars, he was amazed by their beauty, and further still, it overwhelmed him. After coming back in, Dr. Schaeffer asked him what he had seen. Douglas remarked, "I don't know, but something changed inside." While what he had witnessed was something perhaps indescribable in the moment, it had become the means to the beginning of a transformation, and it was not without truth content. Thereafter, Dr. Schaeffer was able to speak to him the explicit truths of the Gospel, adding the relevant truth content, from the Special

³ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Four, A Christian View of the Church*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. 266.

⁴ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume One, A Christian View of Philosophy and Culture*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. 127

Revelation of Scripture and thereby, he could explain the need to bow and acknowledge true moral guilt before God. This particular example is rather unique in the use of nature, but as we shall see, we can also lead men to consider these things with the basic philosophical questions as well.

To grasp this we must understand that this consideration of general revelation is part of Dr. Schaeffer's theme of the two primary tensions of man. Man is noble and yet cruel, he is finite and yet requires an infinite reference point. As a matter of relating the text. The remarks and illustrations in this particular section, of *Death in the City, The Man Without the Bible*, closely match what is found in Dr. Schaeffer's, *He is There and He is Not Silent*. The broader context of that work, the first two chapters, explore the metaphysical and moral necessities man is dealt with. In direct connection to our topic, mankind is noted as having to deal with the basic philosophical question, "Why is something there?" Dr. Schaeffer notes that man will either provide a rational or irrational answer at this point. Either there is a reason for why something is there or there is not. The irrational answer, is that there is no answer. He further notes that, on the other hand, among the rational answers outside of accepting a personal-infinite God, all of the other answers end with an impersonal beginning. Thus, outside of a theistic answer, all that man is left with is the impersonal. This realization among certain philosophers has led them to the final conclusion that all is simply "Silence," (thus Dr. Schaeffer's book title). In other words, there is nobody home, and no reason for man's existence and nothing that answers man's uniqueness as being noble, and nothing that answers his dilemma of cruelty. Man is finally left with merely his finiteness in this reduction, as man is thought of now as a mere biological machine. Man has no answer for where his moral motions come from or where the things that make him man originate. He cannot understand beauty or love, as they are in the final analysis, to him, merely chemical. The Christian on the other hand, has this answer. Man was created in the image of a personal-infinite-triune God, who communicated to each other before the foundations of the world. Within Him is unity and diversity, and thus is the origin of personality. When we consider man's nobility and cruelty, we know that man is created in the image of God and yet fallen. He is cursed by the fall, but with an offered option of redemption, paid for by God himself, in the second person of the Trinity. So, as we think of the man without the Bible, we can see that the "truth of what is" testifies against him, and thus we must bring him gently to acknowledge that he holds the truth, the truth of what is, in unrighteousness.

There is much more we could say here in regard to Dr. Schaeffer's view of inerrancy in this light. Yet we will stop here as our point has been to highlight how it relates to Evangelical identity. If you wish to read more on Schaeffer's explicit explanation of inerrancy as it relates to his work, *He is There and He is Not Silent*, see the appendix A in that book, *Is Propositional Revelation Nonsense?*

As to Dr. Schaeffer's apologetic, and method, I do want to stop here and make sure that we avoid confusion in regard to the fact that taking the above treatment alone, one could possibly confuse Dr. Schaeffer's apologetic with Classicism, and indeed some scholars already have. Yet the way in which Dr. Schaeffer used this methodology must also be seen in context of the

other two previous works of the *Trilogy*, *The God Who Is There* and *Escape from Reason*. Dr. Schaeffer in these works describes using this sort of argumentation in the inverse, whereby one test the other person's presuppositions in these areas for sufficiency and leads them to their logical end, which, without the personal-infinite God, ends in despair. Then when this is done, the individual can be introduced to the Biblical truth content. It in this light that I believe we should call Schaeffer's methodology, a classically informed or modified Presuppositionalism. Yet, let's be clear, Dr. Schaeffer himself not only proved hard to classify, for although he seemed to utilize predominantly, a form of presuppositionalism, he also did not believe there was one explicit apologetic for every addressing every man.⁵ This highlights Dr. Schaeffer's desire to evangelize and have conversations for the sake of the kingdom of Christ, over and before a desire to mechanically adopt a specific methodology alone.

We will now move forward into the consideration of the related issues at stake. What does it mean for the man without the Bible and the church, when we do not hold to a strong view of Scripture.

The Issue at Stake

In this section we will briefly take a look into the opening chapter of *No Final Conflict*, which we should note is also a historically important in that it was first given as a message to Evangelicalism at the International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974.

Now, it should be obvious, from what we have already covered, that there are huge implications if we hold a poor view of Scripture in the area of apologetics. There is a need of being able to wield God's Word with timely skill and accuracy. For not only this, the matter touches the entire structure of the church. Listen to these next two quotes from Dr. Schaeffer:

It is my conviction that the crucial area of discussion for evangelicalism in the next years will be the Scripture. At stake is whether evangelicalism will remain evangelical.⁶

We must say that if evangelicals are to be evangelicals, we must not compromise our view of Scripture. There is no use in evangelicalism seeming to get larger and larger, if at the same time appreciable parts of evangelicalism are getting soft at that which is the central core—namely, the Scriptures.

We must say with sadness that in some places, seminaries, institutions and individuals who are known as evangelical no longer hold to a full view of Scripture. The issue is clear: is the Bible truth and without error wherever it speaks, including where it

⁵ See Dr. Schaeffer's "*The Question of Apologetics*" Appendix A to *The God Who is There*

⁶ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Two, A Christian View of the Bible as Truth*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. 119

touches history and the cosmos, or is it only in some sense revelational where it touches religious subjects? That is the issue.⁷

This call for the church to retain its central core in the Scriptures is the standard refrain for Dr. Schaeffer, and his specific words, that draw us back to the reality of the “truth of what is” is foundational. Note the statement, “is the Bible truth and without error wherever it speaks, including where it touches history and the cosmos.” This is not arbitrary, but rather a regular word cadence that Dr. Schaeffer intentionally repeats over and over for emphasis in numerous places. Herein, he constantly wishes to affirm that Scripture is true in time and space. It is true to what is. Without this, the Christian is never able to move the non-believer from general revelation to special revelation. If the Bible is not true to what is, if it does not correspond, beyond merely religious subjects, as the numerous Modernist and Post-Modernist philosophies teach, it immediately becomes ineffectual. It is on this point where the aforementioned quotes show a direct and significant connection. A firm view of Scripture is at the foundation of all apologetics, and not only central for the explanation of salvation, but more emphatically true to what is given in general revelation. It is this correspondence, that constantly testifies of the personal-infinite God of the Bible to the watching world, who believe they stand alone in a universe of silence.

Now moreover, as Dr. Schaeffer indicates, we must also see that this is at the core of Evangelical identity. There is a need to continue to stand firm on the scriptures. This is how Dr Schaeffer closes this chapter:

Holding to a strong view of Scripture or not holding to it is the watershed of the evangelical world.

We must say most **lovingly** but clearly: evangelicalism is not consistently evangelical unless there is a line drawn between those who take a full view of Scripture and those who do not.(**bold** emphasis added)⁸

If you are not exactly clear on what he is saying here by the usage of the word “watershed,” our next segment will seek to clarify this most important terminology.

The Watershed of the Evangelical World

In *No Final Conflict and The Great Evangelical Disaster*, Dr. Schaeffer calls the matter of Scripture the “Watershed of the Evangelical World.” What does he mean by this? In general the most literal understanding of the term is a sharp divide. A simple online search will yield the definition as follows:

⁷ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Two, A Christian View of the Bible as Truth*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. 122

⁸ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Two, A Christian View of the Bible as Truth*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. 122

an area or ridge of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers, basins, or seas.⁹

Dr. Schaeffer explains it and applies it to Evangelicalism in the following way:

In our day that point is the question of Scripture. Holding to a strong view of Scripture or not holding to it is the watershed of the evangelical world.

The first direction in which we must face is to say most **lovingly** but clearly: evangelicalism is not consistently evangelical *unless there is a line drawn* between those who take a full view of Scripture and those who do not.

What is often forgotten is that where there is a watershed there is a line which can be observed and marked. If one had the responsibility in Switzerland, for example, for the development of hydroelectric power from the flow of water, one would have a great responsibility to determine the topography of the country and then mark where the line would fall, and where the water would divide and flow. In the watershed of the evangelical world, what does marking such a line mean? It means **lovingly** marking visibly where that line falls, **lovingly** showing that some are on the other side of the line, and making clear to everyone on both sides of the line what the consequences of this are.

In making visible where the line falls, we must understand what is really happening. With the denial of the full authority of Scripture, a significant section of what is called evangelicalism has allowed itself to be infiltrated by the general world view or viewpoint of our day. This infiltration *is really a variant of what had dominated liberal theological circles under the name of neo-orthodoxy* (**bold emphasis added**).¹⁰

Thus, this watershed, this line, is not just a mere division. Some might be quick to assume this is just another point of doctrine to divide the church. This argument, is really a false dilemma fallacy, as it puts the church situationally in a conflict with itself where there ought not be a conflict. As Schaeffer states, the church is not truly the church unless it has a firm view of Scripture. So those who would make the argument that this notion is a false divide are basically asking the church not to be the church at all. The church can no more remove a distinctive that defines itself in order to placate those who do not wish to adhere to it, than a dog can remove its bark. What is a dog without its bark? Is not what is being asked is for the dog to be muzzled, so that the enemy that stands at the gate can come in silently and plunder?

As we consider this, let us now moreover, see that Dr. Schaeffer warns of the broader implications of the true divide at this point.

Not far from where we live in Switzerland is a high ridge of rock with a valley on both sides. One time I was there when there was snow on the ground along that ridge. The snow was lying there unbroken, a seeming unity. However, that unity was an illusion, for

⁹ Google search: "definition watershed" accessed April, 3rd, 2015.

¹⁰ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Four, A Christian View of the Church*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. 334.

it lay along a great divide; it lay along a watershed. One portion of the snow when it melted would flow into one valley. The snow which lay close beside would flow into another valley when it melted.¹¹

He goes on to say a bit later...

The snow lies along that watershed, unbroken, as a seeming unity. But when it melts, where it ends in its destinations is literally a thousand miles apart. That is a watershed. That is what a watershed is. A watershed divides. A clear line can be drawn between what seems at first to be the same or at least very close, but in reality ends in very different situations. In a watershed there is a line.¹²

The true end of this so-called small divide are destinations that are truly miles apart. Dr. Schaeffer calls it a watershed, not just because it is a divide, but that it is a divide that will end a thousand miles apart. The church will no longer be the church, and the church will stand for nothing, as it has lost its distinctive. This is the implication of a compromise on Scripture.

While the knee-jerk reaction for some at this point might be to wage an all out total-war to prevent this slide. We must guard against breaking another distinction of the church. The distinction of love. Peppered throughout most of the quotes given, Dr. Schaeffer emphasizes loving correction. We must realize the war we are in, but we must also realize that the war is not to be turned on each other to the loss of our distinction of love, which is a command from Christ himself, to love one another. In the broader context of Dr. Schaeffer's works, we can see that this stance is not to be a mere organizational oneness or a standard of legalism. The distinction is the mark by which all men will know that the Father sent the Son. This distinction which Dr. Schaeffer rightly calls, the final apologetic in his work *The Mark of a Christian*. Consider these words from scripture:

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23 ESV)

Now lastly, I would like us to look at a lecture Dr. Schaeffer gave for the ICBI, that was part of the source material for the portions of *The Great Evangelical Disaster* we have just discussed. Here Dr. Schaeffer discusses the question, *What Difference Does Inerrancy Make?*

What Difference Does Inerrancy Make?

¹¹ Ibid., 325.

¹² Ibid., 325.

What Difference Does Inerrancy Make? is now situated in the Complete Works as an appendix B to *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*. It is fitting now that we consider it at the beginning of the twenty first century, as it reminds us not only that these truths still hold relevance, but they touch on our current struggles more than ever before. His remarks on the ICBI are a good place to start.

A Defense Against Infiltration

The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy was begun by those who were deeply concerned for the Scripture as God's Word, as "Thus saith the Lord." It was called into being because a significant section of what is called evangelicalism had allowed itself to be infiltrated by the general world-view, the viewpoint, of our day. This by which it had become infiltrated *was really a variant of what had dominated liberal theological circles under the name of neo-orthodoxy.*¹³

He later clarifies the primary problem of infiltration:

Notice though what the primary problem was, and is: infiltration by a form of the world-view which surrounds us rather than the Bible being the unmovable base for judging that ever-shifting fallen culture. The Council's position stands at the point of the call *not* to be infiltrated by this ever-shifting fallen culture which surrounds us, but rather judging that culture upon the basis of the Bible.¹⁴

The reason why we are together today is of this same nature, we are seeking to remember the foundations for defense against infiltration, and furthermore, remember the response.

The Foundation for Response

Dr. Schaeffer originally had written a segment released as part of the call for the conference, that is quite helpful in clarifying why this response is so important:

Unless the Bible is without error, not only when it speaks of salvation matters, but also when it speaks of history and the cosmos, we have no foundation for answering questions concerning the existence of the universe and its form and the uniqueness of man. Nor do we have any moral absolutes, or certainty of salvation, and the next generation of Christians will have nothing on which to stand.¹⁵

We will right away notice the commonality of the language used, from what Dr. Schaeffer had said initially in the quotes given from his lecture to the International Congress on World

¹³ Ibid., 103.

¹⁴ Ibid., 106.

¹⁵ Ibid., 103.

Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974. He again pounds home the same principles here. If we are to have a foundation for response in contrast to the world's impersonal answers, we must uphold with certainty the answers of Scripture, which are true to what is. The answers which answer the questions of the universe and the uniqueness of man. The answers which correspond with the truth of what is.

Strength Against Moral Decline

Moreover, a related significant reason for upholding a strong view of Scripture, is the strength it provides against moral decline.

In my book *A Christian Manifesto*, I deal with the consequences of the view now so widely held in our culture that the final reality is some form of energy or mass, shaped into its present form by pure chance. Because of this view, it is increasingly perceived that there are no final values, mores, or a basis for law. Therefore, quite properly on this view that the final reality is only mass or energy shaped into its present form by pure chance, there are not and there cannot be any fixed values. All things are relative, and the final value is what makes the individual or society happy, feel good, at the moment. This is not just the hedonistic young person doing what feels good; it is society and even law as a whole.¹⁶

And we can say the Bible is without mistake and still destroy it if we bend the Scripture by our lives to fit this culture instead of judging the culture by the Scripture. The no-fault divorce laws in many of our states are not really based upon humanitarianism, or kindness. They are based on the view that there is no right and wrong. And thus, all is relative, which means that society and the individual acts on what seems to them to give happiness for them at the moment.¹⁷

It is not just that we require the Scriptures for apologetics, for family, or spirituality, we need it for reality, and we need it as the basis for law. Without it, the church declines and the world declines. The world declines as it has no fixed basis to prevent it from falling further into its depravity. The church declines as it ignores its basis and falls further into compromise. It is truly an all or nothing scenario.

Not a Heartless, Loveless Fundamentalist Legalism

Yet, even here, we must repeat along with Dr. Schaeffer, we must not fall into a heartless, loveless false Legalism, but a proper Legalism. A legal base that is found in Scripture alone. Again, the Godly Christ-like distinction of love along with truth must be upheld.

¹⁶ Ibid., 107.

¹⁷ Ibid., 107.

...in the midst of the seminars for *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, one of us received a letter from someone in the evangelical ranks. The writer holds a good view theologically concerning the Scripture, and I would also say I like him. In his letter, however, he said, "I see the emergence of a new sort of fundamentalist legalism."¹⁸

In the light of the question "What Difference Does Inerrancy Make?" I would like to consider the phrase "a new sort of fundamentalist legalism" in regard to all the points I've touched upon so far in this talk. I'll repeat the phrase: "fundamentalist legalism."

If what is involved is the heartless, loveless, fundamentalist legalism some of us have known so well in the past, of course we do not want it, and we reject it in the name of Christ. The love of God and the holiness of God must always be evident¹⁹ simultaneously.

Again here, as we have seen before. Dr. Schaeffer is intent on us remembering our distinctives. We cannot lose our Biblical distinctive, our basis for Truth, and we cannot lose our love distinctive, which is our identity toward one another. Together, they are our identity in Christ. So how do we move forward. Are the two in conflict?

Truth with Love & Loving Confrontation

It seems quite apparent, from Dr. Schaeffer's prescription, we must uphold both, without compromise!

...when all this is said, when we come to the central things of doctrine, including maintaining the Bible's emphasis that it is without mistake, and the central things of life, then something must be considered. *Truth carries with it confrontation. Truth demands confrontation; loving confrontation, but confrontation nevertheless.* If our reflex action is always accommodation regardless of the centrality of the truth involved, there's something wrong.

As what we may call holiness without love is not God's kind of holiness, so what we may call love without holiness, including when necessary confrontation, is not God's kind of love. God is holy, and God is love.²⁰

Those of us who stand for Inerrancy must be careful here. Far too often there has been a tendency in the stance of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism to uphold Special Revelation alone, and yet downplay general revelation. We cannot uphold the Gospel of Christ on one hand, and then violate the other. In our defense of Scripture, we cannot be harmful to the man without the Bible, who is made in God's image, and claim to uphold the truth of the Gospel rightly. He may be at odds with the Scriptures, he may be at odds with God's Law, he may be at odds with you

¹⁸ Ibid., 108.

¹⁹ Ibid., 109.

²⁰ Ibid., 110

personally, yet there is no cause whatsoever for treating him unhumanly, writing him off, or diminishing his God given dignity. We cannot destroy men with ugliness, whom God has created. We of all people, wretches, who have been given an abundance of grace and truth, cannot afford to assume a posture of arrogance. If we do, we show that we do not truly understand the whole truth. God is holy, God is love. Both are true. God made the universe and what is, and the unbelieving man before us, which holds the truth in unrighteousness, and God gave us Scriptural True-Truth. Both must be understood.

Strength Against Tremendous Pressure

This stance is not only one we need to stand for by raising banners and making speeches about. We must wage this war on our knees, with prayer, and with true heart devotion and perhaps even repentance, if we have not defended Scripture rightly.

We must, with prayer, say no to the theological attack upon Scripture. We must say no to this, clearly and lovingly, with strength. And we must say no to the attack upon Scripture which comes from our being infiltrated in our lives by the current worldview of no fault in moral issues. We must say no to these things equally.²¹

Conclusion

As we address these matters, and specifically Evangelical identity as outlined by Dr. Schaeffer, we can see that Dr. Schaeffer's views in Inerrancy are as important as his methods of upholding it. In this paper we have sought to bring out where the two stances have met. If we are to follow Dr. Schaeffer's instruction, we must firmly say that the church must hold to her distinctions. There must be a stand for truth, the truth of Scripture. There must also be a stand for human dignity, as defined by the Scriptures, where we respect the image of God in the individual. We must further consider how are we as a church addressing the man without the Bible. Are we calling him to acknowledge the truth of what is? Are we, when he has realized the state of his condition, introducing him to the answers of Scripture? Is it a Scripture of our own liking, or is it the Scripture, full of content, with events in time and space? We must have considered the implications and weighed heavily our responsibility to uphold Biblical Inerrancy lovingly. Everything hinges upon it. Consider this thought from Dr. Schaeffer's book, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*

Just as Moses said, well over a thousand years before, "You saw, you heard," so the Gospels say, "You saw, you heard!" God acted in history, and this was observed and was able to be described in ordinary language.

If Jesus did not live, or if He did not rise from the dead, Christianity cannot continue. It cannot live on as a mere idea, because Christianity is about objective truth and not merely religious experiences. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament

²¹ Ibid., 109.

claim to be truth, in contrast to that which is not true, and this truth is rooted in history. We have only one hope, and it rests on a serious commitment to the existence of God and the reliability of His Word, the Bible, in all the areas in which it speaks.²²

In closing, I would like to read to you the account of Dr. Schaeffer's passing from his loving wife Edith, which conveys so well the subject of Dr. and Mrs. Schaeffer's views on Inerrancy.

It was 4 A.M. precisely that a soft last breath was taken...and he was absent. That absence was so sharp and precise! Absent. Now I only observed the absence. I can vouch for the absence being precisely at 4 A.M. As for his presence with the Lord, I had to turn to my Bible to know that. I only know that a person is present with the Lord because the Bible tells us so. I did not have a mystical experience. I want to tell you here and now that the inerrant Bible became more important to me than ever before. I want to tell you very seriously and solemnly—the Bible is more precious than ever to me. My husband fought for truth and fought for the truth of the inspiration of the Bible—the inerrancy of the Bible—all the 52 years that I knew him. But never have I been more impressed with the wonder of having a trustworthy message from God, an unshakable word from God than right then! I did not have to have, nor pretend to have, some mystical experience to prove that Fran had left to go somewhere, that he [Christ] had gone to the prepared place for him, and that he was indeed OK. I could know that by turning to my precious Bible, and to his precious Bible (and we each have had several), and read again that absent from the body is present with the Lord—and that it is far better. It is far better for the one who is thus present, but not for those left behind. God knows all about the pain of separation and is preparing that separation will be over forever one future day. I also know that because the Bible tells me so. I feel very sorry for the people who have to be “hoping without any assurance”...because they don't know what portion of the Bible is myth and what portion might possibly be trusted.²³

²² Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Five, A Christian View of the West*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. 402

²³ Edith Schaeffer, *Dear Family: The L'Abri Family Letters, 1961-1986* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 388-389.