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The Theology of Carl F. H. Henry

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THE THEOLOGY OF CARL F. H. HENRY

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Importance of Carl F. H. Henry as a Theologian

This paper issues from the conviction that Carl F. H. Henry is a foremost spokesman of Christianity in modern times. Astute knowledge of western thought ranging from classic Greek philosophy to modern positivism together with a rich background in biblical theology equips Carl Henry with stature as a Christian intellectual and theologian. His diversified abilities as teacher, scholar, journalist, writer and evangelist furnish Henry with equally divergent media of expression as a Christian leader.

Carl Henry needs no introduction to Lutherans. For over a decade, Lutheran theologians and pastors have been reading the fortnightly Christianity Today. Henry has edited this journal since its inception in 1956. All his books may not be well known; but his major works to date, Christian Personal Ethics, The Drift of Western Thought, Remaking the Modern Mind and The Protestant Dilemma, together with volumes edited by Henry such as, The Bible and Revelation and Christian Faith and Modern Theology, must surely enjoy widespread circulation among Lutherans as well as other evangelicals in America. We must recognize, moreover, that Carl Henry will undoubtedly extend his literary influence in the next decade,

a factor which contributes still more significance to a work representative of Henry's stance as a theologian addressing himself to modern man.

Arrangement of the Study

Following these opening remarks, the work is divided into three major chapters. Henry's understanding of divine revelation and the Scriptures, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of man, soteriology and eschatology are treated in Chapter II. The early pages of Chapter III begin with Henry's indictment of the modern mind for its naturalistic bias. The ravages of naturalism, maintains Henry, are too powerful and will not be deterred by recourse to either ancient or modern idealistic modes of thought. Existentialism is equally impotent. And Henry concludes that the only successful counter movement to naturalism is confidence in the Christian world view rooted in the Hebrew-Christian tradition.

Undergirding this view of man and his world is the Spirit wrought conviction that the Creator-God has specially revealed Himself in the Logos made flesh, communicating to man in propositional truths embodied in that authoritative inscripturated revelation, Old and New Testaments of Holy Scripture. Carl Henry is convinced that current theological expression, if it is to have an impact on the modern mind, must become obedient to Christ and His Word. Henry places

classic liberalism and neo-supernaturalism under careful scrutiny from this vantage point.

In Chapter IV, Henry looks to the evangelical movement to unfold the Christian world view in modern times. The chief requirement for this task of the Church in our day is unswerving submission to Christ and loyalty to an authoritative Scripture. Henry is careful, however, to distinguish contemporary evangelicalism from the excesses of fundamentalism in recent decades. He honestly attempts to emancipate the evangelical movement from theological provincialism, calling upon evangelicals to broaden the evangelistic task of the Church by confronting our modern world with a social outlook as well. Powerful scholarship, respectable Christian higher education, and a spirit of cooperation among evangelicals, concludes Henry, will advance the Christian world view to the four corners of our modern world.

In addition to arrangement of the subject matter, the reader will want to keep several basic issues in mind. Elemental to Henry's theology and general outlook is the idea of special revelation. What does he mean by this concept? How is Scripture authoritative as special revelation? The reader will want to note Henry's delineation of Christ and the Scriptures, especially in view of the current discussion of the Gospel versus Scripture when speaking about authority for the Church. From the standpoint of special

revelation, Henry demonstrates the inadequacies of a large segment of western thought. He goes one step further, concluding from his evaluation that much of contemporary theology imbibed philosophical presuppositions alien to special revelation. Thus, these same theological expressions are judged by Carl Henry to be inadequate as faithful witnesses of the truth to modern man. Is Henry correct in his evaluation of modern theology? Are his subsequent conclusions valid? Finally, what kind of committment is required of Christian theology if it is to properly furnish man with a positive God-concept, man-concept and world-concept with corresponding ethical imperatives consistent with divine truth? These pertinent issues for mankind in any generation will be the subject of considerable discussion in this paper. Whether or not the reader agrees with Carl Henry's reflections, he will certainly credit Henry for diligent grappling with issues assiduously avoided by thinkers and theologians of lesser stature.

Biographical Data

Carl F. H. Henry was an adult convert to the Christian faith. Born in New York City January 22, 1913, Carl Henry began his writing career editing The Smithtown Star and the Port Jefferson Times-Echo, both Long Island weekly newspapers. He also served as suburban correspondent for The New York Times, The New York Herald-Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune.

It was during these years as a young writer and journalist that Carl Henry became a convert to Christianity. Subsequently, he attended Wheaton College, graduating with a B.A. degree in 1938. Remaining at Wheaton to earn his M.A. degree in 1940, he went on to Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, where he was awarded a Th.D. degree in 1942. He was ordained into the ministry of the American Baptist Convention in 1941. Henry earned his Ph.D. from Boston University in 1949. He holds the honorary Litt.D. degree from Seattle Pacific College in 1963. In 1954, he received a Freedoms Foundation medal for a magazine article entitled, "Christianity and the American Heritage."

Carl Henry was Chairman of the Philosophy of Religion Department at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, 1942 to 1947. For the next decade he taught at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, as Professor of Theology and Christian Philosophy. Through the years, Henry has served as visiting professor of theology at numerous seminaries and is in continuous demand as guest lecturer at colleges and seminaries around the world. His sermons are represented in Best Sermons, edited by G. Paul Butler, 1960, 1962 and 1964 editions. His radio and television ministries have included a daily radio program over Station KPOL in Los Angeles. Carl Henry spearheaded the Mid-Century Rose Bowl Rally in Pasadena, 1952, until then the largest Christian rally in the history of the West. For several years,

he was chairman of the annual Rose Bowl Easter Sunrise Service. Together with Evangelist Billy Graham, Carl Henry was primarily responsible for organizing and assembling the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, October 26 to November 4, 1966.

Carl Henry has been elected several times to the Board of Administration of the National Association of Evangelists. He also served on the NAE committee for formulation of Christian philosophy of education and was chairman of its Commission on Evangelical Social Action. He was the literary editor for United Evangelical Action, the official NAE publication, 1945 to 1952. Foremost among Henry's efforts as a journalist is his sustained editorship of Christianity Today since it began as a fortnightly publication in October, 1956.

As a theologian and student of philosophy, Carl Henry has been welcomed as a member of the American Philosophical Association, the American Theological Society, the Evangelical Theological Society, the Society of Biblical Exegesis and Literature, the American Academy of Religion, the Victoria Institute (Philosophical Society of Great Britain), the Mind Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Society of Church History, the American Schools of Oriental Research, the American Society of Christian Ethics, and the Cosmos Club (Washington, D.C.). From 1962 to 1965 he served as member of the Board of Trustees of Gordon College. He is member of the Advisory Board of

the Near East Archaeological Society, the Advisory Council of the Welfare of the Blind, Inc., and served in alumni groups for both Wheaton College and Boston University.[1]

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[1]Biographical Data: Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, furnished from the office of Carl F. H. Henry, February 23, 1966.

CHAPTER II

CARL F. H. HENRY'S THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Theism, A Habitude of the Western Mind

The case for theism in the West has been consistently maintained by the western mind, confident as it was that God is not a phenomenal, but a spiritual being. This view of God, Henry asserts, has found acceptance longer than any other prevailing view among western thought;[1] and, while the case for theism is neither violently opposed nor vigorously established in contemporary times, it also is neither deposed nor embarrassed by any scientific methodology bent on dealing with reality in terms of phenomenal actualities alone. Indeed, even contemporary philosophical movements, i.e., naturalistic theisms, pantheisms, panpsychisms, personalistic idealisms, and existentialisms all express a metaphysical urge to reach beyond the natural realm toward the world of supernature.[2]

The quest for God as a spiritual being of prime reality is a habitude of the western mind. But not every theism will have proper significance for human existence. If a

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[1]Carl F. H. Henry, Notes on the Doctrine of God (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., c.1950), p. 26.

[2]Carl F. H. Henry, The Protestant Dilemma (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), p. 34.

line of pursuit toward God is betrayed and exposed as inadequate, the result will be twice-frustrated meaninglessness for man.[3] To prevent this dilemma, Henry proposes a vital theism which holds not only the prior conviction that God is conceived as a rational moral will, but also that He has clearly revealed Himself to be such.[4] In Henry's opinion, theism which takes seriously God's revelation will prove most adequate for man in any age. Whenever God is acknowledged, the question of whether He has spoken, and what if anything He has said, belongs in the forefront.[5] The concepts of deity and revelation belong together, so that divine manifestation becomes the predominant issue of all genuine religious inquiry.[6] Where the case for theism is maintained from spiritual yearnings of man dependent upon God, His self-disclosure becomes a concern to man of no less import than man's initial theistic interest in the deity.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., p. 215.

[5] Carl F. H. Henry, "Divine Revelation and the Bible," Inspiration and Interpretation, edited by John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1957), p. 253.

[6] Carl F. H. Henry, The Drift of Western Thought (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), p. 76.

The Inadequacy of General Revelation to Satisfy Man's Quest for God

Real self-disclosure of God in special revelation is the main premise underlying the biblical case for theism.[7] Henry believes that, in order to speak dramatically to the western world from the standpoint of theism, the problem of Hebrew-Christian revelation and of the Sacred Scriptures must inevitably be brought into focus.[8]

But the concept of revelation is at first more inclusive than the specialty of God's self-disclosure through divine acts and inspired Scriptures within the Hebrew-Christian tradition. The terms "revelation" and "Scripture" assuredly are not synonymous according to Henry. He says,

> Nothing less may be said than that the category of revelation is identical with the whole unveiling of God, whatever forms that disclosure may assume. Revelation cannot, therefore be equated simply with the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures; the Bible is a special segment within a larger divine activity of revelation.[9]

The category of revelation extends beyond special revelation to include the sphere of general revelation as well. The scope of general revelation takes into account God's disclosure of Himself in nature, history, and the conscience of man. The biblical view of revelation acknowledges the

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[7]Henry, Notes on Doctrine of God, p. 71.

[8]Henry, "Divine Revelation and the Bible," p. 253.

[9]Ibid., pp. 254-55.

existence of God and a general disclosure of God. Anyone who disparages the reality of general revelation in deference to special revelation, misconstrues biblical theology at this point.[10]

The case for theism, however, asserts greater knowledge of God than man discerns through general revelation. Man's yearning for a more complete disclosure of God does not by any means cast suspicion upon general revelation, which is helpful up to a point. On the contrary, if man finds general revelation still inadequate, it is indicative of man's spiritual and moral revolt which sharply curtailed his sensitivity to God's disclosure in a general way. Due to man's rebellion in the Fall and succeeding generations thereafter, general revelation has been distorted. Man "wills down" and "thinks down" the indirect divine disclosure in nature, history and conscience. If it were not for sin, general revelation would today unveil the now-obscured deity, "without distortion, obscurity and uncertainty with which sin now overcasts the natural data of theism."[11] The testimony of general revelation is no longer felt with any impact of certainty and conviction in the heart of sinful man. He has distorted the communication of God through general revelation. It is this blindness of man as a sinner,

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[10]Henry, Notes on Doctrine of God, p. 66.

[11]Ibid.

not the weakness or impotency of the general disclosure of God, which necessitates a distinctive special revelation if man is to comprehend anything about God beyond the remnants still discernible in a general way.[12]

The Redemptive Character of Special Revelation

Following the Fall, God extended Himself in disclosure to man through special revelation. This post-Fall disclosure of God can be understood only as it was revealed to man in a state of rebellion against God. Special revelation does not presume to restate all that was said before the Fall. To bring the fullness of general revelation within the experiential realm of fallen man was not intended at all. Rather, special revelation is furnished to reconcile rebellious man with his Maker. According to Henry, the distinctive character of special revelation is its redemptive nature. It declares God's message for men in revolt, "proclaiming that God is merciful as well as the almighty, holy Lord of the universe and maker and judge of man."[13]

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[12]Henry suggests that general revelation is presupposed for God's special revelation after the Fall. With limited comprehension still possible since the Fall, man possesses enough general knowledge of God to realize that sin is the negation of an original positive element. Thus, even in its insipid state, the general disclosure is necessary for special revelation; for it still testifies of God to whom the sinner is accountable, and consequently in need of a special saving revelation from the Almighty. Ibid., p. 68.

[13]Ibid., p. 69.

Special redemptive revelation discloses something essential about the being of God, especially when viewed from the perspective of man's predicament in sin. Henry says, "God is Love, even as He is the Holy One, and the coming of Jesus Christ into history--His life and death--define most clearly the nature of His holy love."[14] The central figure in this revelation of a loving God is Christ Jesus who confronted all humanity, not with a theoretical revelation about God and man, "but by proclaiming Himself the deliverer who answers to man's need of reconciliation, and standing as mediator, by His vicarious sacrifice between the divine and the human."[15] Because special revelation is distinctively soteriological as it reveals the God of love to sinful man through Christ Jesus, Henry is able to equate special revelation with saving revelation.

God's Self-Disclosure in Special Revelation

Henry posits the christological-soteriological character of special redemptive revelation as the primary theme of the Hebrew-Christian tradition which specifies Jesus Christ as central to its view of God. Other philosophies and religions have marked the history of thought with their peculiar God concept; but none have afforded a deity concept

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[14]Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 116.

[15]Ibid., p. 27.

in the same manner as Jesus, namely, a living God. The Christian God initially appears, not in terms of a general theism, but at the outset in an active relationship with man. In Christ, we see the "human nature incarnating deity."[16] In Him, God is a God of action, more than simply a God of contemplation. The reality of God is not confined to propositional statements about Him, important as these statements are; for the words of God came to man with a sense of divine confrontation. Jesus called men to God in a manner in which none other has called or indeed can call them, "having seen Him, men had seen the Father."[17]

Christ Himself shapes the redemptive character of special revelation. He is the focal point in the Christian view of God; and ultimately He is the center of all revelation. The biblical view traces both general and special revelation to the Logos, Jesus Christ. Henry neatly explains the christological orientation of all revelation when he says of Christ,

> As the divine revealing agent in creation and preservation, He manifests God in the general revelation of nature, history, and conscience. By the Sacred Scriptures, divinely outbreathed through the Holy Spirit to prophets and apostles, He discloses truths about God and His redemptive purpose, inclusive of that salvation history communicated at last by the incarnation and atonement.[18]

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[16]Henry, Notes on Doctrine of God, p. 56.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Henry, "Divine Revelation and the Bible," p. 254.

Framing the same thought in terms of the Word of God, Henry adds:

> When Christianity speaks of the Word of God, it designates not only the rhema theou, the spoken and written word of God in the grammatical sense, but also the logos theou, the personal Word, or the speaking Logos, the agent in creation and the mediator of divine revelation in all its forms and the supreme revelation of God incarnate.[19]

With a common christological base, general and special revelation are distinguished by Henry according to their respective relevance for man. The scope of general revelation has already been discussed with a view toward this conclusion that only through special revelation does God become particularly relevant to man since the Fall. And that relevance consists in redemption through Christ.

Having considered the redemptive character ascribed to special revelation by Henry, there remains for discussion the manner in which this special self-disclosure of God is made known to man. In what manner has God communicated His redemptive intentions to man? Has He acted among men on the plane of history? Or, has He acted as the transcendent "holy other" beyond the realm of man's experience as a creature of space and time, though still in the interest of man's salvation? How may the Sacred Scriptures be viewed in relation to God's special revelation? What relationship exists between the Scriptures and the so-called revelatory acts of

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[19] Ibid.

God in history? Are the biblical writings limited in authority to that of a witness to God's revelation? How much confidence may we have in biblical writings as inscripturated revelation? How adequate are the various current theories of biblical authorship and inspiration? What significance do these theories have for the authority of the Scriptures?

The Bible as Inspired Inscripturated Special Revelation

The issues raised by these and related questions have held the attention of serious theologians for several decades. Carl Henry is vigorously interested in the treatment of special revelation by various schools of contemporary theology, and the following chapter will represent his evaluation of the same. At this juncture, our endeavor is to state precisely Henry's theology of the Scriptures and special revelation. A clear understanding of Henry's position in this regard will be necessary for a fair appraisal of his major concerns as he addresses them to modern man in behalf of the Christian faith.

Speaking on the manner and means of God's special self-disclosure, Henry asserts that such revelation comes about through divine acts which constitute the divine redemptive program whereby God intervened in the course of history to

save the human race.[20] Special revelation involves unique historical events of divine deliverance climaxed by the incarnation, atonement, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the supreme disclosure of God in the flesh.[21] Divine acts as special revelation are in harmony with the redemptive character of that revelation postulated above. These redemptive acts include God's actions in the Old Testament as well as the work of Christ. But Henry is explicit when he says that the Bible sets forth Jesus Christ as the supreme act and meaning of the redemptive program. He even ventures to differentiate between special redemptive activity and the manner in which God addresses man personally in His Son.[22]

In association with self-disclosure in special divine acts, God is revealed in propositional truths embodied in the Bible, inscripturated revelation. God is a God of rationality and respects the rational constitution of man. He communicates divine truths to man in such a way that man can receive these truths with his rational intellect even if their deeper meaning and mystery is beyond comprehension by the human mind. Henry says,

> The rationality of the self-revealed God and His intellectual attributes provide evangelical Christianity a framework which makes possible both the

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[20]Henry, Notes on Doctrine of God, p. 69.

[21]Henry, "Divine Revelation and the Bible," p. 254.

[22]Henry, Notes on Doctrine of God, pp. 69-70.

> conceptual knowledge of God and inscripturated propositional revelation.[23]

If man is to be a recipient of God's revelation, it is necessary that such revelation be addressed to man in conceptual form. And revelational knowledge in all its forms belongs to the genus of knowledge generally. Special revelation is also a communication of truth about God and His purposes as a factor in man's redemption; and thus redemptive revelation comes to man in conceptual mediation through chosen prophets and apostles. It is communicated in words and propositions, and in this fashion is inscripturated in canonical books.[24] The Holy Scriptures are, according to Henry, special inscripturated revelation, that is, the writings of God's truth in propositional form, and as such, an indispensable mode through which the redemptive acts of God in historical events become coherent.

The reader must note, however, that Henry deems it misleading to simply conclude that the Bible and special revelation are equivalent. The Hebrew-Christian tradition is entrenched and built upon the historical events of God's self-disclosure; and Henry would hasten to add that the simple equation of revelation with biblical revelation is not the clearest way to state the matter. But this much needs to be said, "If anything, the Bible, in exhibiting

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[23]Henry, "Divine Revelation and the Bible," p. 261.

[24]Ibid., p. 262.

both the saving acts and their interpretation, is clearer than the acts viewed in isolation."[25] The Bible narrates these acts and also presumes to give the rationale or meaning of these acts. Without this rationale, the acts would be inexplicable and meaningless. Indeed, inscripturation of special revelation is the objective culmination of God's redemptive disclosure in both special historical events and propositions communicated to chosen prophets and apostles.[26] Christianity is not hesitant to identify written sentences and propositions as special revelation, even though special revelation is not strictly identified with the biblical corpus, an equation which would preclude the occurrence of divine acts on the plane of history. On the other hand, recognition of the Word in the form of words as special divine revelation is held by evangelical Christianity to be not only the historic view, but an indispensable element in a proper biblical theology.[27]

The words of Scripture setting forth biblical doctrines are intimately related to the divine saving events which they record and interpret. Doctrines like the substitutionary death and bodily resurrection of Christ are surely not devoid of relationship to the events they expound.

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[25] Ibid., p. 256.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

Without the events, the doctrines would be empty postulates and meaningless. But they are doctrines, divine doctrines, redemptive in character, expressing as they do that God did specifically enter history for redemptive purposes. Calvary and the open tomb guarantee that these doctrines are not artificial postulations, but organically related to the divine activity as part of the revealed rationale of that activity.[28]

As the Scriptures set forth the meaning of the events they relate, they are themselves a revelation, nothing less than redemptive revelation. The Scriptures are the divine rationale which make God's events in history meaningful and significant to man. As such, they are an integral part of God's redemptive activity. This is reflected in the content of biblical materials. The biblical interest centers in man much more than in any other aspect of the space-time universe. The Scriptures are not so much preoccupied with the mathematical secrets of the universe, as with a redemptive plan for sinful mankind.[29] Biblical revelation is soteriological revelation which the merciful God extends toward sinful man in revolt against Him. It is here and here alone, in the Scriptures, that God declares His holiness over against the awfulness of sin. It is only here that, in

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[28]Henry, The Protestant Dilemma, p. 95.

[29]Carl F. H. Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1946), p. 84.

promise and fulfillment, the saving name of Jesus Christ is known. Yes, here and here alone, in Holy Scripture, the special redemptive revelation of God is communicated to man.[30]

The Scriptures cannot be reduced to the status of extra or exalted religious insight. Their purpose and function as redemptive revelation elevate them above the category of occult and mystic divine intuition. Furthermore, they are intrinsically the revealed Word of God. The Hebrew-Christian movement arose in the conviction that there exists a literature, a corpus of writings, a record in words, set apart from all the literature of world history, because in them God speaks the good tidings.[31] Henry is quite explicit in stating his views on the Bible as revelation inspired by God. Of the Scripture, he says, "It is a literature of theological conviction uniquely shaped within an orbit of special divine revelation and inspiration."[32] It is his belief that the plenary view, that is, insistence that the very words of Scripture are given by divine inspiration and are free from error, is both the view of the traditional church and of the writings themselves. Henry's

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[30]Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 159.

[31]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 121.

[32]Carl F. H. Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 63.

position with respect to plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible is reflected in the opening editorial of the first issue of Christianity Today where, as editor, he sets forth the policies of this periodical,

> Christianity Today is confident that the answer to the theological confusion existing in the world is found in Christ and the Scriptures. . . . Those who direct the editorial policy of Christianity Today unreservedly accept the complete reliability and authority of the written Word of God. It is their conviction that the Scriptures teach the doctrine of plenary inspiration. This doctrine has been misrepresented and misunderstood. To state the biblical concept of inspiration will be one of the aims of this magazine.[33]

Furthermore, Henry takes issue with Brunner's hostility to the idea of "plenary" inspiration and to a doctrinaire view of revelation. Brunner says that the doctrine of verbal inspiration rests upon a mistranslation of 2 Tim. 3:16, the text which Brunner concedes to be the locus classicus of the doctrine.[34] Henry refers the reader to a footnote on page nine of Brunner's Revelation and Reason, where Brunner contends that didaskalia in 2 Tim. 3:16 should be translated, "is profitable for teaching (not doctrine)." Henry admits that didache suggests concrete, systematized teaching more than didaskalia; but didaskalia can hardly be voided of doctrinal significance. To illustrate, Henry follows with a statement on the Latin word, doctrina. He says,

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[33]Carl F. H. Henry, "Why Christianity Today?" Christianity Today, I (October 15, 1956), 20.

[34]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 59 (footnote).

> The Latin word doctrina has in view both teaching and doctrine; nor ought the two meanings to be opposed in translating 2 Tim. 3, 16. Even the translation of "teaching" can hardly be made to mean that the teaching value of the Scriptures is restricted to spiritual (as against cosmological or historical) truths.[35]

Brunner is sensitive to avoid the pitfall of making doctrine an object of faith superceding faith in Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh, an error which Henry too is careful to avoid. Brunner contends that doctrine is only a confession of faith, not the object of faith. Jesus Christ is the object of faith. Doctrine is a means to Him, but is never to be considered infallible.

For Henry, this view leaves much to be desired. Brunner's position seems to divorce faith and knowledge or certitude, a cleavage which is impossible according to Henry. In a footnote discussion of Brunner's view, Henry notes that the moment one tries intelligently to answer the question "what Jesus?" is the object of faith, he is necessarily involved in doctrine. Certainly, Henry concedes that doctrine is a means to Christ and not an end in itself. But if it is therefore fallible, it is not any longer a reliable means. In Henry's own words, "Doctrine is a means to Him precisely to the extent that it is infallible."[36]

For Henry, the manner in which the Scriptures are infallible is best stated by the term "verbal inspiration."

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., p. 90.

This term has been opposed by theologians who reject plenary inspiration, and by others who reject propositional revelation of any kind. And still others, who accept the possibility of propositional revelation and uphold plenary inspiration, fear that the term will be confused with a mechanical view of inspiration. Henry is aware of the tendency in some evangelical circles to lean toward a mechanical view of revelation and inspiration. This view could crystallize into a dictation theory, inviting ritualistic dogmatism over the writings themselves, a view which Brunner rightly opposes. What this amounts to, however, is identification of biblical authority with a specific theory of inspiration when the Apostles have not afforded certainty as to the mechanics of inspiration.[37]

Henry feels that biblical authority can well be expressed in such terms as "verbal inspiration" or "inerrancy" and still avoid being "freighted with unnecessary dogmas about the mechanics of inspiration."[38] Even though a few in evangelical circles have made the mistake of equating "verbal inspiration" with a dictation mechanical theory of inspiration, it is not necessary on this account to abolish the term from theological vocabulary. "Verbal inspiration" does not necessarily imply a mechanical theory of inspiration; hence, theologians may cease associating proponents

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[37] Ibid., p. 77.

[38] Ibid.

of verbal inspiration with the radical conservatives who bow allegiance to the Bible as a "paper pope." If theologians must settle on a theory of inspiration, Henry feels that verbal inspiration, as differentiated from both dictation and mere concept inspiration, is the most satisfactory formula.[39] As said before, Henry himself espouses the term "verbal inspiration," but clearly separates himself from those fundamentalists who equate biblical authority with a mechanical view of inspiration of the Bible.

That which distinguishes Henry from a radical fundamentalist view of revelation and inspiration is his concept of biblical authority. Indeed, Henry retains "verbal inspiration" and "inerrancy" as a vital part of his theological vocabulary; but he is convinced that biblical authority is well established upon the internal evidences of Christ's word and the Spirit's testimony.

Of the Old Testament, Christ testifies that the "Scriptures cannot be broken" and from them, "not one jot or tittle shall perish."[40] These words of our Lord, together with the 3,800 times where the Scriptures of the Old Testament declare, "Thus saith the Lord!," are internal evidence for an inspired Old Testament. If such claims are merely dismissed as special difficulties in one's view of inspiration, then

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[39] Ibid.

[40] John 10:35; Matt. 5:18.

it is very likely that the fault lies with the theory of inspiration rather than with the Scriptures.[41] Furthermore, to limit identification of the written word of God to Old Testament prophets is an oversimplification. Henry goes into great and lengthy detail to designate internal evidence of the New Testament claims upon itself as the spoken and written Word of God.[42] The Scriptures do not hesitate to affirm that also these New Testament writings are indeed "the Word."

Added significance is derived from the fact that through the scriptural affirmation, we have the testimony of the Holy Spirit. It is important to remember that the Spirit and the Scriptures are necessary, one for the other, in order to have a reliable testimony of God's revelation. When Brunner violates this combination by insisting upon a fallible Scripture, Henry becomes dubious concerning Brunner's criterion by which the testimony of the Spirit can be tried and tested. If the Scriptures are fallible, then we have traded an objective criterion for subjective certainty of the Spirit's testimony. And to claim possession of the Spirit's witness apart from an infallible Scripture revelation, is highly tenuous for Carl Henry.[43]

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[41]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 82.

[42]Ibid., p. 233.

[43]Ibid., p. 83.

It is the Spirit's business to testify to man of the Living Christ, that is, the Living Word. But the witness of the Spirit to Jesus Christ the Living Word does not dispense with the need for an authoritative Bible. The Scriptures interpret to us the Living Christ whom the Spirit discloses. Except for the written word, we know nothing of Christ; because, in the living experience of Him, our conviction that it is He depends not alone upon the testimony of the Spirit, but also upon the authoritative witness of the written word which the Spirit enlivens. "The Spirit reveals Christ of the Book through the Book; there is no revelation of Christ apart from the Scriptures."[44] Even for Christians, the word is never only the Living Christ apart from the written word of Holy Scriptures. The Incarnate Word did not disparage the written word. He declared of the Scriptures, "they testify of Me" as if the testimony of the letter and of the Spirit go together.[45] Because Christ is the "Living Word" content of the Scriptures; and because it is Christ to whom the Spirit testifies only through the Scriptures, Henry can assert the relation of Christ, Spirit, Scripture and revelation as follows,

> True, the Living Word is Jesus Christ; to Him, the Holy Spirit testifies, and this testimony makes the written word "quick and powerful." But the Scriptures themselves do not hesitate to affirm of the

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[44] Ibid., p. 82.

[45] Ibid., p. 83.

> writings that they are "the Word." The prophetic and apostolic teachings and writings communicated the Living Word as men responded in faith, and were themselves linked to the Living Word. . . . The Holy Spirit makes subjectively true to me the objectively true written revelation by revealing Christ through the Book. The knowledge content of revelation is in the written word, but the communion content waits on the Holy Spirit. But the Spirit affords no propositional knowledge of God over and above what the Scriptures provide. Without the Bible the communion would be mystical confusion; without the Spirit, the Scriptures would afford no life.[46]

The Sacred Scriptures are the divine written and redemptive revelation of God's acts among men in history, acts which are christological and soteriological in character. Through this special redemptive revelation, inscripturated in propositional words and thought concepts, the Spirit testifies of Christ to sinful men. This is the substance of Henry's convictions regarding special revelation and the Scriptures. The written word has objective authority for Henry on the basis of God's gracious redemptive revelation, Christ's execution of that redemptive revelation, and the Spirit's testimony alongside the witness of Christ Himself. If then, we inquire about the relation of biblical authority to theology, Henry commits himself in these words, "The Scripture is the source from which theology is drawn."[47]

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[46] Ibid., pp. 81-82.

[47] Ibid., p. 83.

Content of Inscripturated Revelation

The doctrine of God

Carl Henry's theology develops from his basic conviction that the Sacred Scriptures are special revelation from God. What the Bible says regarding God, man, soteriology, and eschatology is normative for Henry. The remaining paragraphs in this chapter are devoted to Henry's exposition of the forenamed doctrines as he sees them taught in the Scriptures.

In the biblical view, God is One, a Triune unity as opposed to tritheism. Henry says,

> God is Father, God is Son, God is Spirit; that is His name--not names, indeed, but name; He not only acts in a threefold way, but He is threefold in His oneness, in His unity in variety and His variety in unity.[48]

Distinguished from Judaism and Mohammedanism and even Hegel's universals, Trinitarianism is unique to biblical thought. God was not known clearly in His trinity prior to New Testament times; but God's tripersonal manifestation comes irreducible in the incarnation and accompanying events. Through the Incarnation, God discloses Jesus not only as flesh and blood, but as the one. The only begotten Son promises the Holy Spirit, that "other" Comforter who shall

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[48]Henry, Notes on Doctrine of God, p. 46.

take of Christ's and reveal it unto men even as the Son has taken of the Father's and disclosed it. Thus, the New Testament writers link the names Father, Son, and Spirit without concern that violence is thereby done to monotheism which Christianity has always championed.[49]

Personalists, who conceive God to be unipersonal, claim that the Trinitarian doctrine infringes upon the fact that God is a personal God. But God as personal according to their view always tends to appear as something less than personal. With the abandonment of Trinitarianism, the essential ideas of special revelation, of covenant relation, and of incarnation vanish; and God acts in some way less than in a true communicative and personal manner.[50]

To the statement on the Trinity must be added Henry's theological balance of the sovereignty and fatherhood of God. God is sovereign. He is the Creator-Lord. The God of the Bible is a God who is supra-temporal, unaffected by change and development. God is not time; and yet, He is the end goal of time, so that His transcendence of time does not annul it as a dependent reality. Time is a creation of God and His created things are oriented in time bound limitations.[51] Borrowing from the Westminster confession,

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[49] Ibid., p. 117.

[50] Ibid., p. 119.

[51] Ibid., p. 131.

Henry delineates the sovereignty of God through the biblical ascription of attributes. "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."[52]

Furthermore, the sovereign God is the Father. The sovereignty and fatherhood of God are not in contradistinction to each other. God is not sovereign in spite of His fatherhood, nor is He father in spite of His sovereignty. He is the sovereign father who discloses Himself in the miracle of the incarnation and displays His infinite love in Christ on the cross. Here the sovereignty and fatherhood of God are brought together in christological special revelation which furthermore emphasizes that the fatherhood of God is not only creative but more especially and emphatically redemptive.[53]

The Doctrine of Man

Henry's views on the doctrine of man commence with a discussion of the imago Dei and its significance for man after the Fall. The imago Dei embraces the essential nature of man as he is on the basis of creation. It embraces at once the forms of rational experience as well as morality and a

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[52] Ibid., p. 60.

[53] Ibid., p. 92.

knowledge of God as the Truth and the Good.[54] Bearing the image of his Creator, man was endowed with rationality and an ethical nature as part of a more comprehensive divine-human relationship.

Created as a rational creature, man is capable of receiving knowledge within bounds of the laws of consistency and contradiction. Equipped with this capacity, man is able to acquire genuine knowledge and entertain meaningful experiences. Distinguished from the idealistic divinization of man and the naturalistic thesis that man is an animal with rationality, the Christian view emphasizes man's finite contingent existence and dependence upon God as well as his capacity to transcend the natural world and even his own self.[55] While dependent upon the Creator, man is able to rise above the impressions of sensation to pursue an intelligent and purposeful life.

Conjointly, with the gift of rationality, man is also a creature of morality. Man possesses the moral image of God, which both enables and compels him to act in responsible relation to God. In this sense, the imago is bound to an unchanging moral standard on the basis of creation and preservation.[56]

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[54]Carl F. H. Henry, Christian Personal Ethics (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 152.

[55]Ibid., p. 148.

[56]Ibid., p. 154.

After the Fall the image of God was sullied but not totally lost. Though man only bears the image in distorted fashion, he is still responsible to God as a moral being. Man's conscience, the central feature of the imago Dei, may be influenced by subjective and environmental factors other than the will of God; but man is still brought before the judgment of God as one who continues to bear the moral image of God. Furthermore, the Fall did not vitiate the rational capacities of man. Though impaired, man is still able to use his reasoning powers so that, among other forms of knowledge, he is capable on the basis of general and special revelation to receive conceptual knowledge of the supernatural spiritual world.[57]

Still, the Fall had tremendous consequences for man. The Scriptures portray the condition of post-Fall man as one of guilt, corruption and liability to penalty. His predicament is two sided, both racial and individual. It springs from his involvement in Adam's fall and from his own transgressions against the will of God. As a consequence of original sin, man suffers from the guilt of Adam's transgression, inherits a defiled nature, and is exposed to punishment in the form of penal evils.[58]

In treating original sin, Henry is careful to distinguish between the biblical view and modern positions which incorporate

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[57]Henry, "Divine Revelation and the Bible," p. 262.

[58]Henry, Personal Ethics, p. 181.

sin as inherent in man's finite nature. He concurs with the observation that evil does penetrate history, society and the individual in a most complicated and comprehensive manner and that sin does presuppose itself, that is, the presence of sin presupposes its existence long ago. This condition is a consequence of original sin, not the essence of it. Henry cites a quotation from Dean Pike's book, Doing the Truth, where Pike says that, "actually original sin is not because of Adam and Eve; rather, the narrative of Adam and Eve is because of original sin."[59] For Henry, this view implies that original sin is an inherent necessary part of finite existence and thus can hardly be condemned. If original sin is part of man's finite existence, then this condition prevailed already prior to the Fall. And divine justice could not condemn what was divinely given to man from the beginning. This existential reconstruction of the Fall does in fact contradict the biblical teaching that sin was not inevitable from the beginning but came into existence by the historical fall. That the New Testament does not permit this existential fall is clear from Paul's emphasis on "one man" who is the ground of our condemnation. Paul's words, "not after the similitude of Adam's transgression," excludes an existential rendering of the Adamic experience.[60]

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[59] Ibid., p. 182.

[60] Ibid.

The biblical view guards the integrity of man's original state of holiness and asserts that man is not a sinner in view of his humanity as if sin were inevitable from the beginning. To the contrary, the biblical view does affirm that man became a sinner and that all men are implicated in a primal world revolt against the Creator.

In the experience of day to day living, man's transgression is set over against a holy and personal God, an act of human rebellion. The Hebrew-Christian tradition interprets man's relationship to God in terms of his spiritual rebellion. Having no original righteousness following the Fall, man is in a state of enmity against God which he continually ratifies by successive choices of a perverted will. The biblical view differs by contrast with the Platonic view of evil. The biblical doctrine of sin is not simply that man is lacking full and complete knowledge of God. Rather, the distinctive issue is the biblical emphasis on the inordinate will of man through which his reason also is enslaved. The natural man does not strive after the good. On the contrary, he is directed against the good will of God. As a sinner, man not only wills inferior values above the absolute, but he knowingly wills evil under the guise of the good through rationalization. The Pauline view is that the unregenerate man does not perform what good he knows, nor indeed can he. Neither does he will to do the good despite

his knowledge that God approves goodness and punishes wickedness.[61]

Man's personal revolt against God is also significant for natural evil as well as moral evil. Acts of sin reverberate beyond the immediate as surely as do acts of righteousness. As a participant in the dilemma of humanity, that collective body of individuals laden with moral guilt, the individual man in sin provokes extenuating social implications. Taken together, the entire human family is a solidarity of revolt against God.

Soteriology

It is the rational but sinful man to whom special soteriological revelation is addressed. He is, "unable to find his way to the true God, indeed, as preferring to exchange the true God for something less."[62] Sinful man receives the biblical disclosure of salvation through free gracious promises of the God of holy love.

God's grace in Henry's theology is best understood in two phrases, general and redemptive. In a general sense, all God's revelation, including the law is disclosed to man as a gracious act of God. The Mosaic law itself is dependent upon the Abrahamic covenant (Gal. 3:17).[63] The Decalogue

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[61] Ibid., pp. 104-5.

[62] Henry, Notes on Doctrine of God, p. 69.

[63] Henry, Christian Personal Ethics, p. 354.

also contains its underlayer of grace, visible in the preface to these commands and in the gracious promises interwoven among successive prohibitions and injunctions. That role of grace is also apparent in the injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount, commencing as it does with blessing in the initial beatitudes.[64] Henry is not an antinomian. He carefully distinguishes between the respective functions of Law and Gospel. But his strong conviction that biblical revelation is primarily soteriological in character constrains him to demonstrate that with the Law a simultaneous promise of grace was given. Apart from grace, the Law in the Old Testament led to legalism, idolatry of the Law, and a false self-righteousness. Therefore, Henry does not divorce the Law from the promise, but speaks of it as a "Law within grace."[65] Nevertheless, the biblical revelation of the moral law was never communicated with the intention of providing man in sin with a possible scheme of works-righteousness. Henry firmly asserts that the Law cannot justify a man who has violated the least of its commands, James 2:10. Furthermore, it grants no pardon, it has no power to cover sin and reclaim the sinner.[66]

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[64] Ibid., p. 319.

[65] Ibid., p. 354.

[66] Ibid.

The Law, however, has its proper function. For Henry, the Law's threefold significance is political, pedagogic, and didactic.[67] Politically, the Law serves to restrain sin and to preserve order in the world by proclaiming the will of God. The pedagogic character of the Law is realized by exposing the moral failure of men, indirectly leading them to Christ when they become aware of their need for salvation from a source other than themselves. In this sense, Henry speaks of the Law as a means of grace, disclosing as it does the nature of sin and man's need for redemption. But the Law performs this function only in conjunction with special grace, as Henry calls it. Furthermore, the Law is also didactic, that is, it serves as a standard of obedience to God, the fruits of the Spirit being weighed in the balance of the Law.

The impotence of the Law as a means to righteousness is discussed by Henry when he elaborates on revealed redemptive grace. According to Henry, sinful humanity could not lay claim to God's propitiatory forgiveness. Man had no advance knowledge of redemption to be fulfilled in the revelatory acts of God's only begotten Son. It was only the free promise of the unobligated Lord that made salvation known to men. The only proper divine expectation of the sinner was complete satisfaction of divine righteousness.

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[67] Ibid., p. 355.

That such satisfaction was provided only in the gracious gift of God's Son, is "good tidings," the very heart of the biblical message.[68]

The cross of Christ is the locus of God's salvation of rebellious man. The Atonement wrought by our Lord on Calvary was accomplished between the poles of God's holiness and His love. Henry says that the cross of Christ writes into history the essential nature of God; there mercy and truth meet together for the salvation of man.[69] There the holy Lord shows His greatest love for undeserving sinners. And, in that act of love, the giving of His own Son, God's Father-love becomes answerable also to His holiness and justice, consistent with severity and judgment which He has over against sin and sinful men. His wrath and displeasure over man's rebellion and His drastic condemnation of sin is obvious in the shadow of the cross where the innocent blood of His Son is shed. But the magnitude of Christ's sacrifice on the cross also looms great as a complete and satisfactory payment for the sins of all men. Christ's mission on the cross fulfilled man's personal debt; Christ met the divine displeasure against sin; and, as our substitute, He made satisfaction for our sins, placating the wrath of God toward

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[68]Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 81.

[69]Henry, Notes on Doctrine of God, p. 108.

sinful man.[70] The substitutionary atonement is the biblical delineation of God's love and holy justice.[71]

The biblical doctrine of the substitutionary Atonement of Christ deals fairly and satisfactorily with the divine holiness as well as God's love. Other views of God's dealings with men often emphasize one side of the biblical Atonement to the distortion or elimination of the other. The moral influence theory of the Atonement has a great many adherents in most every generation of theologians. Emphasizing Christ's life and His noble self-sacrifice as a monumental example of morality, this view poses the work of Christ as a salutary influence on men so as to incorporate them into the fellowship and vitality of His life. The inadequacy of this view is that it fails to take seriously the awesome demands of God's Law, obscures the holiness of God, and fails to present the catastrophic consequences of man's moral revolt in contrast to the holiness and justice of God.

Henry also charges the dialectical theology of crisis with the same errors as proponents of the moral influence theory. Although theologians in the contemporary school of dialectical theology have contemplated once again the wrath of God and re-emphasized the expiatory work of Christ, the propitiatory and forensic significance of the Atonement is, in Henry's opinion, a most obvious but significant omission.

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[70]Henry, Christian Personal Ethics, p. 374.

[71]John 3:16; Rom. 3:25-28.

The doctrine of the Atonement will not permit the theologian to proclaim God's yearning to pardon man and receive him again into a renewed covenant relationship apart from serious consideration of God's wrath. According to the Scriptures, God forgives the sin of man's revolt only in view of full satisfaction of divine justice and righteousness by Christ's Atonement, and by personal appropriation of its benefits through faith.[72] By suffering death, even death of the cross, Christ delivered man from the curse of the Law and from the sting of death. Christ suffered the curse of the Law for men (Gal. 3:13). By faith in Him whose life fulfilled the Law and whose death removed its curse, the believer lives in justification and victory before God as one who is no longer doomed by the judgments of the Law.[73]

Christ removed the curse of the Law and also abolished death. Henry defines death in a threefold sense. When physical death occurs, the body undergoes dissolution (Eccl. 12:7); when man is cut off from fellowship with God, he is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1); and the third death is eternal death. Their relationship is apparent in Henry's words, "Physical death cuts him off from the opportunity

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[72]Henry, Christian Personal Ethics, p. 371.

[73]Ibid., p. 180.

for repentance (Heb. 9:27). It perpetrates spiritual death into the irrevocable state of eternal death (Rev. 2:11)."[74]

Jesus Christ has abolished death (2 Tim. 1:10). He had power over death in His earthly ministry; and, by His own death, He dealt the final blow of victory to death itself. For the believer, Christ's victory guarantees that physical death is a "sleep" from which the body will be wakened in the resurrection. Christ has thus made ineffectual the role of death; and there is yet to come the final eschatological victory over death as well as all the powers hostile to the purposes of God.[75]

Henry furthermore notes that the deliverance of man from the curse of the Law and from the throes of death is ultimately a victory which Christ achieved over Satan, the Prince of Darkness. He says, "It is against the works of the Devil that the plan of redemption is aimed."[76] As a personal fallen spirit, Satan is the invisible master-mind of the revolt against God. The ethical rebellion in the world is under the sway of Satan. Jesus speaks of the unregenerate as "children of Satan" (Matt. 13:38; John 8:44). Satan is the spirit working in the "children of disobedience"

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[74] Ibid., p. 177.

[75] Ibid., p. 186. 1 Cor. 15:26; 15:24; 2:6; John 16:33; 2 Thess. 2:8.

[76] Ibid., p. 175.

(Eph. 2:2). He is the god of this world, blinding the minds of the unbelieving (2 Cor. 4:3f.).[77]

Henry believes that the biblical assertion of Satan's role in this world's moral debacle deserves serious attention if we are to capture the full significance of the work of Christ. The blessings of Christ's life and atoning death cannot be appreciated when modern dialectical moralists view Satan as a mythical figure rather than the real personal fallen spirit that he is, instigating the entire revolt against God. This avoidance of Satanology is coupled with a weakening of human responsibility for sinfulness since moral evil is regarded as an inevitability of finite existence.

The Scriptures view moral evil as sin, a revolt against God for which man is personally responsible. Man's participation in evil occurs against the background of a powerful, though resistable, invisible demonic spirit world. And the drama of redemption is a picturesque activity of God entering the space-time realm of existence to secure the ultimate doom of Satan. It is the Creator versus Satan in a series of redemptive concerns from the fall of Satan and subsequent fall of man to the final subjugation of all the hosts of evil. Several scenes from this drama of redemptive victory, portrayed from Genesis to Revelation, are the creation and

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[77] Ibid.

fall of man; the divine offer of redemption to sinful man; the coming of the supernatural Redeemer in human flesh to bear the penalty and guilt of sin; and the final judgment and separation of the righteous and the wicked.[78]

The clash of the Creator and Satan is most vividly portrayed on the plane of Christ's life and redemptive work. Contrary to modern trends which mythologize the biblical figure of Satan, Christ did not hesitate to represent the temptations and opposing forces of his incarnate ministry as a contest with Satan. The doom of this enemy is one of the basic objectives of the Kingdom of God. The redemptive promises of the old dispensation begin with certainty of Satan's overthrow (Gen. 3:15). And the New Testament redemptive task of Christ included the conquest of Satan, most dramatically pictured in the Greek term katargeo, meaning, "to render inactive or ineffective," or paraphrased in modern speech, "to put out of commission."[79] When applied to the work of Christ, the term signifies the divine counter-offensive to Satan, sin and death. Thus, the predicament of fallen man is nullified. Jesus inaugurates a new age, the first phase being the Christ event, his life, death and resurection; and the second, His glorious return. Christians still await the establishment of the kingdom of glory. Until

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[78] Ibid., p. 173.

[79] Ibid., p. 185.

that time, Satan is a menace to Christians as he continues to hinder believers. But the redemptive work of Christ has already passed sentence on the prince of this world (Acts 16:30f.; John 16:8ff.).

Eschatology

The hope of the resurrection and entrance into the kingdom of glory is posited with Jesus who brought life and immortality to light (2 Tim. 1:10). Christ became Lord over death, removing the fear of physical death and the sting of spiritual death (1 Cor. 15:55). Christians are the first-fruits of His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20; Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18). The future bodily resurrection involves complete conformity to the image of Christ which the glorified state will bring (Rom. 8:23).[80]

Henry's eschatology sees a future divine rule in which all competitive rule and authority and power of Satan will be completely abolished.[81] This present age of sanctification in the believer's life only precipitates the society of a future age when God will be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28). The coming of this kingdom must be preceded by the millennial age. The millennium is only a small (minute) particle of Henry's theology, and for that matter, his eschatology. The

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[80] Ibid., p. 179.

[81] Ibid., p. 181.

only precise statement on the millennial age which this writer discovered in Henry's works is the following paragraph from his book, Christian Personal Ethics,

> The Divine conquest of death moves into another phase with the millennial age. This age starts with the resurrection of the righteous dead (1 Thess. 4:13ff., Rev. 20:6) and their complete conformity to the glorified Christ (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:21, 1 Cor. 15:49). It ends with the second death or final doom of the wicked (Rev. 20:14, 21:8). The future resurrection is the antidote to physical death. Consummating the believer's possession of eternal life in Christ, it completes the redemptive triumph over death. The eternal kingdom is necessarily one in which redemption has fully annulled the consequences of sin for the redeemed ones. The mediatorial reign of Christ extends until the last enemy, death itself, is abolished (1 Cor. 15:25f.). In the new heaven and the new earth "death shall be no more" (Rev. 21:4).[82]

To this paragraph must be added an earlier statement where Henry is speaking of himself and saying, "The writer's own convictions are broadly premillennial."[83] Henry feels that the discard of radical speculative assertions about the millennium does not justify an uncritical surrender of the entire premillennial structure. Any shift to an amillennialist position because of speculative oddities in some premillennial views would not meet with agreement from Henry. He feels that biblical prophecies demand a future earthly kingdom, but he cautions that,

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[82] Ibid., p. 179.

[83] Carl F. H. Henry, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1947), p. 51.

> It appears more in accord with the Biblical philosophy of history to think of the church age in terms of divine continuity rather than of parenthesis, and in terms of amazing unity of the redemptive plan rather than in terms of an amazing interlude.[84]

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[84] Ibid., p. 53.

CHAPTER III

CARL F. H. HENRY'S EMPHASIS ON THE IMPERATIVES OF A CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW FOR MODERN MAN

The Modern Mind Shaped By a Naturalistic Bias

Antithesis of naturalism to supernaturalism in modern thought

Carl F. Henry is an astute observer of the western mind, as it developed from early Greece through the medieval period into modern times. Careful delineation of movements and patterns in western thought made a significant contribution to Henry's understanding and evaluation of theology, particularly developments on the continent and British Isles and then also in America since the turn of the century. His studies have led to the conclusion that theology since the Renaissance is largely dominated by the great philosophical giants together with modern evolutionary theories of man and his world. Apart from the stream of evangelical theology, which consistently retained Reformation emphases throughout, a stream sometimes wide and other times narrow and diminutive, theology surrendered to philosophical modes of thought which were rooted in unbiblical presuppositions. In so doing, many of the most influential theologians of modern times moved away from the moorings of the historic Hebrew-Christian faith.

These observations invite the reader to evaluate for himself Carl Henry's assessment of modern thought, both its

development and corresponding influence upon contemporary theology. If it is true that theology has forfeited leadership in shaping the tenets of the modern mind to the dominant influences of philosophy, the reader is compelled to press Henry for substantial evidence in support of his thesis. This reversal of medieval and Reformation supremacy of theology and subsequent philosophical influence of all theological disciplines has profound implications for biblical studies, even for hermeneutics. Therefore, Henry's appraisal of modern thought and relationships to contemporary theology deserve a sympathetic hearing. Lutheran confessional theologians dare not neglect the centuries since the Reformation. Perhaps Carl Henry will call to mind certain facts which are often overlooked, inhibiting an objective assessment and evaluation of contemporary theology in relation to both its near and distant past.

If we asked Carl Henry for a single statement pinpointing the major characteristic of the modern mind, he would render this verdict in his own words, "The central postulate of the modern mind, in its final expression, has been the ultimacy of nature."[1] Beginning with Descartes in 1600, modern philosophy took a turn in the road, heading in the direction of naturalism. The idealistic tenets of the ancient Greeks

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[1]Carl F. H. Henry, The Drift of Western Thought (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1951), p. 41.

and Christian idealism, prevailing for almost fifteen-hundred years through the medieval period, were unsuccessful in countering the spread of naturalism after 1600 with the rise of the scientific era.[2] From the standpoint of both the ancient and medieval minds, when taken together, the distinctive modern prejudice is the denial of the supernatural in affirmation of the ultimacy of nature.[3] While the naturalistic bias took hold of modern thought in a gradual process, and not without indirect counter influences of idealistic modes of thought and later existential accretions, the prevailing mood is one skeptical of the supernatural. Carl Henry cautions against identity of the world's prime issues in terms of economic antithesis, that is, capitalism versus communism, or theological vacillation, to believe or not to believe the Genesis creation account, or the Jonah account, or the miracles of Jesus.[4] Basic and elemental to these and related issues in modern thought and theology is the question, "Is this a natural or supernatural universe? Between these two world views there can be no conciliation, for they are exclusive."[5]

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[2] Ibid., pp. 37-38.

[3] Ibid., p. 41.

[4] Carl F. H. Henry, "Is Christianity Worth Trying?," Moody Monthly, XLV (March 1945), 378.

[5] Ibid.

The rise of naturalism in modern thought

Historically, modern naturalistic thought has deep roots in humanism of the Renaissance period. Except for inhibitions imposed on medieval thought by the church, the Christian outlook was unquestionably initially compatible with and encouraging to the inquiring mind. The early Renaissance found the tenets of Christianity to be a stimulus, except as noted above, when dogmatism on part of the church unjustifiably hampered the new quest for knowledge. Henry says,

> There was certainly nothing about essential Christianity to discourage the development of science; rather its stress on a purposive God furnished the necessary intellectual climate in which the orderly working of nature would impress itself upon the inquiring mind.[6]

The point at which Renaissance thought, particularly science, and Christianity confronted a parting of the ways is succinctly stated by Henry,

> The sharp cleavage between Christianity and Renaissance science--and this is much deeper than the so-called Genesis collisions--came about because scientific inquiry increasingly stressed the what and minimized the why as a sufficient interpretation of events. For a teleological or purposive view of the universe, science substituted a mechanistic view. It was not Renaissance science as such, but the philosophy of that science, that engendered the revolt against Christianity. The key to reality was

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[6]Carl F. H. Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1946), pp. 36-37.

> now to be sought not in the Scriptures, but through the telescope and microscope alone.[7]

Encouraged by the Christian outlook to subdue the world through experiment and exploration, the Renaissance man separated philosophy and science from a revelational context and pursued these disciplines as the final key to the mysteries of the universe and man.[8] The cleavage only widened as modern man gained increasing confidence in the scientific method which found its strongest thrust in the biological studies and conclusions of Charles Darwin. The scientific method was utilized not only to uncover the facts, but was freely employed to articulate naturalistic interpretations. Given an air of scientific authority, evolutionary hypotheses, linking man to a space-time universe apart from a spiritual context, joined the philosophical ideologies prompted by Hume, Comte and Dewey to win an overwhelming victory for naturalism in the great thought centers of the west at the turn of the century.[9]

Moreover, impelled by the scientific method, naturalism tightened more firmly its grip on modern thought in recent decades. Early in 1945, Henry cited the challenge of

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[7] Ibid., p. 37.

[8] Ibid., pp. 278-79.

[9] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

scientific dogmatism to the Christian view of God and the world.[10] Modern man is to believe only what can be verified by scientific methodology, observation and experiment, that is, whatever cannot be seen, heard, felt, tasted, or smelled, has no claim to reality. Conceding the important usefulness of the scientific method for achievements with data falling in the physical realm, Henry questions the assumption that scientific methodology is the criterion for all reality, ruling out the supernatural a priori.[11]

The resultant implications of naturalism for modern man

Prevailing for over three hundred and fifty years from post-Renaissance decades to contemporary times, naturalism poses significant implications for theology, cosmology, anthropology, morality and sociology.[12] Theologically, naturalism offers two alternatives. First, the natural world

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[10]"The scientific method is the criterion not only in science, but the ultimate test to which most philosophers and theologians in our day subscribe also. It dominates the modern university. It is the idol before which the living God, the soul, and everything supernatural has been slain. Since the Christian God is by definition supernatural, the rejection of the Christian God is the prerequisite of the acceptance of the current scientific, philosophical, and religious methodology." Henry, "Is Christianity Worth Trying?," p. 379. Elsehwere in this same article, Henry states, "At the heart of this wholesale abandonment of the Christian faith stands the scientific method." Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]These categories are furnished by the writer. While they do not appear in so many words in Henry's writings, his observations and critique of the naturalistic world view seem to logically fall into this arrangement.

of sense and empirical experience is posited as the only reality to the exclusion of the existence of God or any idea about the divine. The second alternative is a modification of avowed atheism. It permits an idea about God, which, arising in the mind, cannot, however, be personal or transcendent in a creative relationship to nature. At best, this latter view allows for an immanent deity which is limited to existence in a space-time universe and is dependent upon that universe for existence and preservation.[13]

Denial of the ontic reference for the deity concept resulted in a world view purged of both the miraculous and a sense of purposeful movement of history. Henry comments, "Between 1500 and 1700 A.D., the medieval teleological universe was displaced by the modern mechanism of mathematical atoms."[14] In contrast to the early Renaissance confidence

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[13]Henry cites the subjectivists as proponents of this view that beyond the individual god-idea, there exists no spiritual reality. He says, "This denial of an ontic reference for the deity-concept ran in earlier days through such post-Kantian writers as Ludwig Feuerbach, F. A. Lange, and Hans Vaihinger; in more recent times, the position has been republished by religious psychologists and humanists. Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, C. G. Jung, and J. H. Leuba regarded the existence of God as an illusion. American humanism, in the vanguard of John Dewey's appraisal of supernaturalism as a mythologizing of reality that obstructs the highways of thought, travels a similar road. For Edward Scribner Ames, Irving King, A. Eustace Haydon, and T. V. Smith, like George Burman Foster before them, the idea of God possesses only a functional, not an ontological, validity. The "god" of these thinkers, reduced as he is to the subjective deity-idea, is plainly dependent upon the universe; destroy humanity and whatever reality god has is likewise destroyed. Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, pp. 203-4.

[14]Ibid., p. 86.

in a spiritual foundation for the laws of nature, the emerging modern science saw the connection of things in the world as wholly explicable by an unbroken cause-effect relationship. The notion of uniformity in nature based upon uninterrupted continuity of natural law came to dominate the modern mind. Citing Spinoza's impartial mathematical structure of nature, the cleavage between miracles and the laws of nature in Hume's thought, the eighteenth century deistic fixed order of nature immune to interference by the Creator, and Darwin's recasting of the traditional teleological argument for an intelligent spiritual being behind the universe--design in nature being the result of evolutionary activity of chance variation and natural selection,[15] Henry concludes,

> By the beginning of the 20th century, modern man stood amidst a mechanistic universe gripped by a mathematical necessity that made irrelevant the medieval God, miracles, purpose, and redemption.[16]

The implications of naturalism are equally incisive for anthropology. In a world where nature is the ultimate reality, man himself is bereft of any link with the supernatural. Where science is captured by evolutionary theories of origin, man's animality is freely asserted. While physical distinctions prevail between man and the creature world, he remains essentially only an animal. Modern thought views

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[15] Ibid., pp. 91-95.

[16] Ibid., p. 95.

these distinctions not so much in rationality as in complex animality.[17] Reducing man to a higher more complex specimen of the animal world, he is deprived of rationality, a distinction always unique to man prior to the modern view. Like the animal, man can never penetrate beyond himself when his own mind is the total reference for reality. Man is capable only of knowledge which is relative. His ideas are true, but not because they reflect an eternally valid pattern of rationality. If there be any truth, it is only in relation to man's insights, which means in effect that his ideas are never absolutely true. In this respect, man is similar to the animals, bound as they are to the world of nature alone.[18] The process whereby nature was absolutized as the ultimate reality with resultant implications for anthropology, bringing about irrationality, is summarized by Henry when he says,

> modern science, almost univocally evolutionary, has intended by man's animality his direct succession, physically and psychically, from an animal ancestry. Man is, on this view, only a more intricate brute. To fix upon a link to supernature as his differentia is, from the naturalistic vantage point, to introduce an unscientific criterion. The whole man, physical and psychical, stands at the complex end of the evolutionary series coming through the lower animal forms. The inevitable tendency of this line of thought is to lessen the contrast between man's rational functions and infrahuman non-physical activity, or to seek some approximation of human rationality among lower animals. Thus man is animalized, the brute humanized. If man is made in

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[17] Ibid., p. 239.

[18] Ibid., p. 247.

> God's image, the prototype appears to the contemporary scientist much like a lemur. The inevitable consequences of the position that mind is a late by-product of the universe, is that rationality appears as an abnormality, rather than as a reflection of that which is ultimately real. Continuity is found along the pattern of animality rather than rationality.[19]

Besides reduction of man and his rational prowess to the status of glorified animality, naturalism lends a relativistic bent to the morals of modern man. This relativity in ethical values derives from naturalism's tendency to forsake the unchanging spiritual reality of the supernatural world. According to Henry, naturalistic ethics posit truth and right as time-bound and changing.[20] With severance of ethics from fixed values and standards, ardently promoted by John Dewey and others, theological sanctions for behavior have been discarded and modern man seeks only social or even individual approval for his moral actions. Christianity's insistence upon absolute values is an insult to the temperament of modern man who dismissed from ethics moral imperatives of an absolute nature. From the introduction to his major work, Christian Personal Ethics, Carl Henry observes, "For the first time since the Christian era, relative, subjective ethics looms as the approved cultural philosophy."[21]

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[19] Ibid., p. 240.

[20] Carl F. H. Henry, Christian Personal Ethics (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1957), p. 23.

[21] Ibid., p. 13.

If indeed man is confined to time-space reality marked by continuous but also aimless process and change, his search for a secure and stable basis for ethical decision seems futile. Sacrificing the moral imperative, leaving ethical decisions up to personal preference, can only bring modern man to the brink of aggravated frustration. A clear example is the dilemma created by development of atomic weapons for warfare. Henry cites the anomaly rising from tensions over the use of these destructive powers. Atomic weapons only serve to emphasize vacillation between rationality and bestiality. When modern man educates against misuse of atomic energy, he is challenging the basic animality of man, particularly when such education involves an appeal to some abiding norm and moral scheme, some ethical code applied universally. Is not this a contradiction when simultaneously the reality of metaphysical realities is denied?[22]

Creating a revolution in ethical values, naturalism's implications for the state are no less significant, particularly as the naturalistic outlook undergirds the advance of communism. With its emphasis, enforced by Stalin, that the material world is primary, the communist version of naturalism has completely submerged spiritual life; and human personality is reduced to an impersonal dimension. The denial of God, observes Henry, is the Russian first commandment; nature is

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[22]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, pp. 251-53.

ultimate, the first principle of dialectical materialsim. Subverting the mental or spiritual realm to the material, Stalin made the material life of society an objective reality existing independently of the will of men. Thus, the social order determines men's consciousness, and not vice versa. The conditions of life, therefore, turn out to be primarily material and impersonal, and basically economic according to the communist appraisal.[23]

The Naturalistic Bias, a Rift from Moorings of the Past

Cleavage with theology and cosmology of antiquity

Having demonstrated the sweeping influences of naturalism, Carl Henry is eager to show that the modern mind has severed ties with medieval and ancient modes of thought. According to Henry, a casual reading of Plato's Republic reveals how the classical mind was fully convinced that full fledged naturalism would result in evaporation of existence. Similar perusal of Old and New Testaments reveals the repeated warning that any civilization built upon naturalistic tenets is destined for decay.[24] Both pagan and Christian antiquity

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[23]Henry, Drift of Western Thought, pp. 60-61. Henry cites from Joseph Stalin's Dialectical and Historical Materialsim (New York: International Publishers), p. 20.

[24]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 22.

are themselves a judgment upon the modern sacrifice of the supernatural, with its teleological perspective of history and its objective principles for the life of man. Platonic thought holds a logical connection between the universal principle of mind and each particular phenomenon; it does so in terms of teleology, or a divine spiritual purpose.[25] And the epoch-making association of the first principle with the notion of god on a personalistic pattern in Aristotle is a still more advanced concept in classical idealism. While Plato disassociates the "forms" or "Ideas" in a separate superworld, Aristotle's significant contribution is the identification of the philosophic first principle and personal deity.[26] Henry observes, furthermore, that both Plato and Aristotle squarely opposed the ancient naturalists like Leusippus and his student Democritus who viewed the world as a composite chain of events ruled by a blind inexorable necessity. He says,

> Plato and Aristotle concur that the universals which make nature intelligible are reflections of an abiding realm of supernature to which the multitudinous particular phenomena are related. This superworld is an eternal, unchanging, moral realm, so that the world of nature subserves final as well as efficient causes; there are abiding norms of truth, goodness and beauty, the existence of which alone makes nature meaningful. This insistence on teleology in

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[25] Ibid., p. 187. For a more detailed treatment of Plato's view of the nous in Phaedo and spiritual theology in Timaeus, see Henry's discussion in this same reference, pp. 187-88.

[26] Ibid., pp. 188-89.

> the realm of physics, involving the notion that events cannot be adequately explained except by reference to purposive good ends, placed Plato and Aristotle squarely in opposition to ancient naturalists, and yet provided an affinity, however compromised, to that unique view of nature advocate by the Hebrews of antiquity.[27]

In medieval thought, the western mind followed the Hebrew-Christian tradition which begins with God who reveals Himself as creator and preserver of the natural world. The biblical view granted the regularity of nature, not by blind natural causes, but to a sustaining God as the presupposition to the entire natural order. This cosmology makes allowance for the interaction of God with His creation through miraculous acts. According to the Hebrew-Christian tradition, the miraculous need not threaten the idea of a rational and regular world of nature. Rather, the interruption by miraculous events is a silent testimony to the orderliness of the natural world.[28] This view, of course, is distinct from the modern naturalistic insistence upon the absolute uniformity and continuity of events.

Cleavage with anthropology and ethics of antiquity

Something more can be said. Not only is naturalism clearly distinguished from theology and cosmology of antiquity,

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[27] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[28] Henry says, "The Judaistic Christian tradition viewed the rationale of nature as providential, so that a providential God was the frame of reference for the regular and miracular alike." Ibid., p. 83.

its views on man and morals are a repudiation of the classical concepts. The assertion in both classical and Hebrew-Christian thought of a supernatural world and reality held profound implications for the understanding of man. Greek idealism clearly insisted that man, distinguished from other creatures, is a spiritual and moral being. According to Plato, rationality, the ability to discern meaning in a temporal world of change, necessitates a supernatural, super-temporal, changeless world of order.[29] Henry notes that the Occidental tradition rests on the assumption that man is not a more complicated animal only, but that he is essentially distinct, possessing psychic capacities other than the brutes.[30] The ancient classic philosophers were willing to admit that man has things in common with the animate world. Man has life, is not inanimate, and is subject to natural law and lives in a world of nature which is the sphere of the physical sciences; but this view of man's animality quite obviously meant no commitment to an evolutionary view whereby man derived his life from lower animals, and lower animals from inanimate forms of existence. On the contrary, Aristotle's biology upholds and clearly affirms the immutability of the species, which is somewhat consistent with the Genesis account of direct divine creation of species. The classical

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[29] Ibid., p. 244.

[30] Ibid., p. 238.

mind never shared contemporary scientific views predicated upon a theory of evolutionary development.[31]

Moreover, man's link with the supernatural world set the pattern of his rational processes. Henry explains that in classical thought, "ideas" are not our own thoughts, but rather are objects of our thoughts; they are realities apprehended, not ways of apprehending. Man is not rational because he shares with the brute perpetual images, but because his mental powers are characterized by an ontic reference to the world of changeless eternal ideas or forms.[32]

Henry asserts that the basis for rationality posed by classic thought was abandoned by modern empiricists. "With Locke's, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, "ideas" became particular images; no longer are some ideas discovered in reality, but all are formed in the individual mind."[33] Therefore, man's interpretation of the universe is based upon a subjective intellection of images of particular things. "Ideas" are merely subjectively formed images of aspects common to particulars, valid only in proportion to the number of particulars which have been sensibly experienced.[34] In this manner, Locke contributed to naturalism's assessment

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[31] Ibid., pp. 242-43.

[32] Ibid., pp. 244-45.

[33] Ibid., p. 246.

[34] Ibid.

of man in strict empirical fashion, a radical departure from the classic view which deemed man's rationality possible only because of his ontic reference to a supernatural realm other than the natural.

By this same relationship with the changeless supernatural order, man was also moral according to classic concepts. While the ancient idealistic philosophies fell short of moral standards set by Hebrew-Christian thought, it shared at least this conviction that moral law is not enmeshed in relativity. On the contrary, man, linked to eternal ideas or forms, was to that extent lifted out of his animal creaturehood and made a participant in the supernatural world while indeed he was subject also to the laws of nature. He not only rationally apprehended the eternal forms of goodness, truth, and beauty; but this very superworld also layed on him an abiding moral demand.[35]

To a certain extent medieval Christianity perpetuated the classical view of man as a moral creature, but always in a redemptive context. For fifteen hundred years individual and social ethics were given a reference not only to an eternal, unchanging moral order, but more, to a personal God, creator of all things who for man's redemption became incarnate in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.[36]

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[35] Ibid., p. 237.

[36] Ibid., p. 273.

Carl Henry has demonstrated how modern naturalistic views have separated from moorings of the past. An aimless universe devoid of any higher controlling reality is foreign to those patterns which dominated the western mind until modern times. Naturalism repudiated both classical thought and Christian antiquity, and more recently medieval Christianity. It fostered a non-revelational world view with widespread implications for modern man.

The Christian World View, Alternative to Naturalism

The debacle in modern thought

Naturalism, the controlling idea of the modern mind, met severe challenges in recent history. Writing during the aftermath of World War II, Carl Henry observed a crisis in modern thought parallel to the debacle of two global conflicts and the shroud of possible nuclear destruction which now envelopes the world. These events have posed serious questions for the modern mind, obsessed as it was with a spirit of radical optimism at the turn of the twentieth century. The ultimate reality of nature and the animality of man, proceeding along a course of evolutionary development and inevitable progress, were postulates combined with a notion of man's inherent goodness and ultimate perfectibility as components of an optimism which seemed quite invincible.[37]

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[37] Ibid., pp. 19-27.

This early twentieth century optimism, however, proved only too vulnerable. At the outset of his volume, The Protestant Dilemma, published in 1948, Carl Henry demonstrates how two world catastrophes and their display of mass destruction have broken the ideas of optimism popular in a former generation. It is now obvious to the modern mind that man has turned inevitable progress into a mood of inevitable disaster. The idea of human perfectibility has reversed to an obvious ineradicable evil of man. By its development of the atomic bomb, the scientific method must now be replaced by a wisdom greater than science. Man yearns for a power beyond science to govern his fickle temper.[38] The modern mind is leaving behind premises which three hundred and fifty years of modern philosophy had struggled long and hard to bring to ascendency.[39] Discontented with speculative gropings, a new world mind is emerging, which in its deepest moments, seeks out a voice from beyond, that is, some light from the spiritual realm, some initiative which God, "shall take in the present plight of humanity's lostness."[40] Is there an alternate world

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[38]Carl F. H. Henry, The Protestant Dilemma (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans'Publishing Co., c.1948), pp. 18-24.

[39]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, pp. 19-21. To show that the decades from 1914 to 1945 stand as an open challenge to an axiomatic philosophy of progress, Henry cites the widespread rejection of spontaneous advancement, reflected in such works as, Adams, The Degradation of Democratic Dogma; Spengler, The Decline of the West; Schweitzer, The Decay and Restoration of Civilization. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[40]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 36.

outlook capable of satisfying this quest of modern man? If the mood of optimism, rising out of naturalistic tenets held by the western mind, has succumbed to the overwhelming disappointments of the twentieth century, to whom shall we turn? Which philosophical ideology can sustain modern man? Shall he revert back to classic idealism or even nineteenth century idealism? Is the answer to his quest lodged in the divine encounter motif of existentialism? No, says Carl Henry! Fulfillment of man's search for meaning beyond himself and his space-time existence can only come from God who has both initiated and executed a special revelation of Himself in the Logos, made flesh in Christ Jesus, and the Word inscripturated in Old and New Testaments of the Hebrew-Christian tradition.

The Christian world view is based upon God's special revelation

For Carl Henry, the supernatural is real; life and the universe in its entirety has a definite ontic reference with the divine. And the great philosophic systems, with few exceptions, are the constructs of men who similarly believed that reality can be explained satisfactorily only from a theistic standpoint.[41] But Henry's theistic metaphysical

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[41]Whether one studies the speculative systems of Plato or Artistotle, Zeno the Stoic or Plotinus, Descartes or Berkeley, Leibniz or Kant, Hegel or moderns like Royce, Hocking, Bowne or Brightman, these minds, says Henry, insist that the scientific world of nature cannot be properly understood without reference to a supernatural world in some sense beyond it or prior to it. Carl F. H. Henry, Notes on the Doctrine of God (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., c.1950), p. 42.

outlook, as distinguished from philosophical systems, is founded upon God's self-disclosure in a process of special revelation. Emphasizing the "one royal truth" offered by the Hebrew-Christian message to mankind, namely, some special self-disclosure of the supernatural to the natural world, Henry notes the distinctiveness of this outlook when he says,

> But the fact that God spoke uniquely at all--even once--that is the emphasis for which one looks in vain outside the Biblical tradtion. It is never God over against man in the non-Biblical religions and philosophies, but rather it is God nowhere or everywhere. Never is room made for a special revelation, for a once--for--all divine disclosure--and that for the sufficient reason that God reserved His redemptive revelation for the Hebrews, among whom it culminated in Jesus Christ. It is the revelation method, the proclamation of God's self-disclosure in the written Word and in the living Word Christ Jesus, that alone can resolve the corrosive uncertainty of the confused mid-twentieth century mind.[42]

The starting point for the Hebrew-Christian world view is God's unique and special dealings with humanity. This initial and fundamental truth is conspicuously absent in

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[42]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 38. Henry posits Jesus Christ as the supreme and ultimate event in God's self-disclosure. Crucial for any concept of special revelation, Christ and His Lordship become vitally apparent for a Christian world view. Where philosophers as Lotze, Bradley, Royce, Bowne, Bergson, Whitehead, Brighteman and Bertocci may be numbered among advocates of a personal god, the divine sovereignty and divine personality in these views lack something of the richness of Christian theology as it superceded ancient classic idealism. Where modern thought, insisting on a personal god, though indifferent to trinitarian theism, projects a unipersonal pattern of the deity, the significance of Christ is lost. Henry comments, "This movement away from Jesus, as crucial for the theocentric problem, is already a movement from higher special revelation to its lower levels, and eventually does not escape abandonment of the whole

many pagan schools of thought. Take, for example, Greek Aristotelian philosophy. Demonstrating that an adequate world view can take its departure only from a personal sovereign God as a controlling principle, it then demands belief in a God who by definition never reveals himself directly to other persons, who does not enter into relationships with the spiritual and rational creatures, who as far as the world of persons is concerned proceeds with impersonal indifference. This, says Henry, "is to bring philosophy and faith to the breaking point."[43] In contrast, beginning with God incarnate in Christ Jesus, the Christian finds it not incongruous to derive both the world and a world view from Him. If one begins with God, setting out with a revelational framework, the self-consistency of the Christian world view will eventually become apparent, a conviction shared by Augustine, Anselm and the Reformational thinkers.[44] Again, Henry recapitulates,

> The distinctiveness of the Hebrew-Christian movement is its declaration of the actuality of once--for--all divine disclosure, justified not in terms of religious postulation, nor simply as a philosophical first principle, but in view of the activity of the self-revealing God.[45]

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principle of special revelation in the interest of an empirical approach." Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 209.

[43]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 192.

[44]Ibid., p. 222.

[45]Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 114.

Component Parts of that Christian World View

The doctrine of God

Carl Henry advances a Christian world view, or call it a Christian metaphysics, with the divine activity of God in special revelation as a starting point. Our discussion moves on with a treatment of the several component parts of Henry's Christian outlook, comparing them to competing philosophical views with this objective, to demonstrate the supremacy of the Christian world view as the only real alternative to naturalism. First in our discussion is the Christian doctrine of God set side by side with both classic and modern god-concepts.[46] Carl Henry reminded us how Aristotle advanced Plato's idea, identifying the philosophic first principle and a personal deity. Nevertheless, the reader has been alerted to the fact that Aristotle's deity is still self-contained and separate from the world. The deity of Aristotle's philosophy is pure thought, not, however, occupying himself with things external to the divine mind, but

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[46]Henry views the concept of God decisive in any philosophical system. He says, "From a certain vantage point, the concept of God is determinative for all other concepts; it is the Archimedian lever with which one can fashion an entire world view. If the great periods of philosophy have diversely interpreted history, the nature of man, and the space-time universe itself, these differences are traceable to variant presuppositions concerning God." Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 171.

rather self-thinking thought, thinking his own eternal nature. This Greek deity has his own unchanging self-consciousness as the lone object of his mental activity. He knows only himself and cannot think inferior objects, whether the forms of evil, or the world, or the law of physics. Aristotle's god acts upon the world, not by divine fiat or any activity which he initiates but through the longing for him, through the desire for formal perfection which the world has.[47] Henry concludes, "The essential nature of the Aristotelian deity is thought directed solely upon itself."[48]

But the Aristotelian "god at a distance" stands at the center of Hebrew-Christian life. Long before systematic Greek philosophy, Hebrew-Christian thought centered in a personal God who revealed Himself and entered into covenant relationship with His people. Biblical theism is the exponent of a revealed God who created the world in fulfillment of a divine plan, a God who takes initiative, revealing himself to man in redemptive activity, the God who, "so loved the world so that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Such concepts are obviously alien to Aristotelian philosophy. And Carl Henry reemphasizes that the Hebrew-Christian deity is derived, not from philosophical

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[47] Ibid., pp. 190-91.

[48] Ibid., p. 191.

speculation; rather, the assurance that a personal God exists and acts among men is derived from a revelational principle. Apart from that biblical revelational principle, the Hebrew-Christian thinker insists that it is quite impossible to rise to an adequate personal-sovereign-deity-view. This revelational principle is a judgment upon Aristotelian and every other god-concept based upon philosophic speculation.[49]

The decline of Greece, in Henry's opinion, is at least partially indicative of a god-concept inferior to the self-revealed deity of the Hebrew-Christian tradition. The disintegration of Greek civilization with the advent of the Hellenistic age of 200 B.C. and the capitulation to barbarity in A.D. 400, is attributed in part to the fact that Aristotle's philosophy did not result in a living theism. The Greeks held a high view of man and morals, giving sanction to a metaphysics at the center of which stood a personal and sovereign deity; yet the moral standard collapsed, a fact which Henry attributes to the lack of vital spiritual union with the deity in Aristotelian theism.[50] The Christian world view, however, presented a frame of reference for the highest moral demands of modern times. This frame of reference, unique to the Hebrew-Christian religion, is that of an absolute God, clothed with the attributes both of stern justice

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[49] Ibid., pp. 191-93.

[50] Ibid., p. 194.

and holiness and tender mercy and love, entering into covenant relation with His creatures, providing redemption for them, and with whom the soul can commune.[51] Incidentally, this Christian view dominated medieval culture for fifteen hundred years.

Nevertheless, Aristotelian god-concepts outlived Greek civilization and influenced Thomist natural theology with its a posteriori arguments for the existence of God. Constructing their defenses upon premises of natural theology, later Christian apologists found themselves in serious trouble when the data of the cosmological, teleological and anthropological arguments for God came under vicious attack in Hume's, Dialogues on Natural Religion. While Luther and Calvin posed the ground for the church's belief in God in the divine self-revelation in the Scriptures, Henry observes that thinkers under influence of Thomistic views continued to demonstrate logically from natural theology, the probability if not certainty, that God exists. In Henry's opinion, these arguments from natural theology are a compromise of the revelational principle. In effect, they betray the Hebrew-Christian view, wherein revelation alone yields certainty; and without revelation, empirical arguments are less than satisfying.[52]

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[51] Ibid., p. 195.

[52] Ibid., pp. 196-99. Significant is the fact that Carl Henry cannot be associated with that school of apologists in former generations who countered attacks upon the Christian

Here we might add that Carl Henry is equally dissatisfied with the a priori ontological argument, that is, the view that knowledge of God's existence is involved in the very idea of Him. This argument tends to minimize revelational insistence upon the beclouding effects of sin in the life of man. Indeed, the unregenerate man's subjective god-idea may include a reference to the one true God; but, to assert that the god-idea of sinful man reaches for the Hebrew-Christian god without hindrance of error and with no serious gap between the idea and the reality is for Henry an impossibility, which in truth denies the very sinfulness of man in need of special revelation of God if he is ever to know the truth.[53]

Moreover, Henry is quick to observe that modern god-concepts show little advance beyond the classic ideas, separated as they are from a revelational context. Theologians

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faith with empirical arguments. Elsewhere Henry cautions that the first cause in the cosmological argument may just be a blind impulsive initial mover like the world souls of Stoicism or the pantheistic substance of Spinoza or the impersonal reason of Hegel as well as the personal God of Christian theism. This argument merely affirms a self-subsistent infinite Being. Secondly, the teleological argument, as Henry observes, states that there is a designer, immanent and transcendent, but not a creator. Here we can only presume to show that the ultimate Being of the universe is intelligent and nothing more. In the third place, the moral or anthropological argument simply identifies the source of our world as a supreme moral lawgiver of a sort. Cp. Henry, Notes on Doctrine of God, p. 43.

[53]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, pp. 202-2. In this regard, Henry notes, "No Bible writer, in point of fact, rose to a knowledge of the Hebrew-Christian God along the pattern of Anselm's Monologium, any more than Anselm did. God came to man when man, his innate concept of God distorted and obscured by an inadequate and misleading content, could not bridge the path to God." Ibid., p. 201.

strongly influenced by Hegel obscured biblical once-for-all revelation. For them, the universal movement of thought provided the most significant disclosure of the Absolute, which amounted to a pantheizing immanence. Those who followed Kant repudiated disclosure of the Absolute, contending that categories of thought do not extend to the supernatural, thus precluding the possibility of metaphysical knowledge. This viewpoint inevitably leads, in Henry's opinion, to the fatal brink of agnosticism.[54] While representatives of modern philosophy have openly advocated a personal god, men like Bradley, Bergson, Brightman and Bertocci, according to Henry, are satisfied to contend merely for a finite god. Personalistic idealists espousing a non-revelational theism contend that nature is not to be interpreted as "other" than God. Nature is to be viewed as part of God's experience, rather than distinctive ontologically.[55]

Still other divergent god-concepts antithetical to the revelational view are those which reduce God to a transcendental idea with a tendency to equate deity with the abstract ideas of the good, beautiful and true. God is the artificial personification of these concepts. George Santayana, Kirsopp Lake, and Bertrand Russell in his presubjectivistic years are named by Henry as representatives of

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[54]Carl F. H. Henry, Fifty Years of Protestant Theology (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., c.1950), p. 16.

[55]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, pp. 208-9.

this view. Still others identify God as part of the space-time universe, believing that empirical scientific methods are capable of solving the religious problem as well as other issues. For empirical theologians there is no supernatural revelation of God in history or the Scriptures. Representatives of this school, says Henry, "invariably reduce God to an immanent feature of the space-time universe, and consistently substitute naturalistic process for a supernaturalistic God."[56] Concluding his assessment of modern god-concepts, Henry clearly distinguishes them from the biblical view in this pointed statement,

> The modern gods do not enter vitally into the stream of history; they have no creation, no revelation, no prophecy, no incarnation, no atonement, no great commission, no regeneration, no missionary martyrs, no future judgment. They simply take part in the passing parade sponsored by contemporary mythologizing minds. That is the predicament of modern gods. Deprived both of personality and of ultimacy they cannot reveal themselves and, worse yet, they can do nothing about it.[57]

Cosmology and history

A second constituent part of Carl Henry's Christian world view includes his outlook on history with general cosmology included within the scope of a revelational framework. History is the sphere in which the drama of redemption is

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[56] Ibid., p. 207. For a more exhaustive treatment of modern god-concepts as Henry evaluates them, consult the entire chapter, titled, "The Predicament of Modern Gods," Ibid., p. 171-210.

[57] Ibid., p. 210.

being enacted, "and in which such once-for-all events occur as the incarnation, the atonement, Pentecost and the consummatory judgment."[58] Henry stresses that the incarnation of Christ was an interruption of the course of world history. Christ brought to mankind the apocalyptic hope of salvation which far surpassed the importance of events in the space-time universe because God is now moving history toward its final consummation in judgment.

In view of this eternal future, the earthly scene is regarded by Christians as a discipline. This is not to say that God is not concerned with the space-time universe. On the contrary, maintains Henry, the Old Testament view posits God as the presupposition of the entire natural order. God is likewise responsible for miraculous supernatural intervention; and for this reason modern thinkers charge the Hebrew-Christian view of nature as unpredictable, unorganized, chaotic and irrational. This allegation is based upon the assumption that the only possible alternative to the absolute uniformity or universal causation postulated by modern science is a chaotic world without rhyme or reason. But Henry explains that the biblical view recognized both the regularity of nature and God's preservation of the universe. These facts demand a teleological world view, but always with reference to a sustaining God rather than merely to preceding

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[58] Ibid., pp. 32-33.

natural causes. Interpretation of space-time events is possible only with this kind of reference. As opposed to deism, God is theistically immanent as both the creator and conserving cause of the universe. And Henry hastens to add that God's activity as preserver in an orderly course of natural events does not preclude the possibility of purposive employment of divine power for the accomplishment of ends which nature in its ordinary course was unable to attain simply because there was a regularity of cosmic action.[59]

The biblical view of God's relationship to the space-time universe as an ontic reference for both miraculous and unmiraculous alike must be differentiated from both ancient and modern views of God and history. Insisting that events of nature and history could have meaning and importance only by reference to the superworld of eternal ideas and forms, classic Greek Idealism could not escape the pitfall of an ancient cycle theory of history which ultimately precluded entrance of the deity into vital relationship with the creation.[60] Modern idealistic thought was also pitted

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[59] Ibid., pp. 82-83. In this same context, Henry explicitly states his understanding of the Hebrew-Christian tradition which views a providential God as an ontic reference for natural law and miracle alike. He says, "The Judaistic-Christian tradition viewed the rationale of nature as providential, so that a providential God was the frame of reference for the regular and miracle alike. On this approach, the line between the regular and irregular was not drawn as sharply as it is today. That is not to say that miracles and non-miracles were not distinguished, but rather that the background against which they were interpreted made both intelligible." Ibid., p. 83.

[60] Ibid., p. 32.

against the biblical view, particularly the Hegelian tendency to spiritualize the entire universe. Hegel's view of world history as the manifestation or self-realization of the absolute tends to limit the transcendent God to the confines of the finite reality. Making all things and persons as fragments of God fails adequately to distinguish Him from that which He has created.[61]

Anthropology and ethics

Besides theology and cosmology, the Hebrew-Christian claim to special revelation has significance for anthropology, particularly ethical imperatives for mankind.[62] Resting firm on the conviction of divine absoluteness with revelational outreach to mankind, the Hebrew-Christian outlook stands today as the source of highest ethical values in the world culture.[63] Christian ethics, according to Henry, are opposed to every kind and species of anthropocentric ethics. Furthermore, he asserts an indispensable connection between religion

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[61] Ibid., pp. 38-39. We mention in passing Henry's critique of emergent evolutionists who make God the final cause but deprive Him of the role of efficient cause. The cause-effect relationship which views the efficient cause as possibly inferior to perfections of the effect is contrary to the Biblical view that effects cannot exhibit more perfections than can be found in the first cause, i.e., the creator God. Ibid., pp. 148-49.

[62] This discussion is not intended to be a thorough treatment of Henry's anthropological views, except as they pertain to his understanding of the moral imperative in Christian ethics.

[63] Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 258.

and ethics. "Ultimate moral reality is one with ultimate religious reality."[64] Religious reality, according to Henry, is of course supernatural disclosure; and Christian ethics, distinguished from mere religious morals, is a specially revealed morality reflecting the absolute will of the Absolute deity.

Christian ethics, according to Carl Henry, are at once metaphysical, religious and theological. Addressing ourselves to the latter first, Henry posits the fountainhead of Christian ethics in the will of God through special disclosure in commandments, statutes, laws and face to face encounter in the incarnation.[65] The theological possibility for Christian ethics is attributed to the Hebrew-Christian emphasis that man is a spiritual being, created in the image of God as a compound being of spirit and body, an emphasis which heightened the classic Greek view of man. Man is differentiated from the animal kingdom not only by his reason or by his participation in the unchanging superworld, but by the image he bears of the creator God enabling him to commune with a personal deity.[66]

Man's link to the supernatural world as a creature bearing God's image is highly significant for Christian ethics.

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[64]Henry, Christian Personal Ethics, p. 191.

[65]Ibid., p. 193.

[66]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 238.

The Christian morality is metaphysical in that Christianity admits no distinction between the course of the universe and the requirements of a moral life.[67] Indeed, Christian ethics is unique to all philosophical and ethical thought because it insists upon the unitary character of truth and the universal validity of moral norms.[68] There are differences among men, but all men are involved in moral situations which are not necessarily at every point unique. Ethical significance for each man is his involvement in an objective and all embracing moral order. Men are responsible because of the divine moral will, which has universal application to all men. This means, furthermore, that ethics can be intelligently defined and can be studied systematically. Moral obligations must be understood with rational comprehension of their essential nature; and moral decisions are to be made when related to universal principles.[69]

Man's capacity to comprehend universal moral norms together with his capacity to make moral decisions corresponding to this universal law has been sullied by sin. Problematical for ethics, according to Henry, is man's rebellion against God, a condition which prevails until man is born anew by the Spirit's power through the gospel. Commenting

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[67]Henry, Christian Personal Ethics, p. 195.

[68]Ibid., p. 146.

[69]Ibid., p. 139.

on John 3:3, Henry sets forth the central dynamic of Christian ethics as spiritual rebirth, a power absent from secular ethics based upon futile confidence in sinful man to shape his own morality apart from the process of redemption. Henry says,

> The Bible does not mean only what humanism means--that we can be delivered from inner tension and personality discord by the unified devotion of our lives to some great person, or ideal, or cause, whether Ghandi, or world peace, or the Red Cross. Nor does the Bible mean what liberalism means, that Jesus Christ, if we surrender to Him as the Lord of life and follow His example, accomplishes this unification of personality "better" than anyone or anything else. . . . The Bible is interested in much more--in man's sin and guilt, in atonement for these and in supernatural power for a moral life. The Bible means by spiritual rebirth that a sinner alienated from God, on the condition of repentance and faith, is restored to favor with God on the ground of the atonement made by Christ. He is renewed in the moral image of God by the supernatural dynamic of the Holy Spirit.[70]

Carl Henry has witnessed to the ground of Christian ethics in an Absolute deity, revealing Himself and His will for morality, all in a redemptive context, that through Christ Jesus and the atonement fallen man may be renewed for godly living by the power of the Holy Spirit. With this exposition of the biblical view as background, Henry proceeds to evaluate, first idealistic ethical principles, and then the modern existential framework for moral obligation. In what respects, if any, does the Christian ethic have kinship with these? What are the differences? Does the Hebrew-

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[70]Carl F. H. Henry, "What Every Educated Christian Should Know," Christian Life, XIII (June 1951), 79.

Christian outlook provide a better solution to the ethical dilemma of sinful man? Is the latter view both unique and superior to idealism and existentialism in their respective ethical systems?

Applied to idealistic ethics, these questions require a brief but pertinent overview, a few historical factors which Henry happily provides.

Modern idealistic patterns in ethical behavior hearken back to Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), a contemporary of Hobbes who secularized and perverted the idea of complete obedience to the sovereign Lord in his work, Leviathan. With Cudworth, the moral phrase, "I ought" came into use. In his volume, Eternal and Immutable Morality, Cudworth sought to place all men under an obligation to act for the common good, arguing that a distinction between right and wrong does not depend upon sovereign divine will, but on the moral order that confronts the whole of reality.[71] Cudworth and the moralists in Britain imposed upon ethics a cleavage between moral obligation and the will of God. The notion that an "intrinsic good" exists apart from God, or even to which God is bound in obligation rather than as author and source, precludes God from acting in a revelatory way. This view is directly opposed to the God of Hebrew-Christian revelation as the ground of ethics, a God who defines the

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[71]Henry, Christian Personal Ethics, pp. 210-11.

whole content of morality by his own revealed will. The implication is clear to Henry that Cudworth's "I ought" no longer means "the sovereign Lord commands"! When ethical conduct is based simply upon so-called self-evident truths or upon intuitions of the moral order, the connection is eventually lost with a transcendent moral order no less than with the sovereign divine will, and the final outcome is a doctrine of obligation sketched independently of both the will of God and theism. At first it was thought that an autonomous reference for ethical decision apart from the will of God would comprise an adequate reply to political naturalism and prevent a complete deterioration of ethical values into a sea of relativity. But the British moralists, influenced by Cudworth, probably did not perceive that separation of duty from the will of God could not survive the rise of empirical and evolutionary movements in western thought. The absolute obligation to perform every duty within an autonomous context eventually disappeared, and with it the absoluteness of duty itself.[72]

The categorical imperative received its major impetus in modern thought, not from Cudworth and the British moralists, but from Immanuel Kant. The most remarkable feature in Kant's theory of ethics, according to Henry, is the philosopher's assertion that the moral life or practical reason

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[72] Ibid.

takes priority over metaphysical and theoretical considerations. Morality *per se* is the fountainhead of all human existence. "Hence," says Henry, "for Kant, life-view determines world-view, ethics determines metaphysics. . . ."[73] Undergirding Kant's moral view is a denial of any theoretical grasp of the metaphysical world, based upon the philosophical presupposition of permanent partition between the noumenal and phenomenal.

Therefore, observes Henry, Kant's morality is separated from religion and has no context or pretext with the divine. The only appeal for morality is man himself, which involves Kant's ethics in a decided anthropological weakness similar to the Socratic tradition. If man becomes the center of tension between the *is* and the *ought*, deification of the rational or intelligible self follows as a matter of course, observes Henry. The attempt to define the *ought* on the solitary basis of empirical analysis of the *is* may involve a highly optimistic view of man, but it also involves a distorted view. The implication is clear that personal introspection on the part of man supplies the totality of the moral demand apart from any metaphysical order. This explains the increased and exaggerated emphasis upon the personal decision of the moral agent. That same personal decision becomes the ultimate foundation of the ethical situation in

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[73] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Kant's employment of the categorical imperative.[74] Kant's ethics are of a postulational nature.

It is the lack of distinction between the ought and the is which makes Kant's moral order particularly vulnerable; but the fundamental point of contrast with the biblical view is Kant's presupposition that the moral order can neither be rationally demonstrated nor divinely revealed. Henry counters,

> Hebrew-Christian Theism asserted that evidence of the absolute character of the ethical idea confronts man in the fact of general Divine revelation, and that further conclusive and normative testimony concerning the content of morality is set forth in the special biblical revelation; therefore, what cannot be proved by rational demonstration is nonetheless accessible to human reason on the basis of Divine revelation.[75]

Thus Carl Henry asserts once again the relevance of special revelation to the predicament of modern man, a revelation which comes to him in such a manner that he can rationally comprehend the imperatives of God's will for his life. The Hebrew-Christian view of special divine revelation is far superior to the framework of postulational idealism in Kant's ethics. It is superior because the Hebrew-Christian view avoids the pitfall of either ignoring man's alienation to God by sin, or grappling with the fact apart from a satisfactory solution through a divinely initiated redemptive plan.[76]

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[74] Ibid., p. 112.

[75] Ibid., p. 109.

[76] In a footnote to his discussion of Kantian ethics, Henry notes that Kant's struggle with his concept of "radical

This is not to deny that points of similarity prevail between Christian and idealistic ethics. Henry concedes the capability of ethical idealism to achieve behavior and conduct of man similar to that of the Christian ethic; but there still exists an insurmountable barricade between them. Sharing the focal problem of bringing together the objective good and the inner moral obligation or duty, the two ethical schemes separate at this point, one proceeding on a speculative basis, the other on a revelational foundation. Henry reminds us that speculative idealistic schemes, even when asserting an objective moral order, nevertheless view God and man and the moral ought from speculative philosophical presuppositions.[77] Most objectionable to Henry is the idealistic tendency to obscure the person and will of God by positing the sense of ought in man as determinative for the moral order. Defending the objectivity of ethical distinctions, idealistic ethics does not convincingly transcend its anthropological starting point. Henry comments,

> Despite the emphasis that all concerns of this life are to be viewed from the standpoint of eternity, the development of this supernatural perspective rises out of the untenable assumption of the essential divinity of the rational soul of man. Plato indeed rises above the standpoint of the later

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evil" brought him closest to the realm of Christian theology. But, the great idealistic thinker chose rather to maintain the doctrine of autonomous reason and identify the higher self with the intelligible man rather than permit the fact of radical evil to serve as a springboard into a doctrine of sin and the fall. Ibid., p. 112, footnote 7.

[77] Ibid., p. 147.

> Kantian ethic in implicitly acknowledging that the moral law cannot be defended simply in terms of autonomy. Man requires contact with the intellectual-moral-spiritual world which exists outside, as well as within, the moral agent. Man possesses a latent capacity for recognizing the good, and the doctrine of recollection is invoked in order to link the inner with the outer order. But the doctrine presupposes both the pre-existence of the soul and its essential Divinity. The collapse of this assumption necessarily capitulates Idealism into the welter of Naturalism. The sacrifice of this starting-point cuts man off from objective moral norms.[78]

Both Platonic and Kantian idealisms share the staggering assumption of man's direct moral continuity with the divine, the one by affirming also his spiritual identity with the divine, the other by venturing to postulate God in the moral image of man's ethical nature. Each system, moreover, excluded any radical judgment or condemnation of human ideals from a divine standpoint, and hence ruled out the biblical doctrine of sinfulness of man, imperfections being merely sub-rational impulses. Nevertheless, in rational and ethical activity man was taken as the direct manifestation of the divine mind and will.[79] All of which made a special redemptive activity of God unnecessary and irrelevant in these idealistic schemes.

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[78] Ibid., pp. 105-6. Henry then proceeds to demonstrate how the Christian doctrine of creation with its corollary implication of general Divine revelation together with the assertion of special redemptive revelation combine to lift ethical discussion from this anthropological point of view.

[79] Ibid., pp. 111-12.

Hegel's dialectical history, Henry observes, posits man together with his sin and guilt a part of the divine. What Christians allude to as the "fall of man," Hegel regards as a logical result of the externalization of the Absolute. The initial sense of guilt in mankind is viewed as part of the logical evolution of the inner and the self-manifestation of the Absolute. Prior to the advent of guilt in the heart of man, the Absolute externalized only in a non-moral and a-moral way; and the sense of guilt marks the appearance of a moral being. There is no need to defeat and conquer sin in this Hegelian optimism which views all reality, including man and his struggles as a sinner, part of the Absolute. Since man is the being where self-consciousness of the Absolute occurs, even sin can be part of the basic moral continuity with the Absolute in the infinite and all inclusiveness of fulfillment.[80] Hence, there is really no room for guilt, for personal responsibility in Hegel's dialectical history. Scriptural and Christian teaching are diametrically opposed to Hegel. A system which views sin inherent in man's very temporal existence, a state from which man climbs or develops from innocence to virtue, militates against the biblical assertion of man's moral revolt lodged in original sin, an insoluble problem except for

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[80]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, pp. 125-26.

God's revelational redemptive activity in Christ.[81] The Hegelian philosophy of immanence precludes communication of divine imperatives for morality, and for this reason also stands in antithesis to the Hebrew-Christian ethic.

Existential ethics also comes under scrutiny from a revelational standpoint. Expressing his own understanding of existential ethical patterns, Henry says,

> The distinctive feature of existential ethics, however, is to be found in the repudiation of the idea that the content for ethics is propositionally expressed in terms of self-consistent principles. Instead, there is a restatement of ethics in terms of subjective ethical experience, and in the reinterpretation of eschatological motifs in the existential mood.[82]

The Danish philosopher and theologian, Soren Kierkegaard, gave impetus to this viewpoint, which in Henry's opinion, robs ethical decision of any rational process within a framework of ethical claims mediated to man in a rational manner through the vehicle of special revelation. For Henry sees a definite kinship between Kant's anti-metaphysical epistemology and Kierkegaard's differentiation and even contrast of religious and ethical propositions to those propositions of the physical world. Kierkegaard's ethical ideas are founded upon presuppositions very similar to Kant's confinement of conceptual knowledge to the phenomenal world. Kierkegaard opposes

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[81]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, pp. 60-61.

[82]Henry, Christian Personal Ethics, p. 296.

application of logical categories to God and to the good; and, in Henry's opinion, the Danish philosopher perpetuates the Kantian cleavage between the rational man and the spiritual moral man. "The real subject is not the cognitive subject . . . the real subject is the ethically existing subject," says Kierkegaard in his Postscript.[83]

Limitation of existential thinking to the narrow realm of experience is akin to post-Kantian ethics in which the real self is identical with the moral self. Assuming that man becomes moral only in passionate decision, existential ethics sacrifices objectivity and places itself in contradistinction with biblical ethics.[84] The biblical view permits no concept of an anguished existence totally devoid of intelligibility and relatedness to the divine. Christ does not expect a leap into another world to touch the true and the good. This is not a God-forsaken world.[85] Existentialism, according to Henry, deprives man of principles and sacred commandments sanctioned by revealed religion. Man is indeed affirmatively related to the eternal spiritual realm which Jesus and the Old Testament prophets set forth; and he lives by the precepts of that spiritual realm, precepts revealed so that they can be intelligibly grasped by man's rational

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[83] Ibid., p. 135.

[84] Ibid., p. 131.

[85] Ibid., p. 141.

processes. The Bible, says Henry, nowhere insists that knowledge claims are confined to the phenomenal world. Rather, its message centers in the disclosure to mankind of a transcendent supernatural reality.

> Jesus, in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets, upholds unconditional imperatives which are transcendent to individual experience, objectively confronting man as divinely authoritative.[86]

Henry cautions against separation of ethics from specially revealed precepts. Ethical decisions removed from the objective realm of spiritual and divine imperative can have only tragic consequences as Henry points out,

> If ethics involves no synthesis of propositions conveying moral truth, it is reduced to sheer decision, unable to construct a rational self-defense of its claims. Therefore, this view threatens to lead to moral disorder and relativism. What else is left when objective criteria for the evaluation of morality are set aside?[87]

Theology and modern science

In addition to ethics, the Christian revelational world view espoused by Carl Henry takes a positive stance toward modern science. That science and faith should be antagonists is a strange state of affairs to Carl Henry, especially when he observes that men like Newton, sometimes regarded by

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[86] Ibid., p. 138.

[87] Ibid., p. 140.

naturalists as the man with whom nineteenth century mechanistic science began, was not a marginal Christian, but combined his scientific views uncritically with the traditional theology.[88] Henry notes that, rather than inhibiting scientific endeavor, the Hebrew-Christian framework fostered a real interest in nature. And this by contrast to other ancient religions; for none gave impetus to scientific pursuits akin to the Hebrew-Christian outlook. Ancient polytheistic religions offered no encouragement for seeking a unitary power or principle in explanation of all phenomenon. Even the classic Greek thinkers, who appealed to an unchanging supernatural rationale in explanation of the changing world of nature, could not transcend the tendency to leave all matter relatively independent of an all-embracing rationale. On the other hand, the Hebrew-Christian tradition postulated an uncompromising monotheism and insisted, furthermore, upon a divine creation of the universe so that the entire structure of finite being finds its rationale in the orderly, benevolent and sovereign divine mind, furnishing the background for the modern confidence that scientific inquiry on all fronts would find the universe to be meaningful. Henry concludes, "Christianity, therefore, is more the mother than the avowed enemy of modern science."[89]

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[88]Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 43, footnote 3.

[89]Ibid., p. 44.

The Hebrew-Christian tradition, according to Carl Henry, is largely responsible for the setting without which the rise of modern science may have been an impossibility.[90] In spite of this fact, the framework of the world as a creation of God, and therefore subject to intelligible investigation, assessment, and rational conclusion, is under attack by proponents of modern science. And it is Henry's conviction that the conflict between Chrstianity and science is due to a naturalistic control of many scientific disciplines and scientists themselves who choose to operate strictly along empirical lines, denying the possibility of a supernatural power or being as responsible for creation and preservation of the world in which we live.

The cleavage between Christian belief and modern science is, however, a development which dare not be attributed to science alone. The Church is not without guilt, particularly when she executed theological judgment against scientific hypotheses, judgments which exceeded the bounds of Scriptural authority. Henry notes,

> It cannot be denied that, in the name of verbal inspiration, war has been waged upon proponents of scientific views which fundamentalists today champion as involving no conflict at all with the Scriptures--as far example, the geocentric view of the world, and the vastly widened notion of planetary space, which is nowhere challenged today; the antiquity of the world, in view of geologic findings, which has encouraged the interpretation of the Genesis creation accounts along the line of successive ages, rather than literal days. . . . An

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[90]Henry, Remkaing the Modern Mind, p. 85.

> age theory of Genesis, or a view of the antiquity of creation, has not always been readily allowed in evangelical circles. Obviously, even within a view of verbal inspiration, not all problems of exegesis are settled, and science has some rights.[91]

Modern fundamentalism, says Henry, views the dogmatic opposition of biblicists to science at these points as unjustifiable, a dogmatism which certainly is not biblically sanctioned.

And theological dogmatism is no more commendable than the dogmatism of scientists who, from observation of the world as it stands and operates today, dogmatically declare how and when it came into being. This, in Henry's opinion, is indisputably outside the scientist's range of experience.[92]

Carl Henry writes at length to demonstrate that dogmatism on the part of science is based more often upon naturalistic biases rather than empirical data. In this regard, he blatantly asserts that exponents of modern views are grossly unfair when they employ scientific methodology to exclude the supernatural from reality. Henry calls modern man to distinguish between assured results of scientific investigation and the postulates of naturalism which often mistakenly accrue to themselves the bearing of scientific authority.

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[91] Henry, Protestant Dilemma, pp. 65-66. Citing changes in fundamentalist thinking on points of controversy between science and religion, Henry undoubtedly reveals his own conviction that the age of the earth and length of the creation days are questions of exegesis which dare not be dogmatized in antithesis to the scientific world. From the quotation above and the ensuing discussion, this writer concludes that Carl Henry takes exception to those who categorically deny the age-theory of Genesis in favor of a fiat creation in six literal days.

[92] Ibid., p. 66.

The modern mind must learn that the ultimacy of nature and the inexorable necessity of nature and the essential animality of man are philosophic infatuation of philosophy proclaimed with the prestige of science but which could not be proven by observation and experiment. It is high time to dislodge the dogmatism of science! The scientist may see that nature is real, says Henry, but he cannot see it alone as real. He may see necessities in nature, but not inexorable necessities; he may behold man's animality, but he cannot see man as an animal only. This is dogmatism on that part of science which thinks these things but sees them not.[93]

That the interpretation of scientific data along the lines of a naturalistic bias to the exclusion of the supernatural reality is an innovation fostered by the modern mind, Henry wishes to demonstrate when he comments,

> By and of itself, the modern interest in science would require no division of mind from the ancient and medieval eras. The prestige of science may be combined equally well with an idealistic or a Biblical theistic view, and any claim that the modern mind arises as a necessary distinction because of our era of scientific research is clearly debatable . . . . Science and the supernatural are not intrinsic opposites.[94]

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[93]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 269.

[94]Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 42. But there are also some representatives of modern science who are supernaturalists. Henry cites alert minds engaged for the Gifford lectures in England who must be counted as contemporary minds with impressive backgrounds in one or another of the modern sciences, holding also supernaturalistic views. Among them are James Ward, C. Lloyd Morgan, W. R. Sorley, and A. E. Taylor. Barth and Brunner, supernaturalistic thinkers, have been

If modern science is preoccupied with natural phenomena, judging the supernatural to be unreal and nonexistent, or at best only a faint probability, it is doing so without historical precedent; for ancient and medieval intellectuals insisted on the reality and irreducibility of both the natural and supernatural.

Not only is the marriage of science and naturalistic philosophy inconsistent with scientific minds of the recent and ancient past, it is basically inconsistent with principles of scientific investigation itself. While humanists and logical positivists in modern times have nurtured their philosophical prejudices, denying the existence of the supernatural, limiting the sources of human knowledge exclusively within the net of empirical observation and experiment, they must be forbidden to do so in the name of or under the authority of true science. Threatening this unwarranted dogmatism is a certain provisional tentativity necessitated by admission on the part of scientists to experimental limitations. As Henry observes, it is characteristic of impetuous scientific opinions to affirm absolute truth, after confessing its experimental limitations. Indeed, the church has erred in absolutizing very unscientific assertions with an aura of biblical authority where neither biblical nor scientific

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included in recent years. To be mentioned also is the fact that able scientists maintain membership in orthodox churches and do so by a sense of spiritual conviction and decision. Ibid., p. 67.

authority could be established. But science has made the same mistake, absolutizing empirical investigations which by the very nature of the case stand subject to later revision. Henry cites the instances of some scientists, who, affirming the provisional nature of their studies, went on to affirm the finality of such viewpoints as, "the nebular hypothesis, the Darwinian theory of the origin of species, the mechanical block-universe espoused by many 19th century physicists."[95]

The modern scene yields many instances of dogmatism on the part of scientists and thinkers who themselves disavowed every right to dogmatism. Initially, at least, the modern scientific age, under pressure of the new philosophies, rejected an appeal to certainty attained by revelation, but retained the confidence that certainty could be reached by the mathematical method.[96] More recently, scientists have recognized the tentative quality of their conclusions, a fact cited in the previous paragraph. Carl Henry maintains, therefore, that tentativity must also qualify scientific

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[95] Ibid., p. 88. Elsewhere, Henry cites Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy and Planck's quantum theory as illustrations of how scientific discoveries have brought the opinion of modern philosophy and science against the rigid continuity dogmatism of the modern mind. The rigid continuity of nature as a fixed base of operation for all scientific inquiry seems to rest more on a priori assumptions than on empirical evidence. See Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 103.

[96] Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 88.

judgment of the supernatural realities. If indeed the scientific approach to truth is such that truth in the absolute and final sense is really unattainable due to the demand for an opening at every step for revision, it is by this very characteristic unable to pass judgment on either the impossibility or improbability of divine special revelation. And when such judgments are espoused, it is not the voice of true science speaking, but the voice of a naturalistic bias. Furthermore, Henry asks how science, restricted as it is to the empirical world of natural phenomena, can make any intelligible judgment pro or con with respect to the supernatural. He asserts,

> Science--in the modern sense of phenomenal knowledge gained by sensual means, requiring laboratory verification and subject to constant revision--is impotent to decide the issue of the reality or unreality of the supernatural.[97]

Basis for a unitary rationale

Related to science, and necessary for coherent scientific endeavor is a unitary rationale embracing the totality of empirical reality. It is Carl Henry's conviction that the Creator-God, through special redemptive revelation, serves as the unifying principle of life and history. The self-revealing God of the Hebrew-Christian tradition is the ground

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[97] Ibid., p. 68.

for rationality and reasonable behavior on the part of mankind. He is the answer to that philosophical quest for an all-embracing metaphysical framework, furnishing meaning and purpose to man's role as a rational creature. The Hebrew-Christian deity, foundation of a rational universe, is the final component part of Carl Henry's Christian world view to be discussed in this paper.

Speaking of the Christian tradition from Aquinas, Augustine, Luther and Calvin, a tradition in which he stands, Carl Henry says,

> the great Tradition insists that a rational, moral Spirit governs creation and has fashioned man for obedience in knowledge; that ultimately truth is one, and that philosophy and theology dare not be confined to separate compartments of the human mind; and that all life, history, and culture are measured by the Infinite God, find their meaning only in relation to him, and derive their ennoblement only through resources in him.[98]

In many passages, Carl Henry advances his own interest in aggressive employment of human reason to actively explore and develop the natural world and its resources. He deplores the irrational philosophies of modern times, as well as fundamentalists who debunk learning and scholarship from the standpoint of a false antithesis of reason and revelation.[99] The basis for Henry's interest in rational endeavors

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[98]Carl F. H. Henry, "Christian Education and Culture," Christianity Today, III (November 10, 1958), 4.

[99]Henry's antithesis to irrational philosophies will follow shortly; and his critique of obscurantism in right wing fundamentalism will be treated in the next chapter of this paper.

is twofold. First, it is a rational God who created this world; secondly, the relationship of this Creator-God to the world is one of active preservation, the implications of which are mediated to man in special redemptive revelation.

That the world has a unitary rationale enabling productive use of man's rationality is not unique to the Hebrew-Christian outlook; yet, the revelational character of this outlook adds significance, for instance, to the classic Greek view. Plato and Aristotle, says Henry, posed an objective order system and posited the existence of God as a necessary presupposition for affirmation of intelligibility in the universe; and the Hebrew-Christian outlook agrees with the classic idea that intellection is possible because there is rationality objective to it.[100] Christian theology, however, involves something more, namely, a revelational philosophy. The appeal made by man in a space-time dimension to revealed truth as the basis of rationality is essentially an appeal from a limited and unenlightened reason to a Reason fully informed.[101] The significant advance over the classic view is that Christianity brought forth the solution to the

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[100] Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 245.

[101] Ibid., p. 232. Henry notes that Augustine started from revelation and went on to a fully informed reason, something no Greek philosopher had ever done or could have done because God had not delivered revelation to the Greeks. Ibid., p. 227.

religious problem which the Greeks could never accomplish. As developed in medieval thought, the created universe held significance for Christianity, not only in its reference to an abiding moral order, who created man in His image and destined man for fellowship with Himself. Henry is even more explicit when he says in the same context.

> Christianity presented an incarnational philosophy; it offered a rationally consistent view of existence with its roots not in human reason alone, but in the divine Logos, of which man's reason was viewed as a gift and manifestation, however compromised.[102]

An important chapter in his book, Remaking the Modern Mind, is titled, "The Reasonableness of Christianity."[103] By this title, Henry means that Christianity has always, and justifiably so, insisted on the intelligibility of its world view. He points out that the Christian approach was not Tertullian's Credo quia absurdum, which implied that revelational theism makes impossible all metaphysical and scientific knowledge. When "the Word became flesh," asserts Henry, the incarnate Christ redeems the rational processes of man, and lifts reason beyond the confines of an intellect limited by finitude and darkened by sin. While the basis of man's rationality lies in the fact that, created in the divine

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[102] Ibid., p. 215. In a footnote to this statement, Henry clarifies his own position with respect to the proper function of reason, when he says, "Reason should not be viewed as a source of knowledge and contrasted with revelation, but as a means of comprehending revelation." Ibid., footnote 2.

[103] Ibid., pp. 213-33.

image, man shares in the divine rationality; thus man is able to think God's thoughts after Him. Christ has enabled the sinful reason to be restored, and enlightened man with an insight into the divine plan and purpose in which all things have their source, support, and end.[104] Again, special revelation in Christ Jesus afforded Christianity a true incarnational philosophy which embraced a unified rationale of life and history. Henry says,

> The claim of every area of learning, of science, of philosophy, of theology, find their true synthesis in Christ Jesus. The Bible knows nothing of the conflict between science, and philosophy, and theology; nature, and human meaning, and redemption, find their unity in Him. In the beginning was the Word . . . All things were made by him . . . In Him was life; and the life was the light of men . . . And the Word became flesh." (John 1, 3, 4, 14). What is John the evangelist affirming except the unity of revelation in nature and man and redemption?[105]

That the living God is rational and moral; that the created universe is expressive of reason and responsive to reason; that these truths are conveyed to man's intellection through special revelation addressed to sinners and climaxed historically at Mt. Calvary, a revelation which also includes concepts and phrases identified as the Word of God written; all this is representative, in Henry's opinion, of the biblical religion, placing it in radical contrast to the irrational

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[104] Ibid., pp. 217-18.

[105] Carl F. H. Henry, "Evangelicals United For Action," United Evangelical Action, IX (April 1, 1950), 6-7.

philosophies of the modern era.[106] And he adds, "Doubtless some religions degrade reason, but Christianity supports the intellectual interpretation of life and experience."[107]

Pertinent is a brief overview of developing irrationalism in modern thought, gaining popularity in this century after World War I. In an address delivered at Goshen College, Indiana, 1958, Henry sketches briefly the rise of irrational philosophies which cause him alarm, excluding as they do any metaphysical knowledge of God. The Scottish philosopher Hume turned modern intellectual currents into a skeptical channel, says Henry. Immanuel Kant proposed his complicated epistemological remedy, and ever since, doubt over human reason's capacity and adequacy to comprehend the spiritual world has vexed Protestant theology. After two centuries of dabbling with the non-rational, modern philosophy in the West finally yielded to Kierkegaard, Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud, and Dewey. Speculative irrationalism of modern philosophy deserted the historic Christian belief that reason pervades the world of reality; it denied rational relationships between a rational Creator, man, and the universe.[108]

Carl Henry counters modern irrationalism with repeated assertions of an ontic reference for rationality, a view held

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[106] Henry, "Christian Education and Culture," p. 3.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

by classic Greek philosophy, and the Hebrew-Christian tradition for over fifteen hundred years through the medieval period, when not only theology was related to Christ, but also worship, philosophy, government, art, music and literature.[109] Henry notes, furthermore, that conformity of human reason and all its achievements to Jesus Christ, the Creator, Redeemer, and Judge grants Christianity an undeniable and permanent interest in education and the broader scope of culture at large.[110] Because all life and history are inherent in the God who reveals Himself in Christ, the Christian intellectual has an entree to knowledge and truth which proponents of irrationalism of every type cannot claim for themselves.

Circuitous Reversal of Idealism back to Naturalism

The vital principles of the Hebrew-Christian revelational outlook as Carl Henry expounds them have been discussed in the previous paragraphs. By his own admission, however, an opposing antithetical naturalistic bias grips modern man. The initial pages of this chapter cited Henry's indictment of modern man for embracing a world view which rejects the biblical supernaturalistic outlook. A question of prime importance for modern man is, "Which shall prevail,

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[109] Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 33.

[110] Henry, "Christian Education and Culture," p. 3.

the naturalistic world view or the revelational view represented in the Hebrew-Christian tradition and expounded by Carl Henry and summarized in the preceding pages?" If the reader is convinced with Henry that the only favorable option lies with the revelational view, he must ask yet another question, namely, "Which philosophical or theological outlook is sufficient to stem the tide of naturalistic influence and bring to the fore once again that revelational perspective which held sway in the west for more than fifteen centuries until the late Renaissance and post-Reformation era?"

Carl Henry would have the reader pose that question because he wishes to express his own answer derived from careful scrutiny of philosophical and theological trends in the history of western thought. First, Henry puts the test to philosophy, focusing particularly upon idealisms, ancient and modern, and all the while searching for a lively option to naturalism. Much of the modern mood, in Henry's opinion, recognizes a need for return to faith. Widely expressed is the conviction that man's only hope lies in abandonment of our sensate culture for an idealistic variety with recognition of a spiritual moral order which cannot merely be reduced to custom or to human insight or to the realm of nature in any aspect. But something more is needed than even a theistic idealism, as Henry notes from the temperament and expression of antiquity. He says,

> It should be remembered, however, that the classic Graeco-Roman culture was of this nature, and that

> it too collapsed because it had no satisfactory answer to the religious problem, which Christianity competently met with an individual and social message.[111]

From the vantage of his own theological convictions that the Creator-God was specially disclosed in Christ Jesus for redemption and regeneration of the human race, nothing less than a complete solution to the religious problem, Henry is constrained to evaluate and judge idealistic attempts to improve modern man as less than adequate, particularly in the face of insidious naturalism. He continues in the context of the previous quotation,

> The contemporary ideals are often not as high as those of pre-Christian Graeco-Roman pagan philosophy, but even if they should rise to that height, we shall not have on that ground alone the basis for a permanent culture, because they do not decide the question of the good, the true, and the beautiful with an adequate frame of reference. All civilizations cut loose from the supernatural, and also those professing the supernatural but not vitally linked by an incarnational and regenerative principle, have in them an unconquerable leaven of decay, for they lack an abiding life which can be imparted to succeeding generations.[112]

Furthermore, failing to provide within their systems an impetus strong enough to reach ideals to which they aspire, both ancient and modern idealistic philosophies, apart from a revelational framework, ultimately suffer a tragic reversal. They descend into the very throes of

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[111] Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, pp. 280-81.

[112] Ibid., p. 281.

naturalism, the very dilemma which they attempted to counteract and escape. How does this work out? The explanation is simple, according to Carl Henry. The fact is that idealisms, ancient and modern, too often share the major tenet of naturalistic thought and influence, namely a rejection of biblical special revelation. Noting how the Apostles' Creed throbs with the exciting narrative of the self-revealing God and His acts upon the plain of history, Henry illustrates how idealistic thought, by comparison, leans toward the naturalistic bias. He says,

> What a contrast the Hebrew-Christian tradition affords to the philosophic Idealisms--whether the ancient Platonic-Aristotelian varieties, or the modern post-Hegelian varieties--in which God does not enter specifically into history, in which there is no notion of special historical revelation, in which the activity of God is conceived so generally that the philosophical Idealisms can link hands with the Naturalisms in bitter attack against the notion of special historical revelation, against the notion of uniqueness, or once-for-all divine acts.[113]

Severance, particularly of post-Christian idealism, from revelational theism and subsequent marriage with naturalism as a common antagonist to biblical supernaturalism, is clearly demonstrated by Henry against the background of ancient idealisms. Post-Christian idealism began with the problem of knowledge, a different orientation from the ancient preoccupation with being. Both Aristotle and Plato moved from epistemology to ontology; but modern idealistic philosophy

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[113]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 94.

merged ontology and epistemology, seeming never to get beyond the latter to speak with certainty on the problem of being. Setting aside the medieval confidence in a divine special revelation given historically and once-for-all, the moderns could no longer assume the ancient premise of an ontic reference for reality. Logically, therefore, they came to be unduly preoccupied with the problem of epistemology.

Still another point of contrast between ancient and post-Christian idealisms, illustrating the latter's severance from a revelational context, centers around the concept of God and history. The classic view separated the divine from history and time, a cleavage which made impossible any notion of history as the bearer of ultimate meaning. The Hebrew-Christian tradition, however, pointed to history as the area of the once-for-all soteriological work of the Word made flesh. While post-Christian idealisms did not repudiate the concept of the divine at work in the world, it united the divine with history in such a way that history logically became the mere externalization of the divine activity, a concept foreign to the biblical view, posing as it did an over optimistic view of man to the dilution of sin and evil, and worse, sacrificing the principle of special revelation from a transcendent deity.[114]

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[114]Henry, Drift of Western Thought, pp. 49-52.

In spite of modern idealistic antipathy for special revelation, Henry grants that post-Christian Kantian and Hegelian streams of thought tempered somewhat the rising naturalistic patterns from Descartes to Dewey. From Kant and Hegel did come those popular modern concepts of the inherent goodness of man and inevitable progress.[115] Nevertheless, because these postulates proceeded neither from a revelational superworld, nor even from the convictions of ancient Greece that man was placed in prior logical moral order over against the animal world, their respective idealistic exponents were not the resistance to the naturalistic that they appeared to be. Henry observes that even where Kantian and Hegelian thinkers link man to a world of supernature or insist that nature is not the ultimate Absolute, they all follow a solution for man's difficulties apart from recourse to special revelation. "The competence of unaided reason to dissolve all enigmas is taken for granted," says Henry.[116] Kantian epistemology precludes real knowledge in the realm of metaphysics, cutting man off from rational knowledge of the noumenal. Thus religion too must be speculative because God is no longer a transcendent reality over against nature and man who nevertheless reveals himself to

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[115]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 25.

[116]Ibid., p. 23.

man in the natural order.[117] And Hegel's externalization of the Absolute coming to self-realization in the world process further contributed to the characteristic of idealism in modern thought, remaining ambiguous about the personality of the Absolute. Hegel absorbed nature and man to God in a manner which eventually could hardly be distinguished from the naturalistic tendency to absorb man to nature, passing off the supernatural as a product of human imagination and desire.[118]

While modern thought followed a circuitous route from speculative idealism to naturalism, Henry is careful to observe that this descent was surely not its original intention.[119] Nevertheless, Henry sees no other possible alternative. The reversal was imminent when post-Christian and early modern philosophy ruled out special revelation as superfluous in the approach to philosophy. Finding themselves in competition with revelational theism, the great idealistic philosophies, in the wake of the magnetic influence of Kant, Hegel, and Lotze, have been unable in the final test to sustain a convincing case for the supernaturalistic world view. Because the vitality of that supernaturalistic view is discarded, Henry concludes that the idealistic

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[117] Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 54.

[118] Ibid., p. 48.

[119] Ibid., p. 47.

ideologies of the West are seemingly impotent to maintain themselves against the strict humanistic views, and especially against the dialectical naturalism stemming from the Russian states.[120] The dogmatism of a narrow naturalistic interpretation of reality has indeed been challenged by the decline of strict empiricisms. Nevertheless, represented by emergent evolutionists and personalistic idealists, this challenge proved ineffective over the long range. When all is said and done, compromise of special revelation ultimately leads only to a thoroughgoing naturalistic bias. Henry comments,

> Even though recent idealism, in its personalistic trends, has sought to halt the descent of idealism to naturalism, it did not muster enough strength to forestall the rise of mighty antipersonalisms, nor could it, for even these trends combined within them the necessity for subsequent descent. The real alternatives to the discard of Biblical theism were now seen to be not a restatement of classic idealism in modern dress, in which some elements of Christianity were retained, some rejected, and most of them transformed, but rather a thorough naturalism in which every trace of Christianity, in so far as possible, would be eliminated.[121]

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[120] Ibid., p. 73.

[121] Ibid., p. 55. Here, Henry's further observation should be noted. Neo-Thomism, in his opinion, has failed as well to provide modern philosophy with any bridge toward recognition of the supernatural. Thomas' intelligo ut credam, calling for certainty to be reached by natural theology on questions of the knowledge of the existence of God, the existence and immortality of the soul, admits to a "partial competence" of unenlightened reason. Once this admission is made, it is possible in the end to arrive at a "complete competence" which sits in judgment upon biblical special revelation. Carried to its logical conclusion, says Henry, this emphasis of Neo-Thomism could eventually lead back to a thoroughgoing naturalism. Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, p. 224.

Quest for a Theology to Expound the Christian World View

Failure of classic liberalism

Modern philosophy, even in its most idealistic moods, ultimately succumbed to naturalistic tenets in a sincere but futile attempt to sustain spiritual realities apart from a revelational framework. Have the main currents of theological expression succeeded where philosophy failed? Success or failure of theology can be measured only one yardstick. That is, according to Carl Henry, the degree which theology recognizes and proclaims special revelation of the transcendent God displayed in the person of the Incarnate Christ and the Sacred Scriptures, divinely outbreathed by the Holy Spirit to prophets and apostles.[122] A dynamic outlook fortified with spiritual renewal and perspective through redemption and regeneration is possible only when theology speaks out from premises of a revelational nature. Without this foundation, theology too will flounder and prove to be equally impotent as modern philosophy against naturalism.

One would expect theology to be the vanguard of the Christian outlook; but that is not always the case. Nineteenth century liberalism offered little impetus to the

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[122]For a review of Henry's understanding of special revelation, turn to chapter one of this thesis. Supra, pp. 13-28. This suggestion is offered in view of the fact that Henry evaluates theological trends in the light of their views on revelation and the Scriptures.

Christian world view. It steered away from biblical theism, and consequently was overshadowed and even absorbed into the mainstream of philosophical thought. In fact, German idealistic philosophy at the beginning of the nineteenth century, particularly Kant and Hegel, served as the well-spring of classic late nineteenth and early twentieth century liberalism. Theologians influenced by Hegel obscured biblical once-for-all revelation. Viewing the movement of thought as the most significant disclosure of the deity, Hegelian theologians ushered in the overwhelming and dominant feature of nineteenth century liberalism, the notion of an all pervading divine immanence. Those theologians influenced by Kant repudiated the Absolute, contending that categories of thought do not extend to the supernatural, a fact which confronted them with the problem of overcoming agnosticism about the existence of the religious object. Moreover, Darwinian evolution served both strains of developing liberal thought. Restricting man's physical and psychic development to the natural order, and ascribing to man an ancestry among the primates, Darwinism encouraged only a vague speculation about a deity removed beyond the grasp of the finite. On the other hand, Darwinian evolution ingratiated proponents of divine immanence who sought disclosure of the divine within the machinations of the natural order, reaching its highest manifestation in the psychic

behavior and expression of man.[123] Nullifying both divine cosmic transcendence of the deity and also epistemological transcendence of man, the latter by radical confidence in the scientific method, Darwinism proved to be fateful for theology at the turn of the century.

By the latter nineteenth century, Schleiermacher's mysticism, followed by Ritschl's ethicism, established a firm but very liberal grip upon theological thought. The trend continued during the early decades of this century when idealistic immanentism held reign in the theologies of such men as Adolf Harnack, Wilhelm Herrmann, Otto Pfleiderer and Ernst Troeltsch in Germany. The German emphases moved to the British Isles and took hold in men likes James Martineau and John Caird who were first among a host of theologians drawn into the liberal camp. Liberalism from the continent reached American theological shores through Theodore Parker and Horace Bushnell.[124]

Now Carl Henry makes this important observation. Whether post-Kantian or post-Hegelian in character, whether due to

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[123]Henry, Fifty Years of Protestant Theology, pp. 15-17.

[124]A more detail survey of emerging immanental philosophy and its effects on nineteenth century theology is furnished by Carl Henry in his book, Fifty Years of Protestant Theology, chapter two, titled, "The Dawn of the Twentieth Century." Ibid., pp. 15-29. Here, as well as elsewhere in his writings, Henry demonstrates how the remarkable momentum of the theology of radical immanence also invaded evangelical circles. Even such evangelical theologians as Augustus Strong were influenced toward costly compromise.

pantheizing divine immanence or to the supposed impossibility of metaphysical knowledge, each approach shared in common a mutual repugnance for special revelation. Where used, says Henry, the word "revelation" came to be simply another term for human insight and behavior.[125] Even personalists like Herman Lotze and Borden P. Bowne, who distinguished man as a creature over against God's ontic transcendence, could not escape the inclination to view nature as a part of God and therewith dissolved the need for special revelation of truth and moral precepts.[126]

The dissolution of special revelation raised the issue of authority in theology; and in this regard, the evangelical doctrine of an inspired inscripturated biblical revelation came under brutal attack at liberal hands. Doing away with ontological, cosmological and particularly epistemological transcendence of God, liberalism also did away with the need for revelation, which resulted in disaster for theology. There was widespread disparagement of biblical authority, ranging from those who partitioned the Scriptures into passages, revelatory and non-revelatory, to the radical extreme of wholesale abandonment of biblical materials except where the Scriptures were considered sufficient for moral guidance. British scholarship reassessed the whole idea of biblical

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[125] Ibid., p. 16.

[126] Carl F. H. Henry, "The Nature of God," Christian Faith and Modern Theology, edited by Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Channel Press, c.1964), p. 73.

authority in the light of biblical criticism, resulting in rejection of inerrancy and acceptance in varying degrees of evolutionary development. Scriptural authority now concentrated in matters of faith and morals rather than extending also to cosmology and history.[127] Everywhere there was a growing tendency among biblical scholars to trust only those parts of the Bible which could be underwritten by scientific empiricism applied by or through the new science of criticism. Furthermore, convinced that God had enthroned Himself in the orderliness of the natural world, liberalism took into its theology the naturalistic skepticism of the miraculous, a devastating turn of events for biblical supernaturalism. Henry comments,

> The combination of radical divine immanence, and evolution disallowed the Biblical miraculous. Hence it ruled out a unique canon, and in fact, the unique inspiration of any sacred writings. Its end result was the denial of special revelation and the consequent assimilation of the Bible to the movement of general revelation. What the God of extreme immanence reveals anywhere He necessarily reveals everywhere, even in lesser

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[127]Henry, Fifty Years of Protestant Theology, pp. 19-20. Henry cites Marcus Dods' Bross lectures on The Bible: Its Origin and Nature, W. Sanday's The Oracles of God, and James Orr's Revelation and Inspiration, in which the author adhered to theistic evolution and rejected the view that inspiration supplies fact material of a historical and scientific nature. In the same context, however, Henry recognizes that not all scholars accepted the newer views without reservation, as witness Orr's volume against the critics, The Problem of the Old Testament. Ibid., p. 20.

> degree. Divine uniformitarianism allows no special events, no special revelation, no special writings.[128]

In the minds of many scholars, the challenge to the miraculous successfully unseated biblical supernaturalism with immediate and significant effects on every doctrine of the Christian faith. Particularly perplexing was the problem of authority alluded to above. Henry poses questions which inevitably reared ugly heads in the wake of liberalism's discard of a uniquely inspired Bible. He says,

> How, in an assertedly fallible religious literature blending divine and human elements, are revelation and non-revelation to be objectively discriminated? What criterion shall be found for distinguishing what is not revelation in a book which professedly contains both? How is the Bible's "truth" to be convincingly "sifted" from its "error"? Are we not reduced to value judgments, to a merely subjective determination of "revelation" by individual interpreters whose arbitrary preferences legislate what is "the word of God"?[129]

Henry notes that such questions are aggravating to the liberal mind. Proponents of that decided bias against miraculous supernaturalism and particularly a divinely inspired inscripturated revelation, have not, on one hand been successful in rendering plausible answers, and more significantly, have been unable to avoid the resultant effects, robbing Christianity of much more than the doctrine of inspiration. While

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[128]Carl F. H. Henry, "Divine Revelation and the Bible," Inspiration and Interpretation, edited by John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1957), p. 260.

[129]Ibid., p. 263.

surrender of divine inspiration is not to be simply equated with surrender of any special revelation and the gospel of redemption, nevertheless, the latter issues come into serious question. The shift in religious knowledge from the reliability of special revelation and the miraculous to historical credibility and actuality to be verified in present experience by contemporary experimental verification of all claims, ushered in a critical treatment of every theological truth. This methodology, in Henry's opinion, came to impugn the stature of Jesus.[130] Obviously having reference to liberal studies of the gospels, Henry says,

> Once the miraculous was set aside in deference to the scientific method, which forged only tentative conclusions, by what consistency could absoluteness be ascribed to Him and His teaching, in part any more than in its entirety?[131]

Moreover, the biblical view of man was equally distorted by classic liberalism. Strongly influenced by Darwinism's hypothesis of man's physical and psychic development from animal ancestry, liberalism substituted evolutionary sociology for biblical redemptive anthropology. Having no knowledge of original sin, modern science required an a priori discard of the notion; and liberal theologians were of the same stripe. Seldom were they more vocal than in wholesale derision of original sin. Sin was equated with mere negation or

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[130] Ibid., pp. 264-65.

[131] Ibid., p. 265.

absence of light, a surmountable but necessary step in the evolutionary development of man. Perfectibility of natural man was possible by nourishing the divine spark or remnant of divinity in man. This meant minimization of evangelism and resulted in demand for conversion without a spiritual crisis. Mankind could be Christianized by education instead of being regenerated by a supernatural evangel involving a miracle of grace. The root of man's imperfection was traced to natural necessities, and the non-Christian humanistic view of man was the leverage which turned religious liberalism into the field of modern cultural problems.[132]

In summary, the teaching of radical immanence imbibed by liberal theology from earlier continental idealistic thought, coupled with the Darwinian evolution and resulting optimism embraced by thinkers and theologians alike in the late nineteenth century, resulted in discard of special revelation of a transcendent God, making biblical inspiration unnecessary for theological endeavors, entwined as these were with scientific criticism. Anthropology, soteriology and ultimately the rudiments of historic Christianity, oriented as it is in the concept of miraculous and once-for-all intrusion of God into history for redemptive purposes, were sullied by classic liberalism.

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[132]Henry, Remaking the Modern Mind, pp. 61-64.

Inadequacy of neo-supernaturalism

But classic liberalism suffered a stunning blow when the western world engaged in the conflict of World War I. During that war and the years following, the school of theology known as neo-supernaturalism gained momentum first in Switzerland through the teachings and writings of Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Edward Thurneysen; the movement transferred to Germany and was popularized by Rudolf Bultmann and Friedrich Gogarten. The appearance of this reactionary crisis theology came to be a most aggressive cleavage with nineteenth and twentieth century liberalism, revolting as it did against both the liberal theology of immanence and the strains of idealistic emphasis upon the transcendence of God.[133] While neo-supernaturalism's revolt only later took root in the British Isles and America, still gripped by the immanental philosophies and corresponding spirit of optimism even after World War I, nevertheless, in Germany, Harnack, Hermann, Otto and Troeltsch were now passe.

German evangelicals, even those on the extreme right, welcomed the Barthian movement with its new emphasis on biblical theology, a movement which brought the Bible back to a prominence in seminaries and pulpits such as it had not been accorded in the liberal era.[134] It should be noted,

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[133]Henry, "Divine Revelation and the Bible," pp. 260-61.

[134]Henry, Fifty Years of Protestant Theology, pp. 36-37.

moreover, in this review of Carl Henry's stance over against neo-supernaturalism that Henry consistently recognizes the contribution made by neo-supernaturalism as a forceful reaction to and dethronement of nineteenth century liberalism. Particularly is this apparent in his charitable representation of positive emphases in Karl Barth's theology. This is not to say that Henry is ever uncritical of Barth, or for that matter, Emil Brunner or any other representative of neo-orthodoxy. But credit is given where credit is due, and Henry attributes renewed interest in biblical theology on the continent to neo-supernaturalism. He has nothing but praise for Barth's awakening of long neglected doctrines as he quotes freely from Barth's, The Doctrine of the Word of God, Vol. I, Part 2.[135] Henry lauds Barth for championing the virgin birth of Christ against liberalism and even his contemporary, Brunner, who denies the virgin birth. Henry also credits Barth for upholding the miracle of the open tomb, Christ's real resurrection as the hope for our resurrection. Henry is impressed by Barth's insistence upon the doctrine of the atonement in dogmatics, widening the concept of substitution to apply to the active as well as the passive obedience of Jesus Christ. In his later writings, Henry is happy to see Barth's treatment of Christ's second coming as part of essential Christianity. Of Barth's professed attempt to derive an answer

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[135] Carl F. H. Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 52-55.

to the question of revelation from the Bible, of Barth's opinion that a right doctrine of Holy Scripture must always be found in exegesis and therefore in Holy Scripture itself, Henry is commendatory.

Carl Henry will have no part in wholesale repudiation of the newer post-liberal theology which sprang up on the continent several decades ago. He holds neo-supernaturalism in high esteem for those points where its theology is consistent with Reformation and historic evangelical theology. On the other hand, Henry is quite outspoken where the neo-supernaturalist revolt against liberalism has proved to be only partial or half-sincere. The question of revelation and the Scriptures is such an issue where, in Henry's opinion, neo-supernaturalism, particularly Barth and Brunner, have made only a token severance with premises which sustained classic liberalism.

Certainly, neo-supernaturalism was a reaction to the liberal theology of immanentism; for the central feature of neo-supernaturalistic theology, according to Henry, is summarized in Kierkegaard's dictum, "the infinite qualitative difference between God and man, time and eternity."[136] Indeed, neo-supernaturalism reaffirmed the Hebrew-Christian movement as an essential unique revelation of God and denied that Christian experience could be intelligible in terms of

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[136]Henry, Fifty Years of Protestant Theology, p. 36.

psychology of general religion outside the orbit of biblical redemption. It recognized man to be sinful at the core of his personality; and christology became crucial both for theism and redemption. Against immanental idealism, neo-supernaturalism stressed the transcendence of God and the limitation of human reason better than any since Tertullian.[137] Nevertheless, for all of these favorable emphases in reaction to classic liberalism, Henry notes that the neo-supernaturalistic theology was also a pronounced reaction to historic evangelical theology, and resisted identity with evangelicals all the while it stood over against liberalism. Pin-pointing the major conflict differentiating the new theology of crisis from evangelical theology, Henry posits the problem in opposing views of revelation and Scripture, which ultimately involved also such doctrines as inspiration of the Bible and inerrancy. Henry says,

> As against evangelical theology, it reduced the Scriptures to a record of revelation, rather than viewing them as God's revelation written; it retained an evolutionary view of origins and championed the necessity of higher criticism from the first; it denied that divine revelation is propositional, and rejected the authority of Scripture for a so-called objective authority of the Spirit.[138]

The new theology of the 1920's broke with that Kantian cleavage of the superphenomenal and the range of human reason and

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[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

intellection, asserting as it did that God does speak to humanity, that the supernatural holy God discloses Himself to man with demands for moral and spiritual decision.[139] Nevertheless, even Barth, who acknowledged more and more the historical interrelations of faith, fell short of the traditional confidence in divinely revealed doctrines. Neo-supernaturalism recognizes that at certain points the eternal touches time or the temporal. These events result in a paradoxic tension which can be resolved only by a supra-rational faith.[140] This unfortunate confinement of revelation to encounter with its corresponding rejection of propositional revelation and denial of a rational base for theology and ethics is, in Henry's opinion, both disappointing and tragic. He expresses his feelings thus,

> Beneath this halting return to the Bible lurks a dialectical prejudice that imparts an anti-intellectual turn to the neo-orthodox view of divine self-disclosure and hence to its definitions of revelation and inscripturation. God's revealing activity is sketched in terms of personal encounter beyond the grasp of human concepts, therefore sealing off any divine transmission of truths and words. Nowhere is the Barth-Brunner theology more disappointing than in thus exalting Schleiermacher's objectionable definition of revelation. Indubitably neo-orthodoxy has supplemented and modified Schleiermacher's view in numerous details. Its essential point, however, is retained, that God discloses no truths or doctrines concerning himself and his purposes. No where does

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[139]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, pp. 38-39.

[140]Henry, Fifty Years of Protestant Theology, p. 37.

> neo-orthodoxy's loud claim to honor the witness of Scripture fall upon stonier ground than in its attempt to justify this anti-intellectual prejudice from the Bible.[141]

The philosophical tenet of a persistent cleavage between God and man, between the eternal and time, between the infinite and finite, is marked by Henry as characteristic of neo-supernaturalistic theologians and at the same time a factor which separates and alienates them from the biblical understanding of revelation and the Bible. Neo-supernaturalism is not speaking of once-for-all historical biblical revelation which Reformation Christianity and evangelical theology affirm. Neo-supernaturalism is distinguished by its view of once-for-allness which replaces the God who has spoken by a speaking God. Henry notes two ways in which this view compromises the orthodox view of special revelation. First, the Bible no longer transmits revelation to us. Secondly, according to the newer theology, we ourselves must contribute to the event of revelation presumed to exist in our age as well as in the Old and New Testament, an idea which is contrary to the emphasis on "the faith once delivered to all the saints" (Jude 3). Revelation, according to neo-supernaturalism, is not divine truth given once-for-all and transmitted by prophets and apostles, but rather a core of invariable content which remains changeless while the experience of revelation is ever new. The impartation of revelation,

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[141]Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology, pp. 56-57.

not limited to prophets and apostles, is made to us as well. Henry observes that for Barth, revelation does not take place except in terms of personal response, a factor which Henry sees as involving the believer's personal response in the consummation of divine revelation.[142] For neo-supernaturalism, revelation does not take place until the written Word is preached to an enlightened hearer, that is, until it becomes the appropriated Word. Revelation is said to presuppose three elements, the Bible, preaching, and the responsive hearer. Henry counters,

> But is there not a revelation, a divine self-disclosure, if prophets and apostles enter into the secret of God, wholly apart from the question whether the written record is subsequently believed or not?[143]

A proper understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Word, according to Henry, will reveal that while the Spirit energizes and personalizes the biblical knowledge content, revelation cannot be said to have taken place each time it is believed.

This view of revelation in terms of personal response is due perhaps to neo-supernaturalism's faulty concept of historical revelation as distinguished from the true biblical view of revelation and history. Only ambiguously does

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[142]Henry, Drift of Western Thought, pp. 119-20, footnote 40. Henry notes that the use of hapax in Jude 3, the passage cited above, precludes the notion of the repeated delivery of the content of the Christian faith.

[143]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 80.

neo-supernaturalism relate revelation to history. Henry observes, "Revelation itself occurs only in super-history, which is intended to designate not miracle-history accessible to the general historian, but rather the existential encounter."[144] Furthermore, Henry observes in this connection that the christology of Barth and Brunner seems to dilute the traditional view of divine revelation to men in the historical situation. He comments,

> The tendency of both Barth and Brunner to treat the incarnate Christ as a "pointer" or "witness" to revelation, rather than as the high point of the divine manifestation to man, as indeed the New Testament seems everywhere to presuppose, indicates that, in their definition of revelation, the historical element is more marginal and less central than Christian theology has maintained.[145]

Consistent with that confinement of actual revelation in the realm of super-history, neo-supernaturalism discards the Reformation view that revelation is inscripturated, that the Scriptures are the divine provision of the Word of God written. Revelation is confined to the existential encounter; and, the Bible, at best, is a witness to that revelation consummated in the existential experience. The Bible, according to neo-supernaturalists, is not infallible. It contains errors of a scientific and historical nature, and may also be in error in some of its theological and ethical writings. The Bible and the content of revelation should never be

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[144] Henry, Drift of Western Thought, pp. 120-21.

[145] Ibid., p. 121.

associated, in the neo-supernaturalistic theology. Like the proclamation of the Church, the Bible is simply a witness to the reality of revelation as communicated in the divine-human encounter.[146] Barth, says Henry, still maintains in his later writings an earlier emphasis that the Bible as such must be distinguished from divine revelation. He observes that more than one interpreter finds difficulty reconciling Barth's endeavor to preserve the Bible as the witness of revelation, while at the same time limiting it as a witness to revelation.[147]

Calling into question the "once-for-allness," the "historicalness" and the "Scripturalness" of the neo-supernaturalistic view of divine revelation, Carl Henry sees an even more serious objection in the very neo-supernaturalistic central concept of revelation itself. Neo-supernaturalism views revelation to be intrinsically paradoxical and non-conceptual, so that it necessarily confronts the recipient as incoherent. Thus, if it is to be received at all, revelation must be appropriated only by faith and not on logical grounds. Such a view, eliminating any appeal to coherence as a test of truth only perpetuates the neo-Kantian skeptical illusionism and agnosticism, leading ultimately to unbelief rather than faith.[148]

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[146] Ibid., p. 122.

[147] Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology, p. 57.

[148] Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 123.

Moreover, when the Scriptures are consigned to a lesser role as witness to revelation, we are involved in a distinction between God's revelation and the written Word, a distinction with unavoidable consequences for the problem of religious authority. Carl Henry wonders, if the dethronement of the Scriptures by the neo-supernaturalists is possible, how can we retain any objective authority for revelation? While Barth and Brunner appeal to the testimony of the Spirit as the only authority for revelation, Henry notes that this appeal is hardly a stabilizing effect, apart from the Scriptures. Widely divergent theological views exist among neo-supernaturalistic spokesmen who appeal to the testimony of the Spirit while admitting to a fallible Bible. This fact, says Henry, illustrates the inescapable subjectivism as a pitfall in that appeal to the Spirit apart from an infallible Bible. Barth's denial of general revelation, Brunner's denial of the virgin birth of Christ, Bultmann's denial that Jesus ever claimed to be the Messiah, are but a few examples of subjectivism resulting from this view. How the Spirit conveys an infallible and consistent testimony through a necessary, but fallible written word is not at all clear to Carl Henry, who comments, "Can there be in this pattern, a way back to an authoritative faith?"[149]

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[149]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 84.

Brunner appeals repeatedly to Luther's formula, "Christus rex et dominus scripturae," and to the distinction between the spirit and letter of biblical writings as demanding this newer view of revelation. In support, Brunner quotes Luther's comment that, "The New Testament should really be only a living Word and not a written word; that is why Christ wrote nothing." To this Henry counters that Luther, in this sentence, is opposed to the medieval tendency to stress doctrinal conformity without personal faith, whereas Brunner extends the argument beyond its intention to eliminate entirely any doctrinal view of revelation.[150] Henry reminds the reader, furthermore, that the standard accounts of the Reformation demonstrate the incontrovertible fact that the Reformers summoned the Church to hear the testimony of the written word, as against the proclamation of the church. The Reformation was a "to the Bible" movement; it was not a "Spirit rather than the Bible" movement. Henry says,

> The attitude of the Reformation toward the testimony of the Spirit apart from, or in priority to the written word, is disclosed by the vigorous opposition of Luther to the Anabaptists, who presumably held that, having the Spirit of Christ to teach them, they had no need of the Scriptures. As against the priority of the testimony of the

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[150] Ibid., p. 102.

> Spirit (Anabaptists) or of the church (Catholicism), Luther appealed to the Bible. Luther opposed lifeless dogmas, but he saw also that the Christian life is anchored in the written word as firmly as in the testimony of the Spirit.[151]

In Henry's opinion, neo-supernaturalism cannot justifiably draw Luther into its camp. The neo-supernaturalistic sole reliance upon the testimony of the Spirit as the only ground for infallibility, exclusive of the written word, must be based upon presuppositions foreign to Luther and the other sixteenth century reformers. In Henry's opinion, Barth and Brunner, precommitted as they are to evolutionary origins and to many negativisms of higher criticism, arbitrarily determine for themselves the testimony of the Spirit where and when the higher critical scientific method of Bible study and interpretation permit the Spirit to speak.[152]

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[151] Ibid., p. 71. Immediately following this statement, Henry cites several quotations from Luther: "I will not . . . waste a word in arguing with one who does not consider that the Scriptures are the Word of God: we ought not to dispute with a man who thus rejects first principles." This quotation cited from Koestlin, The Evangelical Quarterly, April, 1947. Again Henry quotes Luther: "It is impossible that the Scriptures should contradict themselves, save only that the unintelligent, coarse, and hardened hypocrites imagine it." Cited from Dorner, History of Protestant Theology, I, 244. Elsewhere Luther affirms: "He has resolved to give no man the internal things except through the external, and He will give no one the Spirit or faith without the external Word and sign which He has appointed." Cited from Luther, Against the Heavenly Prophets (Works, Erlangen Edition), XXIX, 208. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

[152] Ibid., p. 84.

Henry observes, furthermore, that cleavage of the Spirit's testimony and the written word has had profound influence upon the neo-supernaturalistic view of inspiration of the Bible. Brunner, says Henry, will not concede that the Bible is anything more than human, and therefore an infallible witness to the divine revelation. The idea of verbal inspiration is repugnant to Brunner. He believes an infallible inscripturated revelation fosters a false faith, sacrificing the intellect to this dogma or to the Bible as an infallible book. This legalistic obedience also involves an ethically neutral faith that everything written in the Bible is true, also the cosmological parts as well as the theological, according to Brunner. To this position Henry replies with the observation that Brunner's argument is hardly an argument against verbal inspiration. He says,

> The Biblical faith is not Brunner's view of the Scriptures; it is a relationship to God. But that this relationship can be safeguarded in a context other than one of Biblical authority, Brunner fails to establish.[154]

Again, neo-supernaturalism appeals to Reformation theology for support of its doctrine of inspiration as it did for neo-supernaturalistic views of biblical authority. Brunner must concede, however, that Luther appealed to the letter of Scripture as infallible because it was wholly and

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[153] Ibid., p. 69. In representing Brunner's views, Henry documents his treatment with many citations from the Swiss theologian's work, Revelation and Reason.

literally inspired by God. Especially was this true when the great Reformer was engaged in controversy. Nevertheless, neo-supernaturalists would like to claim, for instance, that Luther's reluctance to view James, Hebrews, Jude and Revelation as capital books involves Luther in a loose view of inspiration. Henry explains that this is hardly the case. That Luther viewed these books inferior so far as lighting up his one absorbing theological motif, "justification by faith without works," cannot be used to evaluate his view of inspiration. Henry asks, "May it not have been his very conviction of the authority of the Scriptures which gave Luther trouble with certain books . . .?"[154] And Henry adds that strict opponents of a doctrine of degrees of inspiration may yet admit that different books and sections are more profitable than others for different purposes. He says, "There are 'right strawy' passages for many purposes, but that is hardly a disproof of canonicity nor of verbal inspiration."[155]

Conflict is also apparent when Karl Barth's views on inspiration and revelation are set alongside the biblical testimony. While Barth indeed speaks of the "inspiringness" of the Bible, his basic theory of revelation as uncommunicable in concepts and words will not permit him to acknowledge the inspiration or "inspiredness" which the New Testament

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[154] Ibid., p. 70.

[155] Ibid.

ascribes to Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16).[156] According to Henry, this decisive reference, 2 Tim. 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God . . ." identifies Scripture itself as "God-breathed"; the writings themselves, as an end-product, are a unique product of divine activity. The reluctance of Barth and others to acknowledge that divine revelation assumes the form of concepts and words is also refuted by the repetitious Old Testament formula, "Thus saith the Lord," as well as such New Testament passages as 1 Thess. 2:13 and 1 Peter 1:21.[157]

Still another unbiblical distinction is drawn by neo-supernaturalists when they pit the deity of Jesus Christ as the supreme and final revelation of God in contradiction to written revelation. Henry observes, however, that the New Testament acclaim for God's personal revelation in the flesh by Jesus Christ is never used to deprive the inspired utterance of the sacred writers of a direct identity with divine revelation (Rom. 3:2; John 10:35). Moreover, Jesus Himself was heard by His disciples to ascribe absolute significance to his own words and commands uttered in their hearing. Henry charges the crisis theology with inconsistency when he says, "The dialectical theory, if true, would preclude any

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[156]Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology, p. 58.

[157]Carl F. H. Henry, "Revelation and the Bible," Christianity Today, II, Part I (June 9, 1958), 6.

direct identification with divine revelation of the spoken words of Jesus, no less than of prophets and apostles."[158] The neo-supernaturalistic distinction between the Word of God as revelation, and so-called "pointers" to revelation, which are deemed fallible human ideas and words, must also challenge Jesus; for one must hear his "word" (John 5:24). Jesus consistently identifies his own words and commands with the Father's word (John 14:10,24; 15:7,10 RSV).[159]

Admittedly, neo-supernaturalism professes to honor the biblical witness to revelation. Yet, at this point, Henry faults the crisis theology for a view of revelation which is not really representative of the true witness of the Scriptures. Reluctant to recognize the written word as revelation, inclined to confine authority to the Spirit's testimony, and adamantly opposed to the biblical concept of verbal inspiration, neo-orthodoxy, in Henry's opinion, does not have an authentically biblical concern for the doctrine of revelation. Here, we must quote Henry once again,

> The Bible nowhere protests nor cautions against identifying Scripture with revelation, but rather approves and supports this turn. Whoever evades these verities in constructing a doctrine of revelation, however vocal his plea for biblical theology, shows greater concern to baptize biblical criticism with an orthodox justification than to confirm the central features of the scriptural view. The neo-orthodox rejection of the Bible as revelation rests

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[158] Ibid., II, 7.

[159] Ibid.

> actually on rationalism rather than on reverence. . . . To expel Scripture from the orbit of revelation itself to the sphere of witness, and subsequently to ignore that witness in forging a doctrine of revelation, reveals speculative rather than scriptural and spiritual motives.[160]

Also foreign to the biblical view of special revelation, is the neo-supernaturalist emphasis upon the saving events of God to exclusion of authoritative doctrine, thus impairing the doctrinal unity of the Scriptures. Henry cautions that Brunner's insistence on the essentiality and uniqueness of the Bible should not be misconstrued with the historic evangelical view of the doctrinal unity of the Old and New Testaments. Not only does Brunner over-differentiate the word of God from the written Scriptures, but he distinguishes it overly from doctrine.[161] For Brunner, the Word of God is Jesus Christ in His loving, self-portraying activity. Divine revelation is not a book or doctrine, but the Person of the Incarnate Jesus Christ. If there be any unity in revelation, it is not unity of doctrine which is embarrassed by historic differences; rather, it is a unity of purpose inherent in God's saving activity consummated in the Incarnate Christ.[162]

If this is true, observes Henry, the entire biblical witness apart from those words which clothe the statement of

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[160] Ibid.

[161] Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 85.

[162] Ibid., p. 88.

the Christ event itself, must remain fluid and flexible, a view which, carried to its logical conclusion, can only flirt with the danger of a flexible view of the living Word, "and in a doctrinal flimsiness provide no adequate safeguard against subjective Mysticism, however much one may cry out against that alternative."[163]

What then is the relationship between revelation, the Bible and the saving acts of God? Is it not one of authoritative inspired interpretation? Orthodox theology has always insisted that the interpretation as well as the event is given by divine disclosure and that there is such a thing as revealed truth as well as revealed action. We cannot fairly distinguish, notes Henry, between revelation and the Bible, between event and the written Word, between that event from which faith springs, and concepts to which faith gives rise as do the neo-supernaturalists. If we distinguish, with the newer view of revelation, between the events and the apostolic teaching predicated thereon, then, in the words

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[163] Ibid., p. 106. For a thorough discussion of the fate of doctrinal unity suffered at the hands of Brunner's theology, see this same volume pp. 85-107. Among other points, Henry notes that Brunner's insistence on Jesus Christ as the denominator for special divine revelation involves him in a contradiction, necessitating as this statement does, that God does become meaningful in propositional revelation, a concept to which Brunner is violently opposed. Perhaps then, observes Henry, Brunner is not opposed to propositional revelation, but merely to that kind not to his liking. Ibid., p. 92, footnote 92. Furthermore, Brunner's exclusion of biblical doctrine from the saving event vested in the Incarnation and the summons to encounter God on these terms, involves Brunner in that rejection of traditional doctrine in such a way as to prepare the way for another doctrine, "even if in the name of protest against the centrality of doctrine." Ibid., p. 90, footnote 87.

of Henry, "the kerygma or 'received gospel,' is then set off against the elementary didache intended for all believers, and a higher sophia or gnosis for mature minds."[164] This is an anti-doctrinal mood, reducing the kerygma to the barest minimum, as if the Old Testament preparation were devoid of doctrinal significance, as if divine activity breaks forth with a minimum of imparted meaning.[165]

Henry calls mid-twentieth century theology back to biblical authority

This survey of Henry's position over against classic liberalism and neo-supernaturalism is concluded with this observation. Neither movement was adequate for proclamation of the Christian outlook to modern man. Their inadequacy was primarily an unbiblical view of special revelation due to more or less anti-scriptural philosophical presuppositions undergirding their respective theological structures. With this background, Henry makes a number of general observations about theology from the vantage point of the mid-twentieth century.

The most striking advance of neo-supernaturalism beyond liberalism was its conviction that the Hebrew-Christian tradition cannot be explained apart from special revelation.

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[164] Ibid., p. 101.

[165] Ibid., p. 102.

Nevertheless, notes Henry, the chief problem posed for theology in the mid-twentieth century is the problem of authority. And he adds. "The problem of authority centers in the query, do we have an authoritative revelation of God and, if so, is it rightly conceived as a word of God in the traditional sense?"[166] This means, according to Henry, the newer neo-orthodox insistence on revelation will retain significance only when it detaches itself from a framework of non-revelational presuppositions and revives honest respect for special revelation to man according to the biblical view, more precise and demonstrable than the encounter school of theology is prepared to concede.

Locating revelation in the divine-human encounter rather than fixing the content of revelation in the Bible, may indeed serve neo-supernaturalism's intention to emphasize the dynamic nature of Christian experience; but it may also lead to devastating mysticism and subjectivity. If indeed the authority of revelation lay primarily in encounter, even if that be what is called the Christ-event, the serious metaphysical and epistemological pitfalls must needs appear on the horizon. The theology of Barth and Brunner is certainly contrary to the Russian mystic, Berdyaev, who views the existential encounter providing the mystical basis of the only real understanding of God available, the inner intuitive

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[166] Ibid., p. 216.

awareness taking precedence over the historical revelation in the Bible; nevertheless, the answer to Berdyaev, in the interest of genuine Christian experience, dare not be formulated in terms of an encounter which loses the objective authority of the written word.[167] Yet, as Henry has observed, neo-supernaturalism is noted for a basic repugnance to locating revelational authority in the written word, a fact which engulfs the newer theology in a morass of confusion and crimps a vital Christian witness to our modern world.

If Henry's assessment of neo-supernaturalism is accurate from a biblical point of view, then the observation is also correct, namely, that as an alternative to classic liberalism, neo-supernaturalism is ironically siding with the metaphysical and epistemological foundation of that very school of theology against which it stood in revolt and avowed antithesis. As such, the newer theology, in Henry's opinion, gravitates as said before, toward three non-Christian options, mysticism, agnosticism and the resurgence of demonism. With respect to the first, mysticism, Henry notes,

> Hebrew-Christian thought had been able to characterize the spiritual world with assurance and definiteness on the basis of revelation. But the anti-metaphysical bias of recent theology, and its consequent repudiation of doctrinal revelation, together with the emphasis on the existential encountering of God, dissolves the supernatural into a formless and nebulous mysticism.[168]

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[167] Henry, Drift of Western Thought, p. 106, footnote 29.

[168] Henry, "Divine Revelation and the Bible," p. 267.

Disavowing the Scriptures as God's special revelation, the God of Barth and Brunner are akin to the philosophical deities of Kant and Kierkegaard. Neither of these philosophers, nor the crisis theologians themselves should be called mystics, yet, in Henry's words, "they share the primal atmosphere out of which mysticism rises: the denial that the supernatural world can be grasped by the discursive reason."[169] And the living God of genuine biblical theology is in direct antithesis to these ideas.

Furthermore, the surrender of conceptual knowledge of the metaphysical world, sooner or later involves one in pure agnosticism. If the spiritual Order can be ascertained, apart from cognitive faculties, only by faith faculties of the non-conceptual aspect of the self, a logical tendency develops toward a position of abject spiritual nothingness. And a third option is demonism. Henry says,

> And a philosophy of revelation which abandons the relevance of all objective evidences, and which excludes any test for truth, on the ground that revelation is paradoxical and supraconceptional, cuts itself off in advance from any rational means of discriminating God from Satan, as well as of detecting Satan in the role of an Angel of Light.[170]

Finally, this chapter is concluded with a clarion call from Carl Henry, addressed to Protestantism in our modern era. He has cited the threatening prospect of rampant naturalism,

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[169] Ibid., p. 267.

[170] Ibid., p. 268.

permeating every avenue of secular thought. Counter resistance by philosophy or even theology will prove impotent unless these counter measures are orientated in that special disclosure of God in Christ Jesus, the living personal Word, and in the inscripturated revelation of Old and New Testaments. The Christian world view is at stake! If this view is to be preserved from the past and carried into the future, the Church must heed Carl Henry's call when he says to Protestantism in the closing paragraph of his book, The Protestant Dilemma,

> The dilemma of Protestantism, no less than any other dilemma of human history, cannot hope for an abiding solution, unless it comes to terms with that word which, while couched in the words of men, has been for prophets and apostles, and for the Christian community, the word of God.[171]

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[171]Henry, Protestant Dilemma, p. 225.

CHAPTER IV

CARL F. H. HENRY'S PERSPECTIVE FOR THE CHURCH IN MODERN TIMES

Modern Evangelicalism, Its Antecedents in Fundamentalism

Foremost among Carl Henry's concerns is a vital Christian witness to modern man. The biblical teaching of God's self-disclosure with redemptive purposes for the human race is, in Henry's opinion, the chief business of the Church in her contemporary proclamation. It has been said before and must be stated again with emphasis that a dynamic Christian witness is possible only when such proclamation springs from a theology, obedient to historic biblical teaching.

On this count, classic liberalism proved to be bankrupt; and neo-supernaturalism, freely employing philosophical presuppositions in its theologizing as well as unabashed higher critical methodology in its biblical studies, gradually disintegrated into impotence as a vital proclaimer of Christian truth. Compromising biblical notions of revelation, inspiration, and authority, neo-supernaturalism rendered itself unsuitable and even incapable of dynamic representation of the Christian outlook.

Consequently, Carl Henry directs the reader's attention to the evangelical movement in western Christendom as the

last but hopeful vehicle for a lively proclamation of the Christian faith particularly in view of the staggering social issues posed by modern man. Historically, evangelicalism is that movement which consistently retained respect for biblical authority, acting as vanguard of historic Christian doctrines.[1] Within the wider context of early twentieth century evangelicalism, there arose a movement known as fundamentalism with a primary objective to champion the fundamental Christian doctrines in antithesis to modernism. For a characterization of fundamentalism, Henry cites the remarks of Theodore G. Soares in his book, Three Typical Beliefs. According to Soares, Protestants of America who defended the great doctrines of orthodoxy were thus called by the name of "fundamentalist." Soares adds, however, that only the name was different, for these defenders of orthodox doctrines affirmed the faith once held by Luther, Calvin, Knox, Robinson, Bunyan, Wesley and great missionaries and evangelists and most of the theologians until recent times.[2]

Hallmark of fundamentalism is the twelve volume set, titled, The Fundamentals. Printed in 1909, this work demonstrates genuine evidence of evangelical strength, says Carl Henry. In his opinion, the fundamentals exemplify a breadth

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[1]Harold Lindsell, "Who Are the Evangelicals?" Christianity Today, IX (June 18, 1965), 3.

[2]Carl F. H. Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 48-49.

and concept of theological and philosophical perspective; a sound concern for scholarly theological interest and enterprise beyond bitterness in polemics; and concentration upon a wider spectrum of theological issues than evangelism and missions, important as these are.[3] Names like James Orr, Benjamin B. Warfield and G. Campbell Morgan are but a few of the distinguished scholars and leaders represented in this work. Henry also observes that the series throughout evinces resounding conviction in the authority and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures. The frequent criticism that authors of The Fundamentals are biblicists is negated by their confident appeal to the lordship of Christ and to the witness of the Spirit, being less inclined than recent evangelical thought to rest everything on the bare inerrancy of Holy Scriptures. On the issue of Christianity and science, The Fundamentals emphasized the great affirmations of the creation narratives. They deplored dismissal of Genesis as legendary and mythical. Opposing evolution, they did so without dismissing the whole scientific enterprise as perverse speculation. They were neither distrustful nor suspicious of science, but open to the facts, though not convinced all the facts have been assembled on the nature of origins. Finally, Henry notes that as a whole,

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[3] Ibid., p. 37.

> the series creditably reflects a scholarly competence, a refreshing range of interest, an application of biblical Christianity to the wider problems of life and culture and an avoidance of restrictions and negations frequently associated with fundamentalism in our times.[4]

Past Mistakes of Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism, however, lost the stature which characterized the movement when The Fundamentals appeared in 1909. Later decades witnessed a decline of fundamentalism from status as a theological position to a lesser negative role as a temperament or mood or disposition, carried away in violent polemics against liberalism.[5] In many sectors conservative Christianity diverted all too much energy in vitriolic condemnation of liberalism, so that Henry can justifiably make this allegation,

> This character of fundamentalism as a temperament, and not primarily fundamentalism as a theology, has brought the movement into contemporary discredit. . . . It's early leadership reflected balance and ballast, and less of bombast and battle.[6]

That heated cleavage between fundamentalists and modernists reached its bitterest point in the decade after World War I. Overly determined to distinguish historic Christianity from the tenets of modernism, fundamentalism drifted into a

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[4]Carl F. H. Henry, "Dare We Renew the Controversy? Part II: The Fundamentalist Reduction," Christianity Today, I (June 24, 1957), 25.

[5]Henry, Evangelical Responsibility and Contemporary Theology, p. 44.

[6]Henry, "Dare We Renew the Controversy?," p. 26.

reactionary movement and emotional spirit. As such, the movement neglected the doctrine of the church, except when defining separation as a special area of concern. This neglect, says Henry, only contributed to the fragmentary spirit of fundamentalism, handing over to the ecumenical enterprise the initiative for defining the nature and relations of the churches.[7]

Moreover, Henry observes how evangelical scholarship was absorbed in polemical disdain for liberalism, inhibiting scholarly acumen for deeper theological issues. The result was that fundamentalism produced a paucity of significant theological literature, relying as it did upon theological classics of the past, satisfied to possess merely a borrowed academic strength. Not only polemics, but preoccupation with the staggering task of carrying on a program of Christian missions and evangelism along traditional lines in the wake of the modernist letdown, prevented serious scholarly endeavor. Added to these factors was the simultaneous usurpation of strategic educational leadership and facilities by modernism; and fundamentalism capitulated with a corresponding distrust of higher education and deemphasis of the importance of scholarly study.[8]

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[7]Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology, p. 35.

[8]Ibid., p. 34.

Due in part to its own mistakes and to the onslaught of Modernism, the isolation and fragmentation of fundamentalism sacrificed the perspective of Christianity as a comprehensive world and life view. Henry says,

> While adhering to the "heart of the biblical gospel" (cf. I Corinthians 15:1-4) in evangelism and mission and Christian education, in its campaign against the so-called "social gospel" fundamentalism tended to narrow "the whole counsel of God" and felt little obligation to exhibit Christianity as a comprehensive world and life view.[9]

Fragmentation of the movement was excelerated when hair splitting over eschatological refinements divided evangelicals who were otherwise united on the primary doctrinal emphases of Christology and soteriology.[10] But salutary concerns for pure doctrine became an end unto themselves, and Henry views fundamentalism's concentration upon "the fundamentals" at the expense of a dynamic thrust in wider dimensions of the historic creeds and confessions of faith a decided failure on part of the movement. Moreover, Henry observes how preoccupation with the orthodox doctrines of the faith became virtually the entire gospel. Social significance of the Christian faith was largely confined to divine deliverance from personal crises. And, says Henry, "Unchallenged by

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[9]Henry, "Dare We Renew the Controversy?," p. 23.

[10]Carl F. H. Henry, "The Vigor of the New Evangelicalism," Christian Life and Times, III (January 1948), 34. Henry refers to the debate over such minutiae as whether the rapture is pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation; or which contemporary is the most likely candidate for antichrist, etc.

the Lordship of Christ were many great areas of culture, literature, and the arts."[11] Witness, says Henry, the manner in which fundamentalism failed to meet scientific developments with a positive approach. Evangelical attitudes toward science as recent as a decade ago, notes Henry, had been for the most part defensive, an approach which held reign for more than a generation. Fundamentalism plainly neglected to evaluate its own position in the light of recent historical and scientific research. Instead of strengthening its theological position for the times, it relaxed in traditionalism.[12] These attitudes, verging on obscurantism, in an age of advanced scientific technology, only serve to illustrate fundamentalism's persistent failure in recent decades to relate the Christian revelation to the broad concerns of civilization and culture. But even more damaging, the movement narrowed the interests of religion to personal piety and helped to foster an antithesis between the intellect and emotions. In a concluding remark, Henry demonstrates how this obscurantist position created a startling reversal, leading fundamentalism to emulate the principles of modernism rather than sound biblical theology. He says,

> This belittling of the intellect and the phrasing of religious experience primarily in terms of the

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[11]Carl F. H. Henry, "The Resurgence of Evangelical Christianity," Christianity Today, III (March 30, 1959), 4.

[12]Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology, pp. 73-74.

> emotional and volitional aspects of life is a tendency actually more in accord with the anti-metaphysical temper of modernist theology than with biblical theology.[13]

Guidelines for Contemporary Evangelicalism

Shed the idiosyncrasies of fundamentalism

Marked by vitriolic temperament, an isolationist outlook and fragmented structure, harboring a myopic concept of Christ's mission limited to missionary endeavors with little or no interest to assert the Lordship of Christ over all phases of culture, and bereft of abiding concern for theological scholarship and education, fundamentalism ultimately permitted theological initiative to pass into the hands of neo-supernaturalists, who aggressively vocalized criticism of liberalism in terms of both internal philosophical and external biblical points of view. While its views on revelation and inspiration were decidedly unbiblical, neo-orthodoxy nonetheless earnestly and enthusiastically produced a vigorous commentary and dogmatic literature.[14] Henry poses neo-orthodoxy as exemplary in yet another sense. As Barth and Brunner were unrelenting in their scathing repudiation of classic liberalism, Carl Henry calls upon evangelical leaders

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[13]Henry, "Dare We Renew the Controversy?," p. 23.

[14]Ibid., p. 24.

to admit candidly the excesses of fundamentalism and bring the movement to repentance and judgment.[15]

Genuine contrition should be required for fundamentalism's eschatology, barren of significance for this present age. Fanatical prophets, absorbed in contemplation of the times and seasons indicative of the end time, were prone to consider eschatology largely in terms of future events quite in isolation from the spiritual privileges of this present life. Henry observes,

> Fundamentalism, at least in its dispensational form, located the Kingdom only in the future; Kingdom truth was millennial truth. This one-sided future orientation of the Kingdom-teaching not only neglected vital elements of New Testament teaching about the present age, but it obscured the important emphasis of the Gospels that in the First Advent the Kingdom was already at hand in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.[16]

This one-sided eschatology, entirely futuristic, was probably a reaction to modernist proponents of the social gospel, convinced as they were that the Kingdom of God would reach its climax as humanity increasingly walked in the way of social, intellectual, moral and religious progress, the personal Second Advent of Christ being only tangential to

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[15] Ibid., p. 26.

[16] Carl F. H. Henry, "The Trumpet of the Lord," Christianity Today, I (June 10, 1957), 20.

this humanistic manifestation of the Kingdom.[17] As a reaction, however, fundamentalism also abrogated the New Testament understanding of eschatology. Assuredly, the Kingdom of God has a future climax with the Second Advent of Christ. Nevertheless, Henry reminds his fundamentalist readers that the New Testament will not permit the weight of eschatological realities to be shifted wholly to the future, a fact which the early church knew from the outset (Acts 2:17; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 John 2:18). The New Testament sketches the power of Jesus Christ in terms of the present manifestation as well as the future. A fulfillment of life is stressed, a present sharing in the life fit for eternity, a shaping of the believer's daily existence, in view of a distinctive relation in which the disciples now stand to their Redeemer. Henry says,

> Linked to Christ by the Holy Spirit, through whom the Lord reigns in the lives of his followers, the church in some vital sense shares in advance, as an earnest of its future inheritance, certain distinctive powers and blessings of the age to come . . . . No exposition of saving events, however orthodox, can compensate for a neglect of these

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[17] Ibid., I, 21. In writing his volume, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism, Henry cites an instance when he was cautioned by a fundamentalist spokesman to avoid the issue of the Kingdom. The reason given was that the kingdom now message might be too easily identified with the liberal social gospel, and a kingdom then message may identify Christianity further to the modern mind in terms of an escape mechanism. Carl F. H. Henry, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1947), pp. 51-52.

> emphases of biblical theology so determinative of the ethical dynamism of Christian existence in this present age of grace.[18]

The kingdom now emphasis, according to Carl Henry, must be recovered if evangelicalism is to be a leaven for our age. Reiteration of orthodox doctrines in a vacuum apart from projectory toward pressing world problems, is a plain contradiction of Christ's commission to the apostolic church. Fundamentalism has traditionally addressed itself to problems of personal ethics such as liquor, smoking, card playing, movies, dancing, etc. What is needed is a frank encounter of the redemptive power of Christ with the social evils as well, that is, aggressive warfare, racial hatred and intolerance, the liquor traffic, exploitation of labor or management, and the like.[19] An even wider spectrum comes into view when the kingdom now emphasis compels evangelical affirmations in political, economic, sociological, and educational realms, local and international.[20] Choosing passivity as an alternative to liberal social movements of a broad idealistic and moral nature, fundamentalism bears the burden of an uneasy conscience. Therefore, Carl Henry makes this appeal to evangelicals: first, conduct a sane and objective analysis of the present impasse between fundamentalism and the modern

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[18]Henry, "The Trumpet of the Lord," pp. 21-22.

[19]Henry, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism, pp. 18-21.

[20]Ibid., p. 68.

world, with a view to reaching modern man on all fronts with the Gospel; second, proceed to address the dynamic redemption of Christ to every issue in life.[21]

Adopt a broader view of the evangelistic task

Carl Henry reminds evangelicalism that the evangelistic task in modern times is the same as in every century and generation of Christendom since apostolic times. Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Fundamentalism treasures that message, but its problem is one of giving the redemptive word a proper temporal form.[22] The Gospel, that foolishness to the wise of this world, must, however, be sounded with clarity. Carl Henry will not clothe the Gospel in garb that is overly relevant to the extent that the fundamental scriptural facts of Christ crucified and His substitutionary atonement are enshrouded in a kind of mysticism. The imperative to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation from sin and guilt is, for Henry, the heart of the New Testament. And it must be proclaimed in so many words, with this objective in mind, namely, the spiritual regeneration of the sinner as he is brought to faith in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Preaching the Gospel is not only proclamation per se, as important as that is; but more,

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[21] Ibid., pp. 9-11.

[22] Ibid., p. 65.

Christ's commission intended to send forth new men in Christ throughout the length and breadth of life and culture, permeating all society as an effective leaven.

These principles of the evangelistic task are set forth by Carl Henry in Christianity Today's poll of Protestant clergy prior to the Eisenhower-Stevenson run-off for the presidency. Against the background of clergy response to the question, "What change for the better in American affairs do you desire for your candidate if elected?," Henry remarks,

> The great need today, as American Protestantism recoils from the invasion of its theology and social ethics by speculative evolutionary principles during the century of Liberalism, is to find its way back to the centrality of the Gospel, and to the recognition that hope for a new society is best mediated to any nation through the spiritual regeneration of its masses. In the long run, it is the decision made at this level which will answer the question of where America goes from here.[23]

An editorial titled, "A Door Swings Open," appearing in Christianity Today, June 18, 1965, also reflected Henry's views on the subject in anticipation of the World Congress on Evangelism held in Berlin, October 26 to November 4, 1966. This statement distinguishes Henry's view of the evangelistic task from that of ecumenical groups which are marked, says Henry, by a dilution of evangelical theology and a diminuation of evangelistic mission. Counsel for evangelicals in

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[23]Carl F. H. Henry, "Where Do We Go From Here?," Christianity Today, I (November 12, 1956), 18.

their quest for a strategy of evangelism is furnished by Henry when he says,

> The instrument of apostolic penetration in a pagan world was the new man, the creation in Christ, who demonstrated the transforming presence of God. For good reason, evangelicals deplore the way the ecumenical movement dilutes evangelism into social sensitivity and deletes supernatural regeneration. Only redeemed and regenerate men can hope to fulfill the Christian ethic, and evangelical Christians consequently make no apology for placing the gospel foremost. They are indeed aware of the pressing need in their own circles for a comprehensive theology of evangelism. They expect, moreover, that such an exposition will broaden their understanding of evangelism. But they have no doubt that an authentic theology of evangelism will transcend the prevalent ecumenical concessions to universalism, fear of proselytism, and secular social concern at the expense of redemptive realities.[24]

His own convictions of the Gospel's power, lead Carl Henry to urge fundamentalism toward a globally vigorous witness. He took personal leadership organizing the World Congress on Evangelism assembled in Berlin, October 26 to November 4, 1966. This gathering of thirteen-hundred evangelists and Christian leaders representing evangelistic endeavors in more than one-hundred nations around the world was intended to stimulate a united spirit of mission thrust in our modern era. Participants were invited to the Congress regardless of ecumenical stance and denominational identity. Position papers prepared by leading evangelical scholars in advance of the Congress called attention to a renewed quest

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[24]Carl F. H. Henry, "A Door Swings Open," unsigned editorial, Christianity Today, IX (June 18, 1965), 25.

after New Testament foundations for evangelism, and focused concern for a strategy to bring a united evangelical witness before the world's eye.[25]

Already we have hinted that evangelism, in Henry's opinion, is involved in the church's approach to social action. The evangelistic task has a much wider social responsibility to the world, as Henry indicates when he says,

> Beyond an evangelistic concern evangelicals recognize the need of a fresh statement of evangelical theology covering the lordship of Christ over all of modern life--a theology not only of evangelism but also of culture and social concerns . . . . The notion of "the less contact with the world, the more biblical" is one informed evangelicals disown. . . . They recognize social concern as legitimate and as a scriptural imperative. . . . Evangelical social conscience insists, in view of divinely revealed principles, upon the supreme social relevancy of the biblical message, and

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[25] Christianity Today, XI (October 28, 1966), 4-39. The titles and authors of these position papers are, "The Authority for Evangelism" (Prof. Johannes Schneider, formerly of the faculty of Humboldt University, East Berlin); "The Theology of Evangelism" (Dr. Harold John Ockenga, minister of Park Street Church, Boston, Massachusetts); "The Hindrances to Evangelism in the Church" (Dr. Walter Künneth, professor of systematic theology, Erlangen University, Germany); "The Obstacles to Evangelism in the World" (Dr. Harold B. Kuhn, professor of philosophy of religion, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky); "The Methods of Personal Evangelism" (Dr. Richard C. Halverson of Washington, D.C., executive director of International Christian Leadership); and "The Methods of Group Evangelism" (Bishop A. W. Goodwin Hudson, of London). For key essays delivered at the Congress, see the following issue of Christianity Today, XI (November 11, 1966), 3-30. A complete summation of papers, essays and discussions from the Congress is presented in this two volume edition: Carl F. H. Henry, and W. Stanley Mooneyham, editors, One Race, One Gospel, One Task, 2 vols., World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966, official reference volumes (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, c.1967).

> evangelicals are asking afresh to what extent the Christian mission involves believers in sociological responsibility and how their witness to political and civic leaders is to be articulated.[26]

Observe that Henry's theology for social action steers a middle course between isolationism on the part of fundamentalism and complete absorption of a genuinely gospel motivation in benevolent and humanitarian programs of a strictly secular orientation. On the one hand, fundamentalism became reactionary in opposition to motives undergirding the social gospel, devoid of the New Testament dynamic of redemption and regeneration. Henry comments,

> The social gospel knowingly surrendered the personal gospel of Jesus Christ's substitutionary death and his supernatural redemption and regeneration of sinful men. Instead, it sought to transform the social order by grafting assertedly Christian ideals upon unregenerate human nature.[27]

While fundamentalism violently reacted to the presuppositions of the social gospel and thereafter remained socially inert, Carl Henry is quick to show that modern evangelicals are finding a basis for social action in sound theological tenets. A vital social thrust is possible for evangelical supernaturalism without compromise of redemption and regeneration. Henry regarded his 1947 publication, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism, as a signpost demonstrating how

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[26]Henry, "A Door Swings Open," pp. 25-26.

[27]Carl F. H. Henry, "Perspective for Social Action," Christianity Today, III, Part I (January 19, 1959), 10.

evangelicals are growing in number who believe that Christianity makes imperative the declaration of the social relevance of biblical religion and ethics in all spheres of life. Speaking as the editor, Henry notes that Christianity Today shares the same perspective, and he comments,

> Today the evangelical movement recognizes in a new way not only the propriety but the necessity of a social application of the Gospel. Those rejecting the concern for social justice as an illegitimate facet of evangelical intent, vocal though they may be, more and more represent a retreating minority.[28]

Nevertheless, Henry is incisive when delineating the bounds of evangelical social action. These qualifications prevail:

> But evangelicals refuse to divorce their social sensitivities from a concern for objective law and standards, from an interest in holiness as well as in agape and justice, and from an emphasis on a supernatural regenerative dynamic rather than merely on revolutionary forces. As a consequence, evangelical social action is predicated on durable biblical principles not foredoomed to discard from generation to generation, as are the pragmatic or existential motivations of twentieth-century liberalism.[29]

Evangelical social action, therefore, cannot arbitrarily merge with programs of a moralistic or humanistic bent, requiring either compromise or dilution of a genuine gospel motivation. Not discounting the good done from vantage point of other than gospel motives, Henry believes the Church must not only do good, but do so for the right reasons. For example, amalgamation of the church with the state in dispensing

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[28]Henry, "Perspective for Social Action," p. 11.

[29]Henry, "A Door Swings Open," pp. 25-26.

welfare is highly tenuous. It is doubtful that the Church can retain her particular witness in such a joint endeavor with the state. Again, Henry expounds the special dynamic which dare not be compromised when the Church acts socially, not even when only good may result from such mutual efforts of the Church and secular institutions. Of the Church, Henry says,

> whatever she does in compassionate awareness of basic human needs she must do in the name of Christ. The Church's compassion after all is really the compassion of Christ for the hungry. . . . the principle of "a cup of water in my name" must always characterize her ministrations to the needs of both body and soul, of both the hungry and the lost.[30]

Moreover, seeking the regeneration of degenerate man as a prime objective in her mission, the Church is constrained to execute social action according to divinely revealed ethical imperatives. This latter emphasis the Church dare not compromise either. Henry says,

> Even where its social thrust is properly aligned and related to the missionary call, the Church is divinely authorized to challenge the prevailing social order only in terms of divinely revealed ethical imperatives. Rather than giving blanket approval to any historical program, movement or personality, the Church must inculcate knowledge and obedience of revealed moral principles governing the believer's life situation.[31]

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[30]Carl F. H. Henry, "The Hunger of the Masses," Christianity Today, VI (March 16, 1962), 25.

[31]Carl F. H. Henry, "The Church and Public Relations," Christianity Today, II (April 14, 1958), 21.

Pleading with evangelicalism to cultivate social consciousness and a humanitarian spirit, springing from a redemptive relationship to God through Christ, Henry cautions the Church to be articulate in her motives for social action as well as in social programs themselves so that the Gospel is by no means beclouded or excluded. Calling for espousal of a vigorous spiritual dynamic applied to social problems, Henry comments,

> Those who in social agitation sponsor a morality of compulsion, or simply trust the word and will of unregenerate men, thereby betray their skepticism of the adequacy of spiritual reserves latent in Christian religion. This growing doubt is manifest in the notion that social problems are not wholly responsive to spiritual solutions. Consequently, the Church has often turned aside from its evangelistic and missionary priorities, attempting to chart a socio-political thrust alongside rather than in and through the evangelistic thrust. Such direct engagement of the Church in politics and economics when it relies on earthly endowments and energies alone, has no biblical mandate. It neglects the Gospel's relevance and indispensability to the whole Church's work including its mission to society.[32]

Having said this, Carl Henry censures the clergy of America who publicly espouse social objectives apart from the foundation of biblical priorities. He says, "In our generation the pulpit often propagandizes for social objectives lacking spiritual vindication, relying mainly upon humanitarian sentiment."[33] Sentimental ideals championed by modern social

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[32]Carl F. H. Henry, Aspects of Christian Social Ethics (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 26-27.

[33]Ibid., p. 123.

reformers are a poor substitute for sound spiritual principles when ministry and laity of the Church attempt to shape public opinion. Carl Henry castigates propaganda with missionary fervor for such platitudes as world government, pacifism, abolition of poverty, and universal social security. Endorsement of such political goals and economic ideals by the church, only attests to the ever-present risk of baptizing highly debatable programs with the hallowed title of Christian social concern.[34]

"Christianity and Social Transformation," is the opening essay in Carl Henry's significant book, Aspects of Christian Social Ethics. The reader will be interested in four categories outlined by Henry as inclusive of major approaches to social transformation employed by religious and secular authorities alike. Briefly described, they are:

(1) Revolution: "By revolution we mean the radical change of social patterns, in their essential constitution, through violence and compulsion."[35]

(2) Reformation: "By reformation we mean that gradual but pervasive ethical amendment of particular abuses which secures a decisive improvement of prevailing social character and forms."[36]

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., p. 17.

[36] Ibid.

(3) Revaluation: "By revaluation we mean a fresh intellectual comprehension and direction, whereby social life and structures are critically reassessed in the light of transcendent moral norms."[37]

(4) Regeneration: "By regeneration we mean transformation by supernatural impulse in individual lives whereby the social scene is renewed through a divine spiritual motivation."[38]

Because these categories reflect Henry's understanding of contemporary social theory, the reader is asked to indulge in a more detailed elaboration. Of these contrasting dynamisms for social change, he says,

> The strategy of revolution relies upon brute power for its promotion of social radicalism. . . . The reform strategy avoids use of violence and intimidation, but for a basic instrument of change relies upon legislated morality, or political compulsion achieved by democratic processes. A generation ago, even before the evolutionary pragmatism of John Dewey invaded the public schools, reform looked to public education and moral propaganda to effect social change. In recent decades, however, with the decline of the democracies, reform tactics increasingly assume the political complex of Big Government as indispensable to social betterment. Then social change more and more becomes political action, and government legislation or compulsion the key instrument of change.[39]

Of the third category, Henry says,

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

> The revaluation strategy emphasizes man's spiritual dignity and his superiority to animals and the material world; therefore, it stresses moral education, propaganda, conversation and persuasion as effective media of social change. Its major disagreement with the revolution and reform strategies is its awareness that merely changed environment without changed human perspective will not effect a fundamental revision of the social situation. Revaluation therefore seeks to inculcate an awareness of the religious dimensions of life, and to exhibit the significance of the moral man for society and the universe. By stimulating conscience, this strategy relates human rights to human dignity; by stressing man's spiritual value as an individual, it supplies ethical fervor to social change.[40]

Then Henry has this to say about regeneration as a dynamic of social change,

> The strategy of regeneration, by contrast, relies primarily on spiritual dynamics for social change. It aims not merely to re-educate man (although it knows that the Holy Spirit uses truth--particularly the truth of the Gospel--as a means of conviction), but to renew the whole man morally and spiritually through a saving experience of Jesus Christ. The power on which it relies for social change is not totalitarian compulsion, nor is it the power, per se, of legislated morality, education, and unregenerate conscience. Regeneration rests upon spiritual power.[41]

In a final statement, Henry commends to the Church the Gospel as the singular dynamic for social action. He says,

> The Gospel of Christ is the Church's peculiar dynamic for facing the entire world. Christian social action condones no social solutions in which personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is an optional consideration.[42]

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[40] Ibid., p. 24.

[41] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[42] Ibid., p. 25.

Citing once again John 3:3, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," Henry views the new birth in Christ as essential for fellowship with God, a transformation which also equips men by the Holy Spirit with the new nature and moral power to pervade our world in the service of righteousness. The Christian pulpit and personal witness of individual Christians will encourage effective solution of social evils by calling out a race of renewed men united in devotion to God's purposes in creation and redemption.[43]

Church and State, Example of Christianity Related to the Social Order

The State's obligation to the Church

The writings of Carl F. H. Henry to date are replete with addresses of the Christian faith and moral principles to every major social issue of the day.[44] Our study cannot hope to represent Henry's Christian social ethics with respect to a myriad of issues. Undoubtedly, his most

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[43] Ibid., A succinct resume of evangelical principles for social action, proposed by Carl Henry, is available to the reader. See, Carl F. H. Henry, "Perspective for Social Action," Christianity Today, III (Part II (February 2, 1959), 14-16.

[44] Racial tensions, labor management relations, poverty, morality, nuclear weapons, church and state, Bible reading in public schools, welfare statism, communism, foreign relations, are but a few of the issues to which Henry addresses himself in articles published in a variety of journals and magazines ranging from Moody Monthly to the Philosophical Forum.

voluminous commentary treats the relationship of church and state; and, the paragraphs following will attempt to expound Henry's views in this regard, simultaneously providing an example of his passionate concern that the Gospel become relevant to the world according to principles set forth in the preceding paragraphs.

Essentially, Carl Henry adopts Roger Williams' view that church and state are distinct in origin, nature, function, and purpose. This appears to Henry as the biblical principle in spite of occasional appeals made by some to the Old Testament institution of theocracy. Henry agrees with Williams who believed the New Testament Church to be established by Jesus Christ upon principles derived from his instruction, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."[45] What is the respective authority, function and proper sphere of influence belonging to church and state? Henry answers,

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[45]Carl F. H. Henry, "The Great Issue," Watchman-Examiner, XL (September 11, 1952), 841. This paper was read in a symposium sponsored by the Los Angeles chapter of Protestants and Other Americans United, which Carl Henry served concurrently as vice-president. Speaking as an officer of this organization, and as a Baptist, he is quick to demonstrate how Baptists historically stood for inviolate separation of church and state, convinced that their position best reflected biblical Christianity. Furthermore, Henry views Baptist individualism on this issue as a reaction to both Calvin'a Geneva and Luther's Germany. Following Roger Williams, Henry believes these Reformation traditions fostered a state-church and thus involved themselves in capitulation to the Roman misinterpretation of church-state relations according to the Christian ideal.

> The state's ministry is in the realm of justice--of human rights, of what is due man as man before the law. A "right" (or "due") is not a matter of charity or welfare. The Church's ministry--not the state's--is in the realm of mercy, of undeserved favor, of charity. What is charity is not a legal due, but a voluntary deed of grace.[46]

More particular, what is the responsibility of the State to the Church? It is no different than its responsibility to all men. On the basis of Romans 13, Henry says, "Human government is divinely willed to preserve justice and restrain evil in a sinful society."[47] This is so irrespective of the particular form of government. Justice is viewed within the framework of general laws with universal application; and inalienable rights are guaranteed within the scope of justice executed according to the dimensions of law; and all of this in relation to God's ordinance for peaceable living, man among men. On the role of government in this regard, Henry says,

> Justice considers every person a subject of rights and an object of duties--the same rights and duties that qualify all other persons under the same circumstances. For that reason justice in the State must express itself in general laws that are to be applied without respect of persons. The justification of civil law is that it protects my rights (and my neighbor's). Government is not the creator of human rights; if it were, man's rights would be relative and discretionary. The role of government is but to declare, to apply, and to enforce rights

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[46]Carl F. H. Henry, "The State in Welfare Work," Christianity Today, III (January 18, 1960), 23.

[47]Carl F. H. Henry, "Can We Salvage the Republic?," Christianity Today, II (March 3, 1958), 6.

> which are given of God and therefore inalienable. . . . The purpose of law is to prevent one person from injuring another; my rights end and become my duty where my neighbor's rights begin.[48]

Are there, however, theological bounds for civil law, both sanctions and limitations? Yes, replies Henry, when he asserts that the State, deriving its authority from God, cannot require of its citizens anything that violates the revealed commandments. Conversely, by obedient fulfillment of these commandments in the spirit of love, the Christian citizen exhibits the highest patriotism.[49] Statue laws of the State are to be obeyed primarily because they are based upon the divine order. Henry remarks,

> The Christian draws his assurance of the universality of law from Scripture, a universality attested by the law written on men's hearts everywhere (Rom. 2:15) . . . . This universally valid law makes social order possible; it not only judges man's disobedience of administered law, but also his willful surrender of absolute moral standards to subjective desires.[50]

Moreover, Henry is careful to state that in addition to the Commandments, the Scripture also provides the great social concerns of revealed religion in terms of divinely disclosed ethical principles. These must determine and motivate social responsibility and action. For example, while Scripture does

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[48]Henry, Aspects of Christian Social Ethics, p. 92.

[49]Henry, "Can We Salvage the Republic?," p. 6.

[50]Henry, Aspects of Christian Social Ethics, p. 92.

not condemn slavery, it states the principles that revealed the death knell of that evil.[51]

Obligation of the Church to the State

What the Church owes the state is the other side of this issue, one that is misunderstood on many counts. A case in point is the manner in which the principle of church-state separation is over extended to signify a thorough-going dis-association of religion from government. Oddly enough, both fundamentalist isolationists and secularists of an agnostic or atheistic orientation share in wholesale abandonment of the state to irreligion.

Carl Henry takes exception to this extreme cleavage of the sacred and secular, particularly where religion and state supported schools is concerned. He challenges the recent emphasis in educational circles that American separation of church and state rules out the teaching of distinctive Hebrew-Christian values because such instruction is deemed sectarian.[52] Henry submits a three-fold rebuttal to this attitude. First, deletion of Bible reading and Hebrew-Christian values from public education is contrary to the philosophy of education espoused by the founding

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[51]Henry, "Can We Salvage the Republic?," p. 7.

[52]Carl F. H. Henry, "Christian Education and Our American Schools," United Evangelical Action, XIV (December 1, 1955), 4.

fathers of these United States. In Henry's opinion, the Bill of Rights did not intend to separate the nation from either God or religion of the Bible. He adds, "The Bill of Rights speaks of the church, and the church is a Christian concept exclusively; the Hebrews have synagogues, the Mohammedans have mosques but only Christianity has churches."[53] While many of the founding fathers escaped from countries in Europe where the state existed for the sake of one particular church, Henry notes, in this country,

> They wanted separation between church and state, but no separation between the state and religion, no separation between the state and Christianity, no separation between the state and the Bible-- else they would not have spoken only of the separation of church and state.[54]

Again Henry observes that the founding fathers can be quoted at length, "to show that they regard pure religion and morality as the indispensable twin supports of democracy."[55] Henry adds that two out of three American colleges were founded by the Churches. Even if few of these hold forth the Christian view of life today, these same institutions of higher learning pay tribute to an era when Christianity held

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[53]Carl F. H. Henry, "Let the Chips Fall," The Christian Statesman, XCVII (March, 1953), 6.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Henry, "Christian Education and Our American Schools," p. 4.

the initiative in education.[56] Moreover, Henry believes an absence of religion in public schools inhibits appreciation of our heritage as citizens of America and heirs of Western culture. He believes that public schools exist for pursuit of the whole truth, which includes, "an understanding both of the distinctive convictions that historically underlie Western culture and of the vision of life held by the colonists and founding fathers."[57]

A second rejoinder to secular minded educators is advanced by Henry when he asserts that teaching of moral values apart from the Hebrew-Christian framework can only have disastrous results. During the early and middle fifties, educators were contemplating a return of religion to the public school classroom. There seemed to be a growing recognition that public education had failed to give adequate emphasis to moral and spiritual values.[58] Holding out promises for a better world, education a half-century ago simultaneously lost concern for the religious and ethical life, a loss which was in large measure the fruit of a naturalistic and evolutionary

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[56]Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology, p. 75.

[57]Carl F. H. Henry, "Is the Supreme Court on Trial?," Christianity Today, VII (February 15, 1963), 28.

[58]Henry calls attention to a resurgence of interest in religion and spiritual values among educators after 1950. See the following references: Carl F. H. Henry, "Religion and the Crisis in Education," Watchman-Examiner, XL (March 6, 1952), 228. Carl F. H. Henry, "Moral Values in Public Education," Eternity, V (September 1954), 14. Carl F. H. Henry, "Christian Responsibility in Education," Christianity Today, I (May 27, 1957), 12.

philosophy which underlay much of modern educational theory.[59] It is Henry's observation that the intellectual climate of the twentieth century was set by John Dewey who said,

> Faith in the divine authority in which western civilization confided, inherited ideas of the soul and its destiny, of fixed revelations . . . have been made impossible for the cultivated mind of the western world.[60]

The decline in morals, so alarming to educators in recent times, Henry attributes to progressive philosophy and methods of education, which, in the tradition of John Dewey, posed values as relative and evolving, never universal and absolute.

More significant, however, is this fact. The very educators, disturbed over failure by their profession to inculcate satisfactory moral values, know not how to meet their concerns with a positive program. The reason is clear. Their renewed interest in relating spiritual and moral values to the cultural enterprise is rooted in the progressive philosophy of a former generation. Holding to this source, they consistently neglect to raise the issue of a permanent rule of values. And the effects of moral guidance from a base of relativity in values is reflected in Henry's words,

> To require of young people absolute devotion to ethical ideals which need not be binding on all people in all places can only lead to a distrust of moral claims. The value of values is betrayed in the very profession of devotion to values when

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[59]Henry, "Moral Values in Public Education," p. 14.

[60]Henry, "Christian Responsibility in Education," p. 12.

> this situation prevails. When no values are ever permitted unquestioning acceptance, the lie soon prevails that values have only a questionable existence.[61]

Such a halfhearted attempt to reverse the bad effects of progressivism is not enough. He holds out for a return to that abiding basis for the moral life in the structure of reality. Again, he appeals,

> If modern education deals earnestly with the neglect of moral and spiritual values, it cannot avoid an emphasis on that unchanging spiritual world which it has obscured in recent centuries. The will of God must again become the center of curriculum.[62]

The folly of substituting any other basis for morality than absolute spiritual principles becomes apparent when certain American educators vainly attempt to outwit communist philosophy by stirring up loyalty for American ideals among their students. Still gripped by the progressive myth, these educators try in vain to exalt American democracy over the totalitarian state. Communism's philosophy of education admits no God, no spiritual world, no eternal truth, no changeless moral principles established by the will of God, etc. How then can democracy be superior when those imparting basic principles are themselves convinced of the relativity of values and absence of absolute criteria for truth and morality? Henry asks,

> In a world in which nothing is permanently true, in which values are subject to change, why should the

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[61] Henry, "Moral Values in Public Education," p. 15.

[62] Ibid.

> enduring truth and values of democracy be assumed? If democracy is preferable to totalitarianism, must it not be so as the bearer of truth and goodness which endure, and not as a phase of relativistic interpretation of life?[63]

Again, Carl Henry calls American education back to God and an abiding norm of divine truth. Addressing himself to the plea of American educators for common schools over against the fragmentation of private institutions of learning, Henry comments,

> What is necessary for the survival of democracy is not common schools, but common values, and, more than that, a common dedication to unchanging truth and ethical principles. Democracy cannot flourish in isolation especially the reality of a supernatural Creator and Sustainer of human rights and duties. To keep democracy alive, it must be "under God"; with government, as with all else, it is true that where there is no vision of God, the people perish.[64]

Therefore, Carl Henry strongly favors the return of Bible reading to public school classrooms. Idealistic and humanitarian values, indefiniteness about religious principles, vagueness about concepts of God, still leaves public education in the throes of secularism. Is vacillation over binding supernatural truth and value really an improvement over thoroughgoing secularism? Is there any real advantage to vague principles over that type of education limited in content to this world only, devoid of even the slightest allusion to the spiritual? Is an agnostic foundation for educational philosophy really very different than atheism?

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[63] Henry, "Christian Education and Our American Schools," p.3.

[64] Ibid.

Surely one can see that secularistic irreligion has the same hue and color of sectarianism which has become the object of criticism among educators opposed to religious teaching in the public schools.

This leads to Carl Henry's third reply to educators who would maintain religious neutrality in public education. Henry is convinced that Bible reading and devotional exercises in public schools do not violate the principle of separation of church and state anymore than avowed secularistic control of philosophy and curriculum of public learning. True, Protestant, Catholic or Jew cannot use the public classroom for evangelistic purposes. Neither atheist nor theist nor die-hard humanists have that right. Addressing himself to the Supreme Court's decision for "devotional neutrality," Henry frankly admits that public schools were never intended to instill devotional attitudes in the young. No one believes, reckons Henry, that assembly or classroom religious observances were inaugurated to replace the responsibility of the home and church in this area, or to compensate for the absence of religion in the home. "Public schools do not exist either to mediate Christian faith or to proselyte for sectarian committment," says Henry.[65] But then he asks, "Is this to mean, however, that no opportunity be provided for a

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[65]Carl F. H. Henry, "Religion in the Public Schools," Christianity Today, VII (May 10, 1963), 31.

serious academic pursuit of the content of religion?"[66] His position is that religion can be taught, and the cultural significance of the Hebrew-Christian faith can be applied to all realms of learning and life, without evangelizing students for a sectarian committment. Henry is convinced that many teachers in public education have accomplished these ends very ably in the interest of competent teaching and thorough learning, all within the scope of the proper separation of church and state.

In addition to the issue of church and state with respect to public education, Carl Henry furnishes additional guidelines for responsibility of the Church as an institution and Christians as individuals toward the state. In broad outline, Henry says, first, Christians should pray for their rulers that preaching and teaching of the Word may be unhindered in a climate of law and safeguards for freedom and peace in society. Second, the Church must proclaim publicly the divinely intended role of civil government. More than preaching political duty and morality to its own members, the Church should lead men to understand govern ment as the guardian of justice. Related to this, the Church is compelled to condemn legal infractions as crimes against the State, and must emphasize the culpability of offenders and their need to repent. Third, the Church must call upon government itself,

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[66] Ibid.

and address even pagan rulers, encouraging them under divine mandate to faithfully maintain order and justice. Encumbent with this duty is the obligation also to criticize those who violate, misapply or refuse to enforce the law.[67]

Beyond these general principles, Henry is very emphatic when he urges participation of individual Christians in political life. Fully aware that traditionally fundamentalism was extra cautious to avoid what is termed "meddling in politics" on part of the Church, Carl Henry asserts, to the contrary, that Christians have both the privilege and duty to engage in the political realm. The objective certainly is not to use political opportunity to evangelize or transform society, but to preserve that which is valuable in the present social order. More specifically, Christians have a preservative function to retain a significant role for religion in politics, that is, to employ religious priorities and spiritual motivations in order to sustain political dedication. Furthermore, preserving the good in society is a worthwhile objective for the Church. She is remiss if total control of education and legislation is yielded to secular agencies.[68]

Political duty performed by the individual Christian is an extension of his general obligation to society. Henry

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[67]Henry, Aspects of Christian Social Ethics, pp. 81-82.

[68]Ibid., pp. 72-75.

alerts Christians to opportunities which present themselves in rights of free speech and a free press. These avenues of communication enable fullest expression of evangelical thought. Neglecting such opportunities to shape community conviction and public opinion, Henry deems civic delinquency.[69] Moreover, the occasion to be a leaven in society is compounded through politics. Certainly political office should only represent the broadest community of interest. No political officeholder has the right to represent his religious group alone or to seek political implementation of sectarian objectives. For this reason, Carl Henry is opposed to establishment of a Christian political party.[70] Yet, Christians have an obligation to seize political initiative. Their role in the body politic is described by Henry when urging young evangelicals to shed fundamentalistic obscurantism in order to pursue even political vocations. He says,

> Evangelical Christians face the obligation of rethinking the structure, nature, and the task of the modern state. The Christian view, therefore, requires both a thorough understanding of the biblical principles of government and active judgments in political affairs. And it will be registered most conspicuously in a democratic society if young Christians, instead of being taught to avoid politics like alcholholism and adultery, are encouraged to regard a career in government fully as legitimate a Christian vocation as medicine or missions.[71]

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[69] Ibid., p. 131.

[70] Ibid., pp. 139-45.

[71] Ibid., p. 132.

To those "sophisticated" Christians who shy away from political affairs because of problems accompanying such activity, Henry offers this gentle rebuke,

> Whatever the problems may vex contemporary Protestantism in its battle over legitimate or illegitimate involvement in political affairs, a neglect of political duty by Christians is inexcusable.[72]

This is not to say that the Church as an institution should ever engage in politics. It may not. Neither should the Church hang on the coat tail of government officials seeking state power and funds to execute measures of societal reform which rightly belong under the purview of the Church only. Since when do influential clergy of the land and church lobbies assume that the machinations of big government can be employed to accomplish church objectives in social action? How can church leaders be satisfied that federal and state welfare programs are now vicariously carrying to the ends of society the mission of Christ to the whole man? By rationalization, the church voids her own responsibility to society when she accepts, encourages and even fosters government programs of social welfare and reform.

Nevertheless, as Henry observes, this merger of government and ecclesiastical leaders into a "social welfare" partnership is becoming a significant feature of American life. This unfortunate commingling of religion and government along

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[72] Ibid., p. 130.

avenues of social action is due, says Henry, to a misunderstanding of the respective roles and ministrations of church and state. Already, Henry enunciated the biblical assignment of justice to the state and love to the Church.[73] This principle is on many counts falsified today. The controlling conviction resulting from a blend of church and state social interests is that the state's ministrations now assume the character of "benevolent justice." By promoting expanded government welfare services and by infusing spiritual content into these activities, the Church unites "love and justice."[74]

Moreover, the Church's involvement in this unwarranted synthesis is due to theological error. Whatever responsibility is shared by the State in this affair, the Church cannot easily conceal her own theological perversion of biblical distinctions for the two realms. Theologically, the problem is one of subsuming divine attributes of righteousness and justice with divine love as the core of God's being. While Protestant liberalism had discounted God's wrath by losing or submerging God's righteousness in his love, Henry shows, that, in spite of Barth's aversion to the modernist erosion of God's wrath in the New Testament, Barth contends that apart from grace God's wrath has no reality in either Old or New Testaments. Neo-orthodoxy, in Henry's opinion, merely

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[73] Supra, p. 168.

[74] Henry, Aspects of Christian Social Ethics, p. 165.

modifies and does not rectify the error of liberalism. Relating righteousness and wrath inadequately to the core of God's being, it still subordinates them to God's love.[75]

Citing from Karl Barth, Church and State [(London: SCM Press, 1939), p. 32], Henry notes Barth's "Christological" basis of law and social justice, asserting that love and justice must be understood as having their source in the love revealed in Christ; and Barth asserts, furthermore, that the whole world is an aspect of Christ's kingdom, making the world reflect the lordship of Christ, to be ruled by the Gospel.[76] Addressing himself to Barth and his neo-orthodox followers, Carl Henry questions whether Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed a wholly new concept of law and justice sharing a mutual source and content from the Gospel. Even the Old Testament, Jesus' "theological inheritance," as Henry calls it, hardly depicts God's essential nature, identifying justice in the divine nature as love. Henry acknowledges Christ's interest in the promotion of justice and righteousness to emphasize his mission of redemptive mercy; but He did not attribute a redemptive function to Old Testament commandments. The Sermon on the Mount reinforces our Lord's demands for justice. And he subjected himself to juridical procedures at his own trial before Pontius Pilate.[77] From this, Henry

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[75] Ibid., pp. 147-49.

[76] Ibid., pp. 149-50.

[77] Ibid., pp. 151-52.

concludes that the life and teachings of Jesus are consistent with the biblical view that justice is an immutable divine quality, equally a part of God's being as divine love, and not reducible to a mere mode of divine benevolence.[78] Furthermore, Henry stands in agreement with those theologians who connect law and justice fundamentally with the ordinances of creation and preservation rather than with the order of redemption. The authority of the State issues from the activity of Christ in creation and preservation, not from the activity of Christ in redemption.[79] To Carl Henry, it is the anomaly of our present social structure that the Church should assign agape to the State as a government duty, and make agape a citizen's rightful expectation from the state. "Is not the State's obligation in preserving justice to provide what is due (as corresponding to the rights of men) rather than to implement agape by acts of mercy or love?" asks Henry.[80] Finally, confusion of justice and benevolence, even if unwittingly, leans in the direction of totalitarianism. While love as a government function would seem in theory to prevent the State from assuming a role of coercion, it actually becomes a handmaid of government compulsion, and rather than preserving, it threatens basic freedoms under God.[81]

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[78] Ibid., p. 146.

[79] Ibid., p. 154.

[80] Ibid., p. 166.

[81] Ibid., p. 160.

For the Church to promote humanitarianism by legislative action, or to have visions of using government as a transforming agency to produce a social utopia, or to project the Kingdom of God as essentially politico-economic in character, is detrimental to both church and state, according to Carl Henry. In such confusion, Henry says,

> the Christian religion neglects its distinctive message and its distinctive dynamism for social regeneration, and the state loses its proper passion for justice in sentimental theories of benevolence that simply tend to substitute the special privileges of one class or group for another.[82]

Again, we are reminded by Carl Henry that the Church's mission is primarily spiritual. As an organized movement the Church must not allow its own energies to deteriorate into political activity, but must encourage individual Christians to fulfill their political duties as spiritual responsibilities.[83] Political activity dare never displace spiritual dynamics, as Henry advises,

> Church members will thus be put on guard against those who, despairing of the relevance of the Church's evangelistic mission to the political and social situation, trust political power instead to usher in a Christian society through legislative reforms.[84]

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[82] Ibid., p. 79.

[83] Ibid., p. 105.

[84] Ibid., pp. 106-7.

New Vistas For Evangelicalism

The distinctive role of church and state is only one of many contemporary issues affording Christians an opportunity to vocalize their witness to a world view based upon God's redemptive dealings with men, specially revealed and interpreted through the Logos made flesh and the inscripturated Word, Old and New Testaments. Carl Henry believes evangelicalism to be the only movement in modern times possessing the dynamic to adequately proclaim these convictions and bring all of life and culture under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Evangelicals do well, however, to seriously consider Henry's appraisal of their movement from the standpoint of preparedness to confront the world with a gospel claim. Though theologically equipped for the mission, that is, by comparison with classic liberalism or neo-supernaturalism, the question arises, is the evangelical movement prepared in a practical way to storm the intellectual and cultural bastiles of contemporary society with the Word of life?

Produce scholarly theological works

Carl Henry performs a genuine service when he calls attention to major deficiencies among evangelicals together with suggested remedial measures. First, evangelicalism could vitalize its witness with increased production of scholarly theological literature. Ever since men like James Orr, Benjamin Warfield, Gresham Machen and others of like stature

put down their pens, evangelicals have been known for a paucity of theological works both biblically sound and scholarly respectable. Serving for a number of years as editor and compiler of the National Association of Evangelicals book list, Carl Henry was in unique position to evaluate literature from evangelical pens. In 1947 he noted that evangelicalism had not yet expressed itself in that type of scholarly and conservatively critical volume which can be set directly into the stream of contemporary thought. And he called for a united effort among evangelicals to launch an evangelical assault in literature on a scholarly basis.[85] Again, in 1950, Henry gave favorable mention to the Reformed series of commentaries directed by Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse, and Frank Gaebelein's Christian Education in a Democracy as examples of better evangelical scholarship. In the same review, however, he noted that in the main, evangelical works had not yet come to grapple with current theological and cultural problem centers with a life-death sense of urgency.[86] Observing that a greater volume of Bible commentaries published the previous year had come from circles with neo-orthodox sympathies, Henry comments,

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[85]Carl F. H. Henry, "Another Year in Books," United Evangelical Action, VI (June 15, 1947), 12.

[86]Carl F. H. Henry, "The Year in Books," United Evangelical Action, IX (March 15, 1950), 9.

> It is nothing less than tragic that such studies are not issuing from the evangelical movement, with its more adequate view of scriptural revelation, and its fidelity to such Biblical doctrines as the propitiatory atonement.[87]

Again, Henry calls upon the evangelical movement to clothe the truth in the best garments of scholarly acceptance by the intellectual world.

Upgrade academic standing of colleges and universities

This will not happen, however, unless evangelicals provide learning centers of academic excellence. When Carl Henry, himself a seminary president, scans the entire field of Christian higher education, he sees a host of small and medium sized religious schools and colleges which often lack proper accreditation for proper rapport with the general academic world. This is the second notable and glaring deficiency of the evangelical movement, according to Carl Henry. As a Christian educator, he is vitally interested in this problem. On a number of occasions he has appealed for a Christian university of academic excellence in all disciplines. Already twenty years ago Henry observed that many conservative schools were preoccupied with producing foreign missionaries and pulpiteers, which in itself is a worthy occupation, but wholly inadequate to send intelligent and capable young Christians into the mainstream of American life. Henry attributes

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[87] Ibid.

much of the dearth of evangelical scholarship and publishing to these same colleges and seminaries which hardly afforded opportunity for sound scholarship necessary to produce competent literature. But then, the growth of evangelical colleges into top rank institutions was inhibited by the fact that supporting churches considered dollars spent on foreign missions a wiser investment than Christian higher education.[88]

Moreover, the foremost objective of many Christian colleges appears to be cultivation of a certain piety, accomplished by screening out all secular influences which prevent students from grappling vigorously with ideas alien and contrary to evangelical views in order that the evangelical position may stand out superior to competing views. Those institutions which neglect to relate the biblical world view as the real alternate to live modern options, and content themselves instead with preservation of private devotion and sheltering students from indulgences of the flesh and gratification of the senses, have simply duplicated virtues which should have been acquired at home and in church.[89] They have not risen to the higher plateau of aggressive Christianity in the world of ideas, the very area where the Christian college

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[88]Henry, "Another Year in Books," pp. 12-13.

[89]Carl F. H. Henry, "Are the Christian Colleges Succeeding?," Christian Herald, LXXXIII (November 1960), 37.

should excel. Speaking of fundamentalist codes of behavior on campuses, Henry observes how many fundamentalist teachers only attempt to throw up pockets of resistance to the world instead of elaborating a Christian world view. Then he says,

> However much smokelessness and dancelessness may predominate on campus, evangelical education has not seriously pursued its primary task until the academic community grapples with higher issues than the mere repudiation of wide reaches of the cultural setting.[90]

Again, Carl Henry takes to task that tendency of too many church related colleges retreating from the world and thereby weakening rather than strengthening the fibre of Christian witness. He asks, "Are we concerned to eke out our own academic survival as a Christian community? To maintain a mere holding-operation for the last scattered and surviving remnants of the evangelical view in educational circles?"[91]

Still another weakness in many Christian colleges is that practice of isolating religion in a separate department alongside a thoroughly secular interpretation of the other subjects. Many schools, observes Carl Henry, are distinguished from secular universities only by chapel services (in many instances an option among students) a course or two in Bible instruction, and a moral code which perhaps has some resemblance

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[90]Carl F. H. Henry, "Morality on The Campus," Christianity Today, VII (May 10, 1963), 28.

[91]Carl F. H. Henry, "The Power of Truth," Christianity Today, VII (September 13, 1963), 24.

to the biblical ethic. Then again, other institutions regard their church relatedness as a liability, a factor which hardly leaves a positive estimate of religion in the minds of either faculty or student body.[92] Still other weaknesses are apparent on some Christian campuses. Some institutions simply wave any required subscription of faculty members to a theological norm in the interest of academic freedom, and the practice of some administrators is known as "ventilating" their faculties, that is, bringing to their schools unbelieving faculty members as a supposed stimulus to intellectual ferment on the campus.[93] If the Christian college has no deeper religious concern than to inculcate humanistic values in Western culture, if the Christian school can only add a religion department to an otherwise secular curriculum, then Carl Henry believes the Church should save her shekels. The big state universities can accomplish these meager goals handily.

What then is the distinctive role of the Christian college? The question is vital according to Carl Henry. Indeed, Christian educators must assume responsibilities in public schools and colleges as aforesaid; but Henry recognizes that whatever gains are made in public education, the result will not compare to the equivalent of substantial Christian

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[92]Carl F. H. Henry, "The Plight of the Church College," Christianity Today, IX (May 21, 1965), 17.

[93]Ibid., IX, 17-18.

education. The Christian institution for higher learning is essential, but it must be liberated of inherent weaknesses such as those mentioned above. The first step in the right direction is for Christian education to be committed to truth in Jesus Christ and his lordship over all. Because the ultimate reality of God is revealed in His son, Jesus Christ, "in whom all things consist," this Lord of all, this Redeemer and Creator, the Logos in whom all general and special revelation inhere, must be related to all disciplines of learning.[94] Any vacillation or equivocation on this point is not worthy the name Christian education. Henry says,

> To shut out the illumination of God's disclosure of himself in Christ, not simply from the world of religion, but also of philosophy, of science, of literature and art, is blindness indeed.[95]

To summarize once again, the truth of Christ demands more than isolation within a pious curriculum devoid of real interest in our world. Neither should Christ, the truth, be confined to religion courses and chapel hours in the wider context of secular learning, largely indifferent to his lordship. Education that is Christian believes that the Logos is constitutive of all reality; therefore, true Christian education will encompass the study of all reality and at every point exalt

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[94]Carl F. H. Henry, Giving a Reason for Our Hope (Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1949), p. 37.

[95]Carl F. H. Henry, "Christian Education and Culture," Christianity Today, III (November 10, 1958), 4-5.

Jesus Christ as Lord. Practically speaking, this means the Logos of biblical revelation will encounter a relevant contrast to contemporary non-biblical outlooks in every course of study; indeed, such Christian education demands comparison of the ancient, medieval, modern, and post-modern minds (and the evaluation of these diverse perspectives by the norm of biblical revelation) in literature, history, political science, anthropology, and so on, no less than in philosophy.[96]

Once more Carl Henry emphasizes the need for a Christian university with a curriculum patterned after a philosophy of Christian outlook described above. Christian elementary schools and even Christian high schools have their place, but the long range effectiveness of these institutions will suffer serious limitations unless supported at the higher level. At present that support is minimal. We should recognize, says Henry,

> The plain fact is that if Christianity does not shape the university world, the university world will always frustrate the climaxing influences of Christian social ethics; if Christian education at the top is hostile or indifferent to the Christian outlook, the expansion of Christian doctrine and life through all gradations of society is hindered.[97]

Indeed, survival of the Christian outlook among moderns cannot be maintained by the present fragmentation of denominational and sectarian efforts, cumbered with the weaknesses exposed

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[96]Henry, "Are the Christian Colleges Succeeding?," pp. 37-39.

[97]Henry, "Christian Responsibility in Education," p. 14.

above. The issue of Christian education for evangelicals is put most succinctly in Henry's dictum,

> The need for a great Christian university remains, in fact, one of the indispensable priorities of this century, if an adequate evangelical leadership is to be rallied in the world of learning.[98]

Someone has intimated, control the thought centers of the nations, and you control the world. Carl Henry recognizes how strategic universities and colleges are in the western world. He appeals to evangelicals everywhere for a united effort in founding a truly great Christian university, an institution where Christ permeates every section of learning in a diverse curriculum of academic excellence.

Foster ecumenical cooperation

A third and final vista posed by Carl Henry for evangelicals of our time is ecumenical cooperation so necessary if the Christian world view is to have an impact on the modern mind. While theologically conservative bodies have reacted negatively to inclusivistic church movements, Henry cautions against isolation with attending perils of divisiveness and disruption which militates against proper fellowship with other believers.[99] Chiding evangelicals for a lack of leadership along ecumenical lines, Henry says,

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[98]Carl F. H. Henry, "The Triumph of Christ's Gospel?," Christianity Today, VII (February 15, 1963), 28.

[99]Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology, p. 77.

> To deplore the theological inclusivism that tries to overcome the fragmentation of Protestantism as a whole without earnestly seeking to overcome the proliferated witness of the evangelical segment is to remain spiritually vulnerable. It is time for evangelicals to find their ecumenical posture, and to set forth a doctrine of biblical unity which will preserve the vitality of the Gospel without compromising the witness of the Church.[100]

Yet, Carl Henry is leary of any movement that is highly structured with a view toward one great church when denominational lines have been successfully eliminated. Instead of erasing denominational lines, Henry seeks to abolish petty competition and jealousy among evangelicals so that cooperation may occur across denominational lines in the interest of a united witness to the world. Writing in the summer of 1965, Henry was looking to the forthcoming World Congress on Evangelism as an open door to ecumenical relations among evangelicals with evangelicals. He anticipated the Congress as an opportunity for denominational and interdenominational efforts to be coordinated in many lands and cities. He insists, however, that evangelicals are not intent on creating an inclusivist structure. Rather, they see renewal of the Church of Christ as something spiritual more than a structural alteration.[101]

Calling evangelicals to more aggressive ecumenical expression, Carl Henry also furnishes words of caution with

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[100]Carl F. H. Henry, "Recasting the Ecumenical Posture," Christianity Today, VII (October 26, 1962), 24.

[101]Henry, "A Door Swings Open," p. 25.

respect to the larger inclusivistic ecumenical bodies. One thing is clear to Henry at the outset. In spite of an all embracing gesture to visibly express the unity of all Christians, ecumenical leadership is by and large indifferent to fundamentalism. The voice of American ecumenicity is predominantly one of a liberal tone; and fundamentalist forces have been ostracized or, at best tolerated, in spite of the fact that American evangelicals are powerful both spiritually and numerically.[102] Prior to the Amsterdam conclave of the World Council of Churches, Henry observed a decided antipathy for fundamentalism on part of the Council's study commission. He cites a comment by Dr. G. Ernest Wright in the January, 1949 issue of Interpretation where Wright discusses the problem of biblical interpretation confronting the council. Whereas the commission was divided on many counts, the first great affirmation of this body centered in hostility to fundamentalism. Henry quotes Wright as saying that the vast majority of non-Roman Catholic constituents in the World Council tend to consider fundamentalism a serious Christian

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[102]Carl F. H. Henry, "Organizational Unity and Spiritual Union," Moody Monthly, XLIX (July 1949), 776. While the Federal Council of Churches numbered 26,000,000 Protestants in 1949, Henry observed that 15,000,000 Protestants were not represented by this body, among them the Southern Baptist Convention numbering 6,079,000 members and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and other states with a membership of 1,400,000. This says nothing of millions more within the Council who still hold strong evangelical convictions. Carl F. H. Henry, "Evangelicals and the Ecumenical Movement," Moody Monthly, XLIX (May, 1949), 630.

heresy. The pre-Amsterdam conferences of this commission, studying the authority and interpretation of the Scriptures, was unanimous in its rejection of fundamentalism.[103]

More serious than its bias against fundamentalism is ecumenism's doctrinal ambiguity and misconception of the nature of the Church. Early ecumenical councils, observes Henry, were concerned primarily with one thing, the establishment of doctrinal truth. And this, in turn, made unity a possibility. By contrast, the modern ideal of a world church is coupled with doctrinal tolerance and fluidity. Unity is a priority over doctrinal truth; and, Henry asks, "Can we expect an unambiguous evangel from an ecclesiastical, theological and political polygot?"[104] Movement toward ultimate inclusiveness and simultaneous indifference to doctrinal soundness places ecumenism in the awkward situation of advocating cooperation on a broader base than New Testament moorings for fellowship. There was no indication in 1949, Henry observed, that the ecumenical movement was interested in a return to the Bible as the Word of God in the sense in which historic Christianity and the Reformation championed it. Thus, in Henry's opinion, any doctrinal position which may be affirmed as the vital basis of world church union is void of a right to claim finality and ultimacy.[105]

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[103]Carl F. H. Henry, "The 'Heresy' of Fundamentalism," Watchman-Examiner, XXXVII (September 15, 1949), 918.

[104]Henry, "Organizational Unity and Spiritual Union," p. 777.

[105]Ibid.

Henry examines the World Council of Churches' affirmation, "Jesus Christ is God and Savior." He lauds this statement asserting Christ as Lord. It is a powerful antithesis to the totalitarian state and a liberation of the conscience from the claim of state absolutism. Furthermore, Henry recognizes that the way to Christian unity lies through christology. Nevertheless, he observes that this confession is only skeletal as a basis for virile Christianity. It is not even the entire New Testament christology. Observe, it does not even include the elements of confession necessary for salvation, namely, that Christ died for our sins and is risen again. (cf. Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). Therefore, Henry concludes that this formula of the World Council of Churches does not properly represent the Gospel of Christ.[106]

When discussions of unity on the basis of doctrinal consensus in the area of faith and order met with frustration, Henry observes that a new approach was launched at the Oberlin Conference of the Council in 1957. Discovery of unity was sought through the Church's mission rather than from a base of common faith or a common order or structure. Of this

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[106]Carl F. H. Henry, "Oberlin: Unity and Mission," Christianity Today, I (September 30, 1957), 22. Earlier, in 1949, Henry observed how the phrase "heilsgeschichte" or "salvation history" was the rallying point for ecumenicity. But the movement was comprised of competing and vastly different notions of just what "salvation history" really means. Nevertheless, most constituents agreed that the term was more or less a modification of the evangelical view of divine revelation and redemption. Henry, "Organizational Unity and Spiritual Union," 777.

tactical shift from a doctrinal basis for fellowship to absorption in the Church's mission, Henry asks some pointed questions,

> Can the mission of the Church actually be defined without adequate reference to faith and order? . . . The notion that mission can supercede theology in building the ecumenical movement seems to place the Church's mission in a non-theological setting. Is such a mission a sufficient criterion for unity? Can mission in fact be detached from concerns of doctrine? Of order? Is not the new WCC emphasis vulnerable to the constant threat of basic dichotomies? Dare we interpret Ephesians 4, 5 in the Revised Ecumenical mood: "One Lord . . . (one mission) . . . one faith . . . one baptism? Is this an adequate reflection of New Testament unity?[107]

On the basis of these searching questions, Henry poses two final and trenchant issues for the World Council of Churches and for that matter, all proponents of world church union when he says,

> Did the early church understand its unity in terms of action rather than of being, of purpose rather than nature? Is the WCC engaged in recovering the past unity of the apostolic Church, or is it shaping its own novel and experimental unity?[108]

World ecumenism, in Henry's opinion, persists in a great contradiction. It is that anomaly of attempting to give the world a sure word, a changeless gospel, while not exhibiting an adequate authority whereby this surety and changelessness can be guaranteed. Without this objective authority of the

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[107] Henry, "Oberlin: Unity and Mission," p. 21.

[108] Ibid.

Scripture, world ecumenism cannot be a fellowship of the Church in an apostolic sense, and thus betrays itself as primarily political and organizational rather than spiritual in complexion.[109] Repeatedly, Henry rejects the idea that visible church structures are to be equated with the true Church.

The question remains, "To what extent can evangelical Christians participate in such inclusivist organizations as the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches?" The answer to this question is a matter for each Christian to decide for himself. Evangelicals who are already members of these ecumenical bodies are encouraged by Henry to act as strong witnesses to New Testament Christianity.[110] He adds, however, this restraint. Evangelicals should not join in the social betterment campaigns of such organizations when the group has ruled out a redemptive reference as a live option for achievement of good ends.[111] Furthermore, evangelicals should assert themselves, speaking out for foundations upon fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures. In the National Council of Churches, for example, evangelicals must persist in calling upon the Commission on

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[109]Henry, "Organizational Unity and Spiritual Union," pp. 777, 818.

[110]Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology, p. 81.

[111]Henry, Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism, p. 78.

Faith and Order to judge theological and ecclesiological issues from the standpoint of Scripture.[112]

This leads to a final question, "What is Carl Henry's theology of fellowship?" Evaluating the Oberlin World Council and its change of direction from structured faith and order, to dynamic missions as a basis for unity, Henry states what he believes to be the real issues in any discussion of ecumenical endeavor, "What is the basis of Christian authority? What is the relation of divine revelation to reason? What is the status of Scripture as a bearer of revealed truth or doctrines?"[113] Carl Henry refuses to take stock in any ecumenical rally around the Lordship of Christ or testimony of the Holy Spirit or mission dynamic apart from common consensus that the Holy Scriptures are God's inspired and authoritative revelation to man. Without the authority of Scripture, Christology and pneumatology and evangelism become doctrinal non sequiturs, the ground for subjective theological expression too easily adaptible to ecumenical inclusivism. In a generation perhaps unparalleled for its emphasis on Christian unity, Carl Henry remains frank and outspoken in his call for a return to the Bible. He says,

> The one great watershed of evangelical thought is the Holy Bible . . . . For it is in the recovery of the great realities and verities of biblical

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[112]Henry, Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology, p. 84.

[113]Henry, "Oberlin: Unity and Mission," p. 23.

> revelation that the church in our century will find its true unity, learn its true nature, and accomplish its true mission. . . . The most hopeful sign on the theological horizon is the renewal of interest in a theology of the Word of God.[114]

Elsewhere Henry demonstrates how the loss of the biblical norm leads to substitution of an ecclesiastical norm, which is sometimes confessional, and in other camps, ecumenical. For a truly confessional church as well as a church bearing a lively ecumenical mission and outreach, restoration of normative biblical doctrine is imperative.[115]

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[114]Carl F. H. Henry, "Theology, Evangelism, Ecumenism," Christianity Today, II (January 20, 1958), 23.

[115]Carl F. H. Henry, "Which Way for Theology in the Near Future?," Christianity Today, IX (November 6, 1964), 10.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The mainstream of Carl Henry's theology reflects the passion of a Christian thinker for his world of modern men. Carl Henry is an evangel to the intellectual and theological nerve centers of the twentieth century. He is a churchman speaking to the Church; but something more, Carl Henry is a Christian thinker addressing himself to the entire western world at a crucial time in history.

What is Carl Henry saying to his world? This study provides a succinct but thorough distillation of his message. The initial chapter set forth the substance of Henry's theology. A second chapter presented Henry's concept of Christian world view as the only alternative to that naturalistic bias which grips the modern mind. In this regard, Henry exposed the weaknesses of both classic liberalism and neo-supernaturalism as representatives of the Christian outlook. A final chapter posed Carl Henry's concerns for the contemporary Church as she proclaims the Gospel and sets forth a Christian view of man and his world. With these themes in mind, it remains for us to summarize them in greater detail.

Central to Henry's thought is God's self-disclosure in special revelation. This doctrine, according to Henry, is

axiomatic for Christianity. It distinguishes the Christian faith from pagan theism of antiquity and prevails in modern times as a distinctive contrast to naturalism. Moreover, Carl Henry believes theology should be evaluated from the standpoint of integrity to this doctrine of special revelation. Furthermore, the witness of the Church should reflect deep conviction that God reveals himself in a manner more particular than general revelation in nature, history and man's conscience.

What, then, has Carl Henry said about special revelation? Foremost is its redemptive character. Because general revelation, since the Fall, was obscured and distorted by sin, God initiated a particular revelation of himself with redemptive purposes. The soteriological nature of special revelation centers in Jesus Christ, the Logos made flesh. Already in the Old Testament God intervened in the course of human history through special divine acts as part of his redemptive plan to save the human race. These divine interventions of old reach a climax in the incarnation, atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the supreme disclosure of God in the flesh.

In addition to divine acts, special revelation is disclosed in the Old and New Testaments. God created man a rational being, and God communicates to him in such a way that man's intellectual capacity receives divine truths even if their deeper meaning and mystery remain beyond full

comprehension by the human mind. The Scriptures, then, are as much special revelation as God's divine acts. While Henry is careful not to equate the Bible and special revelation per se, he observes that Scripture is the divine rationale which gives meaning and significance to God's activity in history.

We should understand, however, that the authority of Scripture rests upon the fact that the written Word is inspired by God. The function of Scripture as a witness to God's special divine activity, important as that witness may be, is not the sole ground for biblical authority according to Carl Henry. The writings of prophets and apostles were divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit. Henry believes that the stature of these writings as special revelation can best be expressed by such terms as "verbal inspiration" and "inerrancy."[1] Henry is convinced that these terms do not involve one in theorizing or dogmatizing about the mechanics of inspiration. To arbitrarily dispose of these terms might leave the impression that Scripture is less than reliable and divinely authoritative.

Carl Henry freely recognizes that his views on special revelation are alien to a large segment of modern thought and

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[1]The authority of Scripture for Carl Henry rests not only on bare claims to inspiration and inerrancy, but also encompasses the Spirit's testimony through the written Word, giving witness to Christ, the Living Word.

contemporary theology as well. As Henry observes, the prevailing mood of modern man is one skeptical of the supernatural. Beginning with the Renaissance, both philosophy and science were gradually severed from a revelational context. Set apart from revelation, these disciplines were thought to hold the final key to mysteries of the universe and man. Unfortunately, the scientific method received prime impetus from the purely naturalistic studies and conclusions of Charles Darwin. Thereafter, many scientists and thinkers arbitrarily dogmatized naturalistic viewpoints in the name of science. Widespread recognition of evolutionary hypotheses is a case in point. The influence of such thinkers as Hume, Comte, and Dewey only contributed to that rising tendency to separate man from the context of spiritual reality, binding him to a space-time universe.

That naturalistic bias became manifest in a spirit of optimism which reached a climax around the turn of the twentieth century. But that optimistic spirit and confidence in the perfectibility of man confronted a serious challenge in two world conflicts the first half of this century. Disillusioned modern man went about groping for meaning to life beyond the space-time bounds of the natural world. The implications of naturalism for cosmology, anthropology, morality and society were suddenly dissatisfactory to man in the post war era. Henry demonstrates how philosophical solutions were equally inadequate. Neither idealism, classic or modern, nor

existentialism were competent to fill the void. Moreover, these movements shared a common hostility for special revelation of God in the living Word and the written Word, a factor which eventually leads them back to a naturalistic outlook.

From a theological perspective, classic liberalism proved to be just as impotent. Even when its theology of divine immanence was tempered here and there with strains of idealistic thought, liberalism could not bring to bear upon the heart of man the power of God's self-disclosure with redemptive purposed for mankind. In its most positive expressions, nineteenth century liberalism shared the Kantian and Hegelian antipathy for special revelation.

Classic liberalism, however, was attacked by the reactionary crisis theology of the early 1920's. Breaking with the Kantian cleavage between the superphenomenal and human intellection, the new theology asserted that God does speak to humanity through special revelation. Nevertheless, Henry notes how Barth and Brunner fell short of historic Christian confidence in divinely revealed doctrines. Neo-supernaturalism's confinement of revelation to an encounter experience versus the traditional view that God's revelation is propositional truth seems to be the crux of the issue. The idea that revelation is divine truth given once-for-all and transmitted by prophets and apostles appears to be offensive to neo-supernaturalism.

Neo-supernaturalism's confinement of revelation to super-history opens a Pandora's box of difficulties. The Scriptures lose their infallibility; and the witness of the Spirit through a fallible Scripture, in Henry's opinion, is out of the question. How does neo-supernaturalism's Christ-encounter hold abiding significance apart from a divinely authoritative written Word? Confining revelation to God's encounter and man's corresponding experience related to that confrontation, threatens to hurl the entire divine-human encounter into a sea of subjectivism.

Carl Henry is outspoken when passing judgment on both classic liberalism and neo-supernaturalism. Both theological disciplines render themselves incompetent to adequately and powerfully proclaim Christianity to modern man. They are disqualified on the basis of either wholesale negation of God's revelatory activity or an unbiblical view of special revelation. Still influenced by Kantian and Hegelian thought patterns, both schools of theology prove unsatisfactory from the standpoint of historic Christian doctrine. According to Carl Henry, no view of special revelation can adequately represent God's redemptive self-disclosure unless it is totally separated from non-revelational presuppositions.

The only alternative for contemporary theology, in Henry's opinion, is a return to that Reformation emphasis of God's central revelation in Christ, the Logos made flesh, also acknowledging special revelation embodied in the inspired

Scriptures of Old and New Testaments. Neo-supernaturalism has failed to bring liberal Protestantism around to this position. Therefore, Carl Henry looks to the evangelical movement for a dynamic witness to Christ in modern times. Henry turns in this direction because evangelicals believe the full complement of God's special revelation, holding the entire Scriptures to be the written Word of God. The Scriptures furnish evangelicals with divine authority to bring cosmology, anthropology, morality, social issues, science and every other useful art under the lordship of Christ.

Evangelicalism, however, should be distinguished from fundamentalism. Carl Henry is frankly disenchanted with fundamentalism on many counts. He chides this twentieth century development within historic evangelicalism for eschatological extremes, myopic missionary endeavors which fail to challenge the intellectual world with Gospel imperatives, and for a distorted social outlook. Carl Henry pleads with evangelicals to adopt a wider view of the evangelistic task to include obligations of the Church to social issues so apparent today. He calls upon evangelicals to extend the lordship of Christ to the university level. Evangelical Christianity should enter the mainstream of theological scholarship. And Carl Henry urges ecumenical cooperation among evangelicals to accomplish these objectives.

Conclusion

No attempt has been made by this paper to fit Carl Henry into the mold of a confessional Lutheran. If Henry's theology crosses the path of Lutheranism at several points of contact, well and good. Needless to say, however, it would be grossly unfair both to Henry and Lutheran theology if our study drew parallels which do not exist.

On the other hand, Carl Henry should not be dismissed by the casual observer as a fundamentalist in a negative manner of speaking. This is said because some Lutherans are heard to lump all conservative Christians outside the Lutheran Church into one large camp bearing the label, fundamentalists. What a thorough lack of discernment! Particularly are those conservative Christians standing outside the pale of the prominent ecumenical organizations vulnerable to the indiscreet label, fundamentalist.

Lutherans want to know, "Is Carl Henry a fundamentalist?" The answer to that question is twofold, "Yes and no." If by fundamentalism one means that movement within historic Christianity which expounds and proclaims and defends biblical doctrines championed particularly in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, then Carl Henry may be called a fundamentalist; and, for that matter, confessional Lutherans shouldnot be ashamed to wear such a cloak of loyalty to the central teachings of the Christian faith.

We realize, however, that fundamentalism bears some decided negative connotations in our times. No one is more aware of this fact than Carl Henry. The previous chapter represents Henry as one of fundamentalism's severest critics. Fundamentalists who prefer gospel songs and revivals to the exclusion of a lively Christian concern for witness to the entire world of culture, draw fire from Carl Henry. Intellectual centers of academic and scholarly pursuits should be objects of missionary activity just as surely as natives of the south seas. University education, scholarship and the professions are not pagan disciplines unyielding to the lordship of Christ as some fundamentalists have led the Church to believe. Henry carries his purge a step further. He is disturbed by fundamentalism's narrow preoccupation with radical eschatology, stickly debate over minutiae of orthodox doctrines and a vitriolic castigation of liberalism. This temperament inhibits fundamentalism from meeting social issues of the day which are crying for reflection from a Christian perspective. No, Carl Henry will have no part of this isolationist and even obscurantist temperament of fundamentalists where such a spirit has usurped the hearts and minds of conservative Christians.

Eager to shed this caricature of fundamentalism, Henry would prefer to be called an evangelical. What is an evangelical? In historic Christianity, evangelicals have held a position which can be summarized as follows:

1. Sinners are justified before God through faith in Jesus Christ and his atonement for sin on the cross of Calvary.

2. Inspired by the Holy Ghost, the Scriptures are the inerrant Word of God to be interpreted by sound hermeneutical principles. The Scriptures are authoritative for the faith and life of the Church.

3. The Scriptures furnish the Christian man with absolute moral values which bear the stamp of divine authority for day to day living.

4. The Church has our Lord's mandate to preach the Gospel to all men.

If these principles are truly characteristic of evangelicalism, then Carl Henry may certainly be called an evangelical. Moreover, we should add that Henry takes the stance of an evangelical as a moderate Calvinist. He believes in the sovereignty of God without taking an extreme Calvinistic position on predestination. Henry is not a synergist. The total depravity of man is everywhere punctuated in his writings together with the doctrine of sinful man's regeneration by the grace of God, a work wrought by the Holy Spirit alone through preaching of the Gospel. Of course, Henry's works conspicuously lack allusions to the Sacraments. Lutherans will be impatient with Henry for this deficiency. We should remember, however, that Henry has not yet presented the theological world with an exhaustive Christian dogmatics which would necessarily include treatment of the sacraments.

In spite of Henry's present omission of the sacraments, his work is certainly important to evangelical Christians,

Lutherans included. Chief among his contributions must be Henry's careful scrutiny of theological developments in the light of trends in modern thought. Henry recognizes and exposes a deeper interchange between philosophy and theology than many students of theology are ready to admit. The intimate relationship of philosophy and theology in Europe has obviously become problematical for American theologians. Moreover, Carl Henry advises the theological student to be candid about philosophical presuppositions underlying contemporary theology. This much is true. We can understand an exegete or systematic theologian only when his orientation is determined from both a philosophical as well as a theological standpoint. It is just as significant to know whether a theologian is influenced by existential, idealistic or naturalistic modes of thought as to identify him as a Lutheran, Baptist or Dutch Reformed.

Finally, we leave the reader with an obvious but most important observation. The Scriptures are ever dear to Carl Henry. Christ, the living Word and the Word written are never mutually exclusive. Inspired by God, the Scriptures are the vanguard of the pure Gospel. It is safe to say, according to Henry, that the Gospel is in jeopardy when studied or discussed or proclaimed from an orientation other than the complete authority of Scripture. What significance has this principle for intense ecumenical dialogue and cooperative efforts in modern times! Christ reigns where His Word is held to be the final authority. If His lordship is to be

supreme in the world of men and things, the abiding authority of the Scriptures must prevail. Whether or not contemporary theology heeds the counsel of Carl Henry on this point remains to be seen.

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