

Lecture 16: The Infiltration of Evangelicalism (I)

Introduction and Review: Following the five general consequences of the “upper and lower story” dichotomy, Professor Barrs begins a four-part lecture on the specific ways in which religious existentialism has affected evangelical thought and practice. (Page references for quotations are taken from the five volume set of *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer*, Crossway)

The Infiltration of Evangelicalism (I)

I. A Summary of the Problems

- A. The existential methodology and Scripture
- B. The church’s accommodation of the “spirit of the age”

II. The Practical Consequences

- A. Attack on propositional revelation (*The God Who Is There*, 1:99-100)
 - 1. Language as a viable vehicle of communication from God to men
- B. Reluctance to equate the biblical text with the Word of God (*The Church Before the Watching World*, 4:128)
 - 1. “Containing” or “pointing to” the Word of God
- C. Attack on biblical historicity (*The God Who Is There*, 1:100; *Escape from Reason*, 1:257)
 - 1. “A particular time and place context”
 - 2. Problems with the claim that the Bible has no basis in objective truth
 - a. Example of the fall and the problem of evil (Niebuhr)
 - 1) If the Genesis account is a description of man’s nature and not an event in history, then what is the explanation for man’s nature?
 - b. The phenomenological principle
 - 1) Cultural “assumptions” in Scripture
 - 2) A slippery slope
- D. Denial that the Bible speaks truth about the cosmos and science (*The God Who Is There*, 1:100)
 - 1. “A unity over the whole field of knowledge”
 - 2. The dangers of “complementarily”