UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

THE CRISIS OF TRUTH AND WORD: A DEFENSE OF REVELATIONAL

EPISTEMOLOGY IN THE THEOLOGY OF CARL F. H. HENY

by

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SUMMARY

There are times when a confluence of events, individual talent, preparation and strategic timing all meet at the same point in time which result in a historic period on the larger scale of history. Such is the life and legacy of Carl F. H. Henry. Henry was born at a strategic time in the history of the Protestant church in the United States. He possessed and developed intellectual gifts that far surpassed most of his contemporaries. He also possessed an ability to be at the momentous shifts in Christian history in the United States. This study examines, in historical context, the surrounding circumstances and the developments from those circumstances that gave rise to "the dean of evangelical theologians," Carl Henry.

Henry burst onto the theological scene while the ambers were still burning from World War II. While the world was recovering from war, Protestantism, both in the U.S. and in Europe, was recovering from a battle of its own. In the United States, the conflict between liberals and conservatives had provided deep divides in the county's denominations. With liberals having assumed seats of power in denominational structures and institutions of higher learning, the conservatives had withdrawn both culturally and theologically. Across Europe, two world wars within one generation had significantly damaged the cardinal doctrines of liberalism. In its place, came the rise of neo-orthodoxy. While on the surface the renewed emphasis on the Bible seemed to offer great promise, the philosophical underpinnings of neo-orthodoxy would soon erode the short lived hope that a return to the foundation of scriptural authority, as expressed by the Reformers, was in the making.

It was into the this milieu that Carl Henry emerged onto the scene, with the publishing of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, as a major theological voice calling for a renunciation of the obscurantism of the fundamentalists, and a re-engagement with culture both in terms of social ministries and a renewed commitment to academic excellence. In addition to *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, which received much more recognition that the preceding volume, *Remaking the Modern Mind* and then the later work, *The Protestant Dilemma*, these two books laid out the basic theological method that Henry would follow throughout his career resulting in his magnum opus, *God, Revelation and Authority*. It is here that evangelicalism finds its most definitive defense of biblical authority, inspiration and inerrancy, grounded in Henry's theological methodology—revelational epistemology.

In addition to Henry's prodigious theological output, he was instrumental in changing the theological landscape in America. Having called for the re-engagement of the culture and the mind, Henry was pivotal in the forming of several key evangelical institutions. Henry actively took part in the founding of the NAE, ETS, Fuller Seminary and *Christianity Today*.

Henry's legacy is cemented in his ability to articulate and formulate viable contemporary expressions to fulfill the Great Commission. His contributions to the Kingdom of God are as monumental in their breadth and scope as the King he served.

ABBREVIATIONS

CD   - *Church Dogmatics*
CT   - *Christianity Today*
ETS   - Evangelical Theological Society
GRA   - *God, Revelation, and Authority*
NAE   - National Association of Evangelicals
The Uneasy Conscience   - *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When one arrives at this place of their academic journey, it did not happen by accident or alone. There are many to thank and I would be remiss not to thank the church where I have served as pastor for nine years and with the completion of this project, have completed two doctorate degrees. I thank the Lord for you, your patience and encouragement in all my pursuits. It is with joy and not grief that I serve.

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My family deserves more gratitude than I could ever possibly hope to give them for having suffered through yet another foray into higher academic pursuits. I want to thank you again: Joy, Daylee, Kevin, and Julianna for giving me room to read and write. I love you. The days that are ahead, God has charted the course and as you both learn to navigate more skillfully, I watch with great excitement and expectation. Joy and Julianna, soon it will be we three, as learn to ride the wave with skill!

I declare that the thesis, *The Crisis of Truth and Word: A Defense of Revelational Epistemology in the Theology of Carl F. H. Henry*, which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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Kevin L. King, Sr.   August 2008
Student No. 23462559

Dedicated to GW, JMK, and DLA

My three men of Athens

your journeys have all inspired me

VITA

Dr. Kevin L. King Sr. was born in Savannah, Georgia on June 22, 1962. Kevin was born to an unwed sixteen year old teenager, who made the decision to give her baby up for adoption. Dr. King was adopted seven months later by John and Cozette King. Dr. King grew up just south of Atlanta, Georgia where he married Joy Akin on June 9, 1984. The Kings have three children, Daylee Elise, who was born December 19, 1985; Kevin Lebel Jr., who was born January 20, 1985; Julianna Faith, who was born June 13, 1998.

Dr. King went to public schools from first through twelfth grade, graduating from Morrow High School, in Morrow Georgia in 1980. In 1985, Dr. King graduated from Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia with a Bachelor of Science degree. In 1994, Dr. King graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina with a Master of Divinity with Languages. In 2000, Dr. King received his Doctor of Ministry degree in Expository Preaching from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Dr. King has pastored several churches in North Carolina, Georgia, and Colorado. Dr. King's first church, Sandy Creek Baptist Church was in Louisville, North Carolina (1994-1995). After Sandy Creek, Dr. King served as the Youth Pastor at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Georgia (1995-1997). After Mt. Zion, Dr. King went to pastor First Baptist Church in Buchanan, Georgia from 1997-1999. Since July of 1999 to the present, Dr. King has been the pastor of the Anchor Way Baptist Church in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Dr. King is currently a DLP (Distance Learning Professor) at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia. He teaches evangelism and church history classes. Additionally, Dr. King taught at Southern California Seminary in San Diego, California until the fall of 2008. While at Southern California Seminary, Dr. King taught on-line apologetic, philosophy, evangelism and New Testament classes.

CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION

There are times when a certain individual enters onto the stage of history who forever changes the drama that is life. No one more so than Martin Luther, who changed history by his fidelity to the Word of God and his willingness to confront his culture at the point where the difference was most acute. In fact, it was Luther who famously said, "That the true test of a disciple's loyalty and faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ is not merely found his professing the truth of God with the loudest voice and clearest exposition, but doing so precisely at the point where the world and the devil are at that moment attacking."[1]

In an editorial article, Stephen J. Wellum makes the comment that sadly many theologians in the history of the church have failed at this very point. Theologians in the twentieth century sought ways to communicate the Gospel in a specific cultural context. In doing so, two extremes were commonly manifested. The first extreme was to fixate on truths of God's Word that are important but not central to the current debate. Second, the all too common attempt to engage contemporary culture was in a way that undermined and compromised the truth of God's Word.[2] It is in this type of theological context that Carl F. H. Henry emerged. With the publication of his first major book, *Remaking the Modern Mind* (1946), Henry served notice that he would

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[1] Stephen J. Wellum, "Editorial Remembering Carl F. Henry (1913–2003)," *The Southern Baptist Theological Journal* 8,no.4 (Winter 2004): 2.

[2] Ibid.

engage the culture where the battle was the fiercest, and do so without capitulating to

the culture. In *Remaking Modern Mind* (1946), Henry served notice that he would

engage the culture where the battle was the fiercest, and do so without capitulating to

the culture. It would be said of Henry in retrospect:

> In an age of declining theological vigor and few theological giants, Carl F. H.
> Henry has emerged as one of theological luminaries of the twentieth century.
> His experience as journalist, teacher, theologian, editor, and world spokesman
> for evangelical Christianity ranks him among the very few individuals who
> can claim to have shaped a major theological movement.[3]

Bob Patterson, the editor of the *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*

series, said in making the choice for the outstanding American evangelical theologian

that the decision in choosing Carl Henry was easy. According to Patterson, Henry "is

the prime interpreter of evangelical theology, one of its leading theoreticians, and . . .

the unofficial spokesman for the entire tradition . . . and the prime mover in helping

evangelical theology in America reassert its self-respect."[4]

1.1   The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the role that revelational epistemology

played in the theological method of Carl F. H. Henry from a historical perspective.

Carl Henry has long been regarded as one of the foremost theologians in

evangelicalism. This study will examine those factors historical, philosophical and

theological that enabled Henry to emerge, as *Time* magazine called him in 1978, as

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[3] Albert Mohler, "Carl F. H. Henry," in *Baptist Theologians*, ed. Timothy George and David Dockery (Nashville: Broadman, 1990), 518.

[4] Bob E. Patterson, *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind: Carl F. H. Henry* (Waco: Word, 1983), 9–10.

"Evangelicalism's leading theologian."[5] The period under review will be from the time that Henry came onto the theological scene in the United States with his release of three major works in the 1940s: *The Remaking of the Modern Mind* (1946), *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947), and *The Protestant Dilemma* (1948) to the publication of *Toward A Recovery of Christian Belief* (1990). These works in many ways laid the philosophical and theological foundation for all of Henry's work that would follow in the ensuing years. The importance of these books is that it is here Henry lays out, as he sees it, the mistakes made philosophically and theologically that led to the then current demise of the impact of the Protestant church in the United States of America. The review continues in that it looks at the rise and development of neo-evangelicalism and Henry's role and guiding hand in what would become evangelicalism. Other seminal events during this time will be examined, such as Henry's role in the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary, the founding of *Christianity Today*, the context of the writing of *God, Revelation and Authority*, the defense against neo-orthodoxy, and its import for evangelicalism. Henry was a major force in developing the shape of more than a few of Evangelicalism's more institutional forms such as the National Association of Evangelicals and the Evangelical Theological Society. Finally, the study will examine Henry's lasting impact and relevance for evangelicalism today as it wrestles with a myriad of issues at the start of the twenty-first century. Henry addressed issues in whole or in part, such as the authority of God's Word, the capacity of the human mind and language to

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[5] Ibid., 9.

grasp trans-cultural, timeless and absolute truth, the very existence of absolute truth, the nature of propositional truth, and the inerrancy of God's Word.

1.2   Reason for the Study

Today, evangelicalism finds itself in turmoil. There are discordant voices that produce a cacophonous sound in the ears of contemporary culture. With the ascendancy of a postmodern paradigm, evangelicalism finds itself facing daunting questions:

1) Is the Bible authoritative-functional or ontological?
2) Is language an effective medium of communication that transcends time and culture?
3) Is religious pluralism a viable expression that is grounded in and consistent with the Bible?
4) Are the laws of logic relevant in the postmodern context?
5) Can God be known and does the Bible present Him reliably and accurately?
6) Is Open Theism an accurate interpretation of the information presented in the Bible of God's relationship to the world?
7) Does inerrancy really matter?
8) Is truth personal or propositional? Is the nature of truth functional or ontological? And what difference does it make?
9) What is the proper understanding of gender roles?[6]

These are but a few of the questions that evangelicals face and must answer. Furthermore, in a day that has all but deified tolerance, how does the exclusive and absolute nature of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ make its presence felt? Is there still something distinctive to be said about Jesus Christ that makes a difference

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[6] Issues such as these are raised all across the evangelical landscape but for a sampling see A. B. Caneday, "Critical Comments On An Open Theism Manifesto," *Trinity Journal* 23, no.1 (Spring 2002),103–107; D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live* (Wheaton: Tyndale House,1999); Stanley Grenz, "From Liberalism to Postliberalism: Theology in the 20th Century," *Review and Expositor* 96 (Summer 1999); 385–404; Harold Netlan, "Religious Pluralism and Truth," *Trinity Journal* 6 (Spring 1985): 74–87; Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004); Francis Schaeffer, "He Is There and He Is Not Silent," *Bibliotheca Sacra* Volume 129 (January 1972): 3–19; Roy B. Zuck, ed., *Vital Theological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Krege,1994).

to this post modern context? Carl Henry would answer these questions in much the

same way as the Reformers, Augustine, and the writers of the New Testament would.

The answer is to be found in the two basic axioms on which Henry based his

theological method: the true and living God (the ontological axiom) and divine

revelation (the epistemic axiom). It is on these two foundational pillars that the

answers to aforementioned questions can be found. It is for this reason that Carl F. H.

Henry is a worthy subject of this study.

1.3   The Issue at Hand

In his Rutherford Lectures in 1989, Carl Henry lays out in summary fashion

his theological method. At the end of his long and distinguished career, these lectures

raise again his challenge against all competing claims against Christianity, and how

his particular theological approach is the appropriate methodology to meet the

challenges of contemporary culture. Henry described in succinct fashion the effect of

the "contemporary forfeiture of the public significance of Scripture [that]has negated

the necessity and possibility of the Biblical world explanation. The search for an

alternative model is beset with confusion and Western society drifts indecisively

toward chaos. Secular scholars seem unable to tell us where we are."[7]

In answer to the question, "Where are we?" Henry proposes what Wellum

calls "revelational epistemology" as the guide to find where modern man is and as the

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[7]Carl F. H. Henry, *Toward A Recovery of Christian Belief* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1990), 16.

appropriate road map for where he should go.[8] In the Rutherford Lectures, Henry expounds the virtue of presuppositionalism. He refers to himself as an evangelical presuppositionalist: "If presuppositionalism implies that anyone who thinks has presuppositions, then I am unapologetically an evangelical presuppositionalist." [9] Henry anchors his presuppositionalism in the true and living God and in divine revelation. Henry asserts that every Christian should assume these axioms. In doing so, the Christian is able to account for reality and the intelligibility of existence.[10] Henry writes in defense of his basic epistemic postulate:

> In appealing to transcendent revelation as its basic epistemic axiom, Christianity casts its truth claims comprehensively over all areas of human life. The fact that Christianity postulates first principles and affirms fixed core beliefs does not rule out the propriety of rational test. Neither does the appropriateness of rational test imply that Christianity must be regarded as only hypothesis.[11]

Al Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote following the death of Henry about the challenges he faced, of the criticisms he received, and of his influence. In telling fashion, Mohler remarked that Henry left a legacy for those evangelicals that follow him, which include a magnificent defense of divine revelation and of the rationality of Christianity. He quoted Henry's comment on the importance of the Bible in that as:

> divine revelation is the source of all truth, the truth of Christianity included; reason is the instrument for recognizing it; Scripture is its

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[8] Wellum, *"Editorial,"*,3. For an introductory look into apologetic methodology see Stanley N. Gundry and Steven B. Cowan eds., *Five Views on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000).

[9] Henry, *Toward A Recovery of Christian Belief*, 42.

[10] Ibid., 51.

[11] Ibid., 53.

verifying principle; logical consistency of a negative test for truth and coherence a subordinate test. The task of Christianity is to exhibit the content of biblical revelation as an orderly whole . . . the divine reservoir and conduit of divine truth, the authoritative written record and exposition of God's nature and will.[12]

Henry includes in this process the use of the Law of Non-contradiction and writes, "A telling test of universal validity and of truth is logical consistency . . . logical inconsistency sacrifices plausibility and . . . cannot be valid or true. Logical consistency may not decisively establish the truth of intellectual claims, but it is nonetheless a potent negative test."[13]   It is at this point that a problem arises. The charge that is leveled at Henry is that he is "overly rationalistic"[14] and that he is too influenced by Enlightment models of rationality.[15] William McClendon charges that Henry's theological method fits neatly into the modern paradigm, and his philosophy is marked by the "four marks of the modern paradigm: human centered, universalizable, reductionist and foundationalist."[16] It is to these issues that this study looks to address in the context of the cultural milieu in which Carl Henry addressed them.

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[12] Albert Mohler, "The Life and Legacy of Carl F. H. Henry: A Remembrance," December 9, 2003, http://www.crosswalk.com/news/weblogs/mohler/1234999.html?view (accessed June 1, 2004).

[13] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief,* 53.

[14] Mohler, "The Life and Legacy of Carl F. H. Henry," 1.

[15] Chad Owen Brand, "Is Carl Henry a Modernist? Rationalism and Foundationalism in Post-War Evangelical Theology," *The Southern Baptist Theological Journal* 8, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 44.

[16]Ibid., 47.

1.4 Hypothesis

The development of Carl Henry's theological methodology is based in presuppositionalism.[17] His presuppositions are: 1) the true and living God (the ontological axiom) and 2) divine revelation (the epistemic axiom). It is the second axiom that will be developed in this study. Henry's presuppositionalism is developed by the use of logical consistency (law of non-contradiction as a negative test for truth), the law of correspondence and consistency as positive tests for truth, the role of *imago Dei*, the role *Logos* of God, and the relationship of reason and revelation in concert to give man the ability to understand his world and to know God. It is stated that in lieu of being captive to an Enlightment or modernistic paradigm, Henry's approach is a methodology that faithfully expounds the historic and orthodox Christian worldview.

1.5 Study Goals

Evangelicalism is a well studied phenomenon here in the United States. The body of literature is extensive and dates within a few years of its inception as a movement. However, the formal historical study of Carl Henry, his methodology, and its role in the rise and development of evangelicalism has a remarkable dearth of attention given the magnitude of his contributions. The subject of this study was a prolific author, and his literary production spans seven decades.[18] The study will look at the historical context that led to the development and the impact of revelational

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[17] N. L. Geisler, "Presuppositional Apologetics," in *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 607–608.

[18] Henry Center, "The Writings and Publications of Carl F. H. Henry, A Preliminary List by William H. Bates," Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, July 2006. http://www.henrycenter.org/carl_henry_pub_works.php (accessed September 17, 2007).

epistemology used by Henry, and the effect it had in American evangelicalism in the latter half of the twentieth century. It is also appropriate to examine the potential for lasting influence at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

1.6   Methodology

Meaning is found in context, as the taking of isolated events and trying to piece together their meaning often results in erroneous conclusions. To combat that possibility, the methodology employed by this study is intended to give proper historical context to the work of Carl Henry. Surveying the cultural and theological milieu that existed before Henry's rise to prominence; then following the contemporaneous theological developments during Henry's long career, will develop a setting that establishes the impact of his life. Henry left a rich depository of theological production. That literary depository, along with his the writings of his major influences and contemporaries, will allow for the use of primary sources as the main focus of this study. Along with those primary sources are secondary sources that provide valuable commentary on the impact of those primary works. This study will draw heavily from both primary and secondary sources.

1.7   Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 will examine Henry's rise to theological prominence, which began as a reaction to theological compromise that he detected in the works of A. H. Strong. Under the influence of Gordon Clark, Henry would emphasize the rationality of the Christian faith. Strong attempted to find a mediating position between orthodoxy and liberalism. But the failure in Henry's view was a dependence on modern critical

philosophy and post-Kantian epistemology. Henry masterfully illustrates the failures of the mediating theological positions at the time, with a careful analysis of the theology of Tertullian, Augustine, and Aquinas. He offers Augustine as a *via media* between the abandonment of reason (as seen in Tertullian) and the elevation of reason above revelation per Aquinas. The Augustinian tradition, which can identified with Calvin and Luther, presents an alternative to an independent natural theology that places reason prior to revelation or to a theology of the absurd; this places faith outside of the realm of rational discourse.

Chapter 3 will focus on the influence that Henry's *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* had on the fundamentalist world in America. A brief survey of the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy, including a discussion on *The Fundamentals*, sets the stage for the impact of Henry's first book. The effect of this book would be the birthing of the movement that was to be called "neo-evangelicalism," and the book would serve as the burgeoning movement's manifesto. A survey of the major tenets of neo-evangelicalism will comprise the remaining part of the chapter.

Chapter 4 will examine the growth of the movement, now known just as "evangelicalism," and the influence that Henry had on it. From the early days of the founding of Fuller Seminary to the publication of *Christianity Today*, Henry set the tone for the evangelical engagement of the culture, and laid the foundation for the movement's key theological tenet that is the authority of Scripture. Following the Reformers, Henry's influence on evangelicalism can be seen in his defense of the revelational nature of Scripture, which ensures its truthfulness and trustworthiness.

Chapter 5 will focus on Henry's major theological work, *God, Revelation and Authority*. It is here that Henry becomes a primary proponent of the evangelical doctrine of revelation and scriptural authority. The basic epistemological foundation that Henry operates from is divine revelation. Revelational epistemology posits that God's communication to man is rational, conveyed in intelligible ideas, and meaningful words. A major emphasis of Carl F. H. Henry is propositional revelation, which validates biblical authority. As will have already been shown, to deny propositional revelation is to reduce faith to faith in the absurd. It is at this point that a critique of Henry's emphasis on human reason and its receptivity to divine revelation and the distinction he draws between reason and rationalism. Since Henry's defense of biblical inerrancy has had a major influence in the evangelical world, his argument and influence will be critiqued and analyzed.

Chapter 6 will highlight the rise of neo-orthodoxy and the contribution of Karl Barth. Neo-orthodoxy would constitute the second major theological movement that Henry would combat, and he would do battle on several fronts with rival to orthodoxy. He would refute the basis of Barth's system (as Barth was the major threat in Henry's view of neo-orthodoxy) Kantian epistemology, which in Henry's view led to much of the theological confusion of the day. The major weakness, in Henry's view, was the non-propositional character of special revelation.

Chapter 7 will detail the legacy that Carl F. H. Henry has left. Charges of Thomism will be analyzed, as well as accusations of being "a rationalist" in his defense of scriptural authority. Carl F. H. Henry has left no doubt regarding his reliance on propositional revelation. As such given the great weight of his influence,

he reasserted the vital role of theology in the church. Another aspect of Henry's influence has been aggressive engagement with the culture at large. From the publication of his first major work in 1946, Henry has always been at the forefront of leading evangelicals in the larger public arena. However, his most enduring legacy may be the return to the Reformation principle of the authority of Scripture.

CHAPTER 2   THE STAGE IS SET

> Once upon a time there was a great religion that over the centuries had spread all over the world. But in those lands where it had existed for the longest time, its adherents slowly grew complacent, lukewarm, and skeptical. Indeed many of the leaders of its oldest groups even publicly rejected some of the religion's most basic beliefs.
>
> In response, a renewal movement emerged, passionately championing the historic claims of the old religion and eagerly inviting unbelievers everywhere to embrace the ancient faith. Rejecting the skepticism the leaders who no longer believed in a God who works miracles, members of the renewal movement vigorously argued that their God not only had performed miraculous deeds in the past but still miraculously transforms all who believe. . . . Over time, the renewal movement flourished to the point of becoming one of the most influential wings of the whole religion.[1]

The above two paragraphs are not the beginning of a fairy tale. Rather they chronicle with some literary flair the as yet unfinished story of evangelicalism. Sider finishes his opening introduction of his book by hinting at the rising political influence and affluence of the evangelical movement. However, the point of his book is not to lavish praise on the evangelical movement, but rather to call evangelicals to return to their moorings and foundation. What started out as a great renewal movement now has the trappings of a failed renewal effort. Evangelicals now are as "likely to embrace lifestyles every bit as hedonistic, materialistic, self-centered, and sexually immoral as the world in general."[2] Sider adds that whatever

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[1] Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 11– 12.

[2] Ibid., 13–17.

the issue that is faced in life, the polling data indicates that widespread and blatant disobedience of the clear biblical demands on the part of the people who allegedly are evangelical, born again Christians. The statistics are devastating.[3]

The world stage looked very different in the first half of the twentieth century that it does now as the beginning of the twenty-first century. That much is obvious. What is important for this study is that Carl F. H. Henry, one of the shapers of the movement that came to be known as evangelicalism, commented on the sad state of affairs that evangelicalism now faces in 1976, the very year that *Newsweek* magazine reported that 1976 was the "Year of the Evangelical."[4] Henry wrote, "If evangelical Christians do not join heart to heart, will to will and mind to mind across the multitudinous fences, and do not deepen their loyalties to the Risen Lord of the Church, they may become—by the year 2000—a wilderness cult in a secular society with no more public significance than the ancient Essenes in their Dead Sea cave."[5] Henry would write further in that same book that "twenty-five years ago there were signs that the long-caged lion would break its chains and roar upon the American scene with unsuspected power. The evangelical movement's mounting vitality baffled a secular press, beguiled by ecumenical spokesman for liberal pluralism into regarding conservative Christianity as a fossil-cult destined to early extinction."[6] Henry concludes his opening chapter *in Evangelicals in Search*

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[3] Ibid., 17–29.

[4] Carl F. H. Henry and Kenneth S. Kantzer, eds., *Evangelical Affirmations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 19.

[5] Carl F. H. Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco, TX: Word, 1976), 16.

[6] Ibid., 19.

of Identity by saying, "Having burst his cage in a time of theological default, the lion of evangelicalism now seems unsure which road to take."[7] If current trends are any indication, the lion of which Henry wrote is still looking for which road to take. However, that was not the case in the early 1940s.

2.1   The Shaping of a Theologian

What were the factors that gave rise to the situation in which Carl Henry would emerge as one writer referred to him as the "Michelangelo of the evangelical renaissance."[8] It is the answer to that question that this paper now turns.

There are times in history when a convergence of events come together that leave a lasting impact, and the world is changed forever. Such was a time when a young theologian published his third book, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism.*[9] The theological scene in America was still smoldering in the aftermath of some theological infernos. The embers of the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy were still burning.[10] Presbyterians and Northern

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[7] Ibid., 24.

[8] Carl R. Trueman, "Admiring the Sistine Chapel: Reflections on Carl F. H. Henrys' God, Revelation, and Authority," *Themelios* 25, no..2 (2000): 48–58, under "Theological Studies.Org.UK," http://www.theologicalstudies.org.uk/article_henry_trueman.html (accessed October 18, 2007) who was quoting Gabriel Fackre. Trueman went on to say that Henry was perhaps *the* central intellectual figure of American evangelicalism this century, position symbolized by the fact that he was the only evangelical selected for the extended treatment in the series *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, where he took his place alongside such luminaries as Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard and Panneberg as those who have exerted profound influence on the shape of various theological traditions. Henry is also placed alongside G. C. Berkouwer and Helmut Thielcke in Ray S. Anderson's article in "Evangelical Theology," in *The Modern Theologians* 2d (ed. David F. Ford; Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

[9] Henry, Carl F. H., *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947, 2003).

[10] Randall Balmers and John R. Fitzmier, *The Presbyterians* (Wesyport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 85–94, 125; Bradley Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy*: *Fundamentalist, Modernist & Moderates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Baptists were greatly affected by the controversy, and the fall out had yet to be fully assessed. The 1920s in the United States were a tumultuous time in both the cultural and religious context. Indeed they were the "Roaring Twenties." In addition to the Modernist-Fundamentalist Controversy, of which more will be said later, the effect of that controversy saw the formation of several organizations all within in the decade that lead to the turmoil of the period. The World Christian Fundamental Association (1919), The Fundamentalist Fellowship (1920), The Baptist Bible Union (1923), and The Auburn Affirmation (1924).[11] The Scopes Trial in 1925 was an event that had left conservatives reeling under the backlash of a trial in which their views had been misrepresented and caricatured.[12] Consequently, there had been a withdrawal from cultural engagement that at one time had been a hallmark of evangelicalism on both sides of the Atlantic.[13] The founding of Westminster Seminary (1929) with J. Gresham Machen and three other seminary professors of Princeton Seminary that had left after a defeat for conservatives in the reorganization of Princeton seminary could be construed as another withdrawal from the cultural battlefield.[14] The impact of Neo-orthodoxy, while beginning to

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[11] Rolland D. McCune, "The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part One): Historical and Theological Antecedents," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Theological Journal 3* (Fall 1998): 3–34.

[12] Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 4, 13. George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 6, 184–88.

[13] Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitfield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003); John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wiberforce, More, Chalmers, and Finney* (Downers Gove: InterVarsity, 2007); David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005).

[14] McCune, "The Formation of The New Evangelicalism," 30.

subside a bit in Europe, was still effecting the American theological scene

significantly. And the impact of Liberalism, while in some quarters had dissipated,

was still a force with which to be reckoned.[15]

It was into this very turbulent scene that a young theologian from Long

Island, New York, made his entry onto the theological stage and would emerge as

one writer put it "arguably the most significant exponent of the new

evangelicalism."[16] Mohler would not be the only one to extol Henry as

evangelicalism's theologian of note. In 1978 *Time* magazine named Henry as

"evangelicalism's "leading theologian."[17] But just as a word needs context to have

meaning, so does the life of an individual. The life of Carl F. H. Henry has a

broader context, but it also has a more narrow context that in many ways is the

more significant of the two. This paper has touched on briefly some of the events

that would play a major role in the development not only of Henry but also of the

context that he would enter and provide the backdrop of the stage on which Henry's

gifts would be so dramatically displayed.

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[15] Peter Toon, *The End of Liberal Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1995); Carl F. H. Henry, *Frontiers In Modern Theology* (Chicago: Moody, 1964, 1965); Edward John Carnell, *The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950, 1960), 13–93; Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion 1805-1900* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, & Modernity 1900-1950* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003).

[16] R. Albert Mohler, "Evangelical theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989), 108.

[17] Ray S. Anderson, "Carl F. Henry" in *The Modern Theologians 2d* (ed. by David F. Ford.; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 489.

2.2   Long Island Beginnings

On January 22, 1913, Carl Henry was born to immigrant German parents in New York City. Henry was the oldest of eight children and in good Prussian fashion was given two middle names: Carl Ferdinand Howard Heinrich. In the World War I years German families in New York anglicized their names. In 1917 when the United States entered the war, the Heinrichs became the Henrys. Henry makes the comment in his autobiography that due to growing hostility to German immigrants that his family stopped speaking German, even in private.[18]

Growing up Henry would say that religion was a matter of private indifference to his parents.[19] His mother was a Roman Catholic and his father a Lutheran. So religion for Henry's early years was not nominal at best. Growing up in the Depression, money was difficult to come by. So in addition to doing a variety of jobs to make money, Henry displayed an early talent for the typewriter. By his junior year in high school, he could type eighty-five words a minute.[20]

His typing skills enabled Henry to secure a job at *The Islip Press* in 1928. In 1932 he was promoted to serve as the editor of the *Smithtown Star* on Long Island. This editorship brought along with it an associate editorship of the *Suffolk Every Week*. Before becoming the editor of the *Star*, Henry's ample literary skill and his work ethic brought him rewards that he could not have imagined as a child of a

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[18] Carl F. H. Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, (Waco, TX: Word, 1986), 15–16.

[19] Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry*, 19.

[20] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 29–30.

German immigrant family struggling to make ends meet. His pay increased from $12 a week to $15 per week. Soon he was given a daily gas allowance.[21]

The new editorship, the financial increase, the perks (complimentary tickets for boxing, wrestling events, auto races, county fairs, summer theatre, flower shows, restaurant openings, stage events in New York and the like) directed Henry's attention on the secular world. As Henry says in his autobiography, "My heart and mind were geared to the secular world and knew little of religious things."[22] That was about to change.

On Henry's editorial team was Christy, a widow, who would become an endeared figure in Carl's life. Christy was responsible for proofreading and correcting the galleys. Henry had developed a close relationship with Mrs. Christy and had made the offer that should she ever need a ride, all she had to do was call him. It was as a result of this standing offer and the developing friendship that Carl Henry would meet Gene Bedford, and it be would Bedford that would introduce Carl Henry to Jesus Christ. Christy managed to get Henry to a meeting where Gene Bedford was speaking. After the meeting Bedford extracted a promise for a meeting the following Saturday from a very reluctant Carl Henry. The topic of the meeting would be to discuss God's plan for the newspaperman's future. Bedford had no way of knowing but the summer had been a particularly anxious time for Henry. He was greatly troubled over not only his temporal future but also his relationship to God. Before the meeting with Bedford Henry would have a profound experience:

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[21] Ibid., 34.

[22] Ibid., 36–37.

I had driven to the quiet shorefront at Blue Point, and there had meditated and prayed and wrestled with God. I still felt as when reading accounts of Jesus' resurrection, like a moth circling a flame, daring neither to believe nor to disbelieve. . . . But then a sudden squall followed by a furious storm sent me driving homeward through earth piercing lighting and thunder. As I parked momentarily for the raging rain to sub-side before opening the large barn door for car entry, a fiery bolt of lightning, like a giant flaming arrow, seemed to pin me to the driver's seat, and a might roll of thunder unnerved me. When the fire feel, I knew instinctively that the Great Archer had nailed me to my own footsteps. Looking back, it was as if the transcendent Tetragrammaton wished me to know that I could not save myself and that heaven's intervention was my only hope.[23]

After a three hour conversation with Gene Bedford, Carl Henry knelt down in the front seat of Bedford's car and accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Henry would never be the same and neither would the Protestant world.[24]

Henry would write of his conversion in his autobiography:

By the end of the prayer the wonder was wrought. I had an inner assurance hitherto unknown of sins forgiven, that Jesus was my Savior, that I was on speaking terms with God as my Friend. A floodtide of peace and joy swept over me. My life's future, I was confident, was now anchored in and charted by another world, the truly real world . . .

I waited and wept before God as the minutes passed, silently asking for guidance and direction and committing to him the whole panorama of future vocational possibilities. I know knew God to be King of my life. Had he dispatched me, I would have gone that very day to China or anywhere else in his cause.[25]

Truer words were never written. At the age of twenty in 1933, Carl F. H. Henry's conversion to Jesus Christ was radical and changed the direction of his life.[26]

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[23] Ibid., 45–46.

[24] Ibid., 46.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Anderson, *Carl F. H. Henry*, 489.

Even as his journalistic career looked bright with promise, Henry felt an
ever increasing conviction that he needed to enter college or a university to prepare
for full-time Christian service. He wrestled with the idea. No one in his family had
ever went to college. College cost money. In the mid 1930s money was tough to
come by. He had a paying job and to walk away from that was daunting to say the
least. However, "if God directed . . . he would doubtless provide. But how would he
provide?"[27] It was during this struggle of determining God's direction in his life,
that Henry discovered a last principle that would not only guide him in the many
years to come, but a principle that would serve as a foundational axiom in his life
and work:

> I have always been open to some so-called mystical aspects of the Christian
> life, if in fact mysticism is really a term appropriate to the New Testament.
> Too many theologians have hastily dismissed the apostle Paul's teaching on
> "union with Christ." To be sure, the New Testament doctrine is remarkably
> different from what in philosophical circles is generally meant by
> mysticism. The Christian's relationship to Christ involves no absorption or
> disappearance of the self into the Infinite; distinctions of personality are not
> cancelled, but rather are intensified in man's relationship to the Deity.
> Equally important is the fact that Bible anchors the most intimate divine-
> human relations in redemption, even if that experience rests upon Christ's
> prior mediation in creation and revelation. Scripture knows nothing of a
> sinful humanity with immediate access to the holy God in man's own right
> or on man's own terms; communion with God presupposes the God who
> speaks and saves. God has revealed his nature normatively to the inspired
> prophets and apostles as set forth in Scripture. That does not mean, however,
> that he enters into no significant relations today. New truth about God there
> is not; a novel God about whom we must affirm only revisable predications
> is a modernist invention. But when God becomes *my* God, when divine
> revelation penetrates not only the mind but rather the whole self, when the
> Spirit personally illumines the believer, dynamic fellowship with God
> opens possibilities of spiritual guidance in which the Holy Spirit
> personalizes and applies the biblical revelation individually to and in a
> redeemed and renewed life.[28]

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[27] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 51–52.

[28] Ibid., 52–53.

2.3   A Theological Quest

With this new insight in the relationship with "the God who speaks and saves" Henry enrolled into Wheaton College in 1935. His program of study was philosophy where he studied under Gordon Clark.[29] This relationship would have a profound and a lifelong effect on Henry.[30] The influence of Clark is easily seen in Henry's work and the latter would write of the former:

> I am deeply indebted to scholars of various traditions, especially to competent philosophers under whom I have studied like Gordon H. Clark, W. Harry Jellema and Edgar S. Brightman. . . . To no contemporary do I owe a profounder debt, however, than to Gordon Clark, as numerous index references will attest. Since the thirties when he taught me medieval and modern philosophy at Wheaton, I have considered him the peer of evangelical philosophers in identifying the logical inconsistencies that beset non-evangelical alternatives and in exhibiting the intellectual superiority of Christian theism.[31]

Wheaton was gaining a reputation and would become known as the "Harvard of the Bible Belt," the foremost fundamentalist college in the nation and a producer of such future leaders as theologians Carl F. H. Henry, and Edward John Carnell, and evangelist Billy Graham.[32] Henry's Wheaton years were not only instrumental in academic preparation but also formative denominationally and relationally.

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[29]Richard A. Purdy, "Carl F. H. Henry," in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, (ed. Walter A. Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 260.

[30] R. Albert Mohler, "Carl F. H. Henry," in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition* (ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 280.

[31] Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. 1* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, , 1999), 10.

[32] Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 22.

While at Wheaton, Henry worked his way through college doing a variety of jobs. One of those jobs was as a typing instructor. This job would introduce him to another great life long influence. He met Helga Bender, who was a student of his and whom he would marry August 17, 1940. Their family would eventually include "a daughter, Carol Jennifer, an expert musicologist and a son Paul Brentwood, United States Congressman."[33] Helga was a priceless treasure to him and when they met at Wheaton College a goal of his was to persuade her that she "ought not to marry any of the others already in line" ahead of him.[34]

Wheaton also had other major influences on Henry. Wheaton was an interdenominational school, and even though Gordon Clark was a Presbyterian (Clark was a major influence in the shaping of Henry's theology), he found himself leaning toward Baptist views of Scripture. Henry wrote that it was during his student days he was "propelled . . . toward Baptistic views as I studied Scripture, interacted with campus associates and reflected on contemporary religious life."[35] While returning for a short visit to Long Island to see family, Henry went to Babylon Baptist Church on Long Island and was baptized on profession of faith in 1937:

> I returned to Long Island for a few weeks with my family, and made an
> important contact with the First Baptist Church of Babylon. Bible study had
> convinced me that New Testament baptism was by immersion, and is
> intended for believers only. I asked Pastor Burgess E. Brown to explain

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[33] Timothy George, "Inventing Evangelicalism," *ChristianityToday.com*. Located at http;//www.christianitytoday.com/global/printer.html/ct/2004/6.48html. (Accessed February 14, 2005).

[34] Carl F. H. Henry, *Conversations with Carl Henry: Christianity for Today* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 116.

[35] Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry*, 21.

believer's Baptism to me in detail, as if I were hearing about it for the very first time. He made clear its significance as an open personal identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and as one's witness to the world at large of new citizenship in the kingdom of God. I was immersed at the next midweek prayer meeting. My option for future theological studies now looked specifically toward Baptist ordination.[36]

He graduated from Wheaton in 1938 and immediately started theological studies at Northern Baptist Seminary in Chicago and concurrently enrolled in the newly formed John Dickey Memorial Theological Seminary at Wheaton College.[37] He was ordained to the Baptist ministry as pastor of Humboldt Park Baptist Church.[38] During these days of academic preparation and study Henry would say that the persuasion of the Baptistic views would be strengthened and deepened.

Bob Patterson in his book on Carl Henry lists those Baptist distinctives that made such an impression on the theologian in the making:

Henry lists them in this order: (1) the final authority of Scripture above all creeds and speculation; (2) the priesthood of all believers; (3) believer's baptism by immersion; (4) the autonomy of the local church; and (5) the separation of church and state. Henry says that while "I might not use this precise order of tenets now, I would surely insist on the inclusion of each one" . . . Respect for the authority of Scripture may be the key to understanding the Baptist witness, and why this witness so strongly appeals to Henry. He says: "Reliance upon Scripture to reveal the saviourhood and lordship of Jesus Christ, and his plan and purpose of mankind, is more than the first tenet of authentic Baptist belief; it is the foundation stone for the other principles which, if unsettled, jeopardize the total Baptist spiritual

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[36] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 84.

[37] Steven Mark Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma: A comparative study of the thought of Karl Barth and Carl F. H. Henry" (Th.D. diss. Lutheran School of Theology, 1989), 66.

[38] Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry*, 21. Henry also served as interim pastor of the First Baptist Church of Elmhurst, Illinois. Cf. James Emery White, *What is Truth? A Comparative Study of the Positions of Cornelius Van Til, Francis Schaffer, Carl F. H. Henry, Donald Bloesch, Millard Erickson* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 86.

structure. Henry finds most appealing the Baptist confidence that the New Testament revelation is the climax of divine disclosure.[39]

This emphasis on divine disclosure contained in the Scripture would emerge as a foundational axiom for Henry that would anchor his theological work for the rest of his life.

2.4   Henry's Objection to Strong's Compromise

In 1941 Henry received his B.D. from Northern Seminary and Th. M. from John Dickey Memorial Seminary. He received his doctorate from Northern in 1942. His dissertation was on church publicity. He also published his first book, *A Doorway to Heaven, a history of the Pacific Garden Mission*. He was hired by Northern Seminary to teach English, American Literature, and religious journalism.[40] Henry was also a charter member of the National Association of Evangelicals that organized in 1942.[41] While teaching at Northern, Henry enrolled at Boston University's doctoral program and studied under personalist philosopher Edgar S. Brightman.[42] Henry received his doctorate from Boston University in

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[39] Ibid., 21–22.

[40] Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma," 65.

[41] Ibid., 66. More will be said of the development of evangelicalism in various forms later.

[42] Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, & Modernity 1900-1950*, 298–325. "Personalism holds that reality is personal and that persons are the highest-not the only-intrinsic values. It is a type of idealism which maintains that the PERSON is the supreme philosophical principle that principle without which no other principle can be made intelligible. It is the view that the universe is a society of interacting and intercommunicating selves and persons with God at the center." Jr. Rufus Barrow, "The Personalism of John Wesley Edward Bowen" *Journal of Negro History 82 (*1997), 1, http://www.questia.com/read/5001524396,(accessed on January 21, 2008). Brightman studied under Bordon Parker Bowne and eventually held the Bordon Parker Bowne Professorship of Philosophy at Boston University. Brightman's, *A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1940) expanded what came to be known as Boston Personalism. Brightman followed Bowne's personalism that "corrected Ritschl's theory of religious knowledge by a personalism (of Professor's Bowne's type) that recognizes the unity of the subject, and looks on the harmonious, consistent realization of the total personal life as the ultimate criterion of truth."

1949. His dissertation which was later published, *Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology*[43]showed the influence of Brightman who argued that modern Christianity needed to critique the reigning philosophies and provide an alternative.[44] Henry concluded that due to Strong's "halfness and hesitancy, because of his conviction that the old and new could be retained as two phases of a deeper truth" lead to a revision of traditional doctrines.[45] Whereas Brightman would take a personalistic emphasis in his critique of deficient worldviews, Henry following Gordon H. Clark, would insist on the priority of divine revelation and the true and living God.[46] Clark would also insist that a proper theological method would discover those weaknesses in competing claims. Clark called this method the apagogic method–the

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Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal*, 299. Bowne was a Methodist who thought that Methodism needed to be totally rethought. Bowne's view was a blend of epistemological realism and idealism. His major work in this area was *Metaphysics: A Study in First Principles* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, 1882) and *Theory of Thought and Knowledge* (New York: American Book Company, 1897).

[43] Carl F. H. Henry, *Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1951).

[44] Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology*, 301.

[45] Henry, *Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology*, 229. Grant Wacker writes that Henry concluded that this tendency by Strong to try and find a middle way between modernist and fundamentalist ultimately weakened his theology because he "tried to build traditional doctrinal positions on post-Kantian premises." Grant C. Wacker, *Augustus H. Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 9.

[46] Carl F. H. Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief* (Wheaton, IL; Crossway Books, 1990), 49. In this publication of his Rutherford Lecture of 1989, Henry would emphasize the fundamental axiom of his theological method: "The Christian's primary ontological axiom is the one living God, and his primary epistemological axiom is divine revelation." Henry, *GRA. Vol. V*, 381. Also Henry, *Carl Henry At His Best* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1989), 167. See also Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961); and Clark's, *A Christian View of Men and Things: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Baker ,1952, 1981).

method of *reduction ad absurdum.*[47] Clark provides an example of how this method

is employed:

> Logical Postivism and the Oxford school of Analysis hold that religious
> statements are meaningless because they are not susceptible to sensory
> verification. Aside from formal tautologies, such as the principles of
> mathematics, no statement is meaningful (true or false), unless verifiable.
> But this axiom of verification reduces to absurdity because it violates itself.
> The principle is not subject to sensory confirmation and hence is nonsense.
> Granted this is not all a Christians evangelist should say to a Logical
> Positivist; it is not all that he should say about Logical Positivism; but the
> apagogic method must remain basic apologetic procedure.[48]

Henry would use this method with great precision.[49]

Another influence that would surface in the Henry's approach would be the

assertion of Bowne that one need not apologize, compromise or make excuses for

basic philosophical axioms. Bowne would say that the personalistic school had a

"perfect right 'to be loyal to its own insights, to acknowledge, with pride and

gratitude, its debt to Bowne, in short, to be a school."[50] Brightman would write, "I

do not see that we need apologize for having convictions, or for believing that

Bowne's fundamental insights are a permanent contribution to philosophical

opinion . . ."[51] Henry would echo his Boston professor:

> Each worldview has its distinctive starting point or touchstone thesis
> through which it attempts to unify and explain human experience. The

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[47] Gordon H. Clark, *Karl Barth's Theological Method* (Philipsburg, NJ: Trinity Foundation, 1963, 1997), 96.

[48] Ibid., 96–97.

[49] Henry, *GRA,* Vols.1-6, *The Drift of Western Thought*, and *The Remaking of the Modern Mind* are three prominent examples. It is an irony of sorts that two of Henry's major influences would be involved in the apagogic method. Gordon Clark applies this methodology to Brightman in Clark's, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, 232–46.

[50] Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology* , 302.

[51] Ibid.

Christian philosopher is under no intellectual compulsion, therefore, to accept rival premises, however fashionable, as the starting point for advancing his or her theistic worldview. And the nonbeliever cannot object that the axioms of Christian theism are derived from a source other than sense experience or mystical intuition or philosophical conjecture. The evangelical's confidence that Biblical theism is comprehensively explanatory is as legitimate a pre-philosophical assumption for formulating his or her truth claim as is the logical positivist's notion that only empirical confirmability rescues the term God from meaninglessness.[52]

Henry in the same address stresses this principle even more:

 Christian philosophers are ill-advised if, to make Biblical theism as palatable as possible to secular philosophers, they conform Christian claims to the alien and often hostile principles of non-Biblical thinkers. The validity of Christian theism does not depend on whether unbelievers find its presuppositions acceptable, or upon espousing only those beliefs that dissenting philosophers approve. Alvin Plantinga puts it, "[T]he Christian philosopher is entirely within his rights in starting from belief in God. . . . He has a right to take the existence of God for granted and go on from there in his philosophical work just as other philosophers take for granted the existence of the past, say or of other persons, or the basic claims of contemporary physics."[53]

Of axioms more will be said later.

2.5   Theological Foundations

As he was working on his doctorate in Boston during the summers, Henry would find time to write and publish his first attempts at formulating a Christian worldview, and it also showed the promise of the young budding theologian. In 1946, Henry published *Remaking the Modern Mind*. It has been said that in many ways this book was "the most significant of Henry's seminal works."[54] Henry

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[52] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 65-66.

[53] Ibid., 66.

[54] Paul R. House, "Remaking the Modern Mind: Revisiting Carl Henry's Theological Vision," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology: Carl F. H. Henry (1913–2003): A Tribute,* 8, no 4 (Winter 2004): 7.

wrote in the introduction that it was his conviction that the modern mind will only

come to maturity when its contemporary reversals are transmuted into a return to

that Christian theism which makes intelligible the scene of human activity."[55]

Henry surveys and critiques the modern mind and then makes a succinct evaluation

of the problem that modern man faces in the first half of the twentieth century: "the

modern mind is built on unreasonable precepts."[56] One of the aspects of the book is

that it introduced several important themes that surface consistently throughout

Henry's lengthy theological career: it stressed epistemology, methodology,

theological fidelity based on biblical revelation, and engagement with modern

thought.[57] Another professor would have a impact on the development of Henry's

thought during this period of his life. Henry would write in his autobiography that

while taking graduate courses at Indiana University he sat under W. Harry Jellema.

Jellema in Henry's words was

> a master teacher who taught history of philosophy. . . . He lectured
> methodologically and magisterially, sweeping over the broad cognitive
> vistas of Western thought with special alertness to the dilemmas of
> modernity. His interest in ontology and epistemology was at the same time
> an interest in moral philosophy and spiritual reality. He not only held
> Christian world-life intellectual convictions, but promoted Christian
> perspective as well, that is the need to think and live Christianly.[58]

> Jellema would make valuable suggestions on *Remaking the Modern Mind.* [59]

Henry would dedicate this volume to the "Three Men of Athens"—Gordon H.

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 8.

[58] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 109.

[59] Ibid.

Clark, W. Harry Jellema, and Cornelius Van Til.[60] The reason for the dedication

Henry would write that he was "inspired by correspondence with Gordon Clark . . .

by Jellema's lectures . . . by a continuing reading of some of Van Til's syllabi. The

dedication was to these three men who have sharpened my convictions by action

and reaction, in delightful philosophical interchange."[61]

Remaking the Modern Mind was published in 1946. Important as this first

volume was, in 1947 Henry would publish the *Uneasy Conscience of Modern*

Fundamentalism, which would launch Henry onto the national stage. In reviewing

the book, John F. Walvoord of Dallas Theological Seminary wrote that "Dr.

Henry's book may well prove to be one of the most provocative volumes to come

from the evangelical press for some time."[62] The reason for the characterization

was that in light of the fundamentalist adherence to the authoritative Word of God,

they (the fundamentalist) "ought to have an uneasy conscience in regard to their

silence concerning the Christian answer to the political, social, and moral problems

of our day."[63] Henry would take this charge to heart and this small work would

serve as the clarion call for evangelical engagement with the culture. The

significance of this book cannot be overstated. "One of the few matters of

evangelical historiography that all sides of the evangelical debates can agree on is

the role of Carl Henry's 1947 manifesto *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern*

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[60] Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind*, 5.

[61] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 111.

[62] John F. Walvoord, "Book Reviews: *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 104 (July 1947): 363.

[63] Ibid.

Fundamentalism in shaping the theological definition of the founding era."[64]

Chapter 3 will undertake a more thorough examination of the historical and theological significance of *The Uneasy Conscience*.

In that same year Henry would leave Northern Baptist Seminary for the newly formed Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.[65] Joining the faculty of Fuller was significant in that Fuller was started with the intention of becoming the flagship institution of a revitalized and intellectually respectable fundamentalism.[66]

Henry's role in the founding of Fuller and its impact on evangelicalism will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 4. Rolland McCune would write that it was

> the prodigious pen of Carl F. H. Henry that in the 1940s and 50s did the most to raise the issue of fundamentalism's intellectual want and tried to elevate the standard of evangelical/fundamentalist scholarship and the intellectualism of the day. And it was Henry who did as much or more early on to set the scholastic tone and academic standards of the new evangelicalism's flagship of learning—Fuller Theological Seminary.[67]

McCune was correct in saying that the pen of Henry was prodigious. During this period Henry wrote significant volumes that elevated the respectability of the

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[64] Russell D. Moore, "The Neo-Fundamentalism of the Evangelical Left: Post-Conservative Evangelical Proposals as Reversal of Evangelical Doctrinal Development" [paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, GA, November 21, 2003].

[65] George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids:. Eerdmans, 1987, 1995), 56, 57, 59, 75–82. In this volume Marsden provides a comprehensive account of the role of Fuller Seminary in the early development of evangelicalism.

[66] Hutchens, *Knowing and being in the context of fundamentalist dilemma,* 66–67.

[67] Rolland D. McCune, "The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal 4* (Fall 1999): 123–24.

growing neo-evangelical (later to be called simply evangelicalism) movement.[68]

Henry would publish fifteen books during the 1940s and 1950s. He would serve as

editor on two other series during this period as well.[69] Henry released a book in

1948 titled *The Protestant Dilemma*.[70] The dilemma that Henry analyzed was "that

Protestantism had embraced and now generally rejected Modernism by 1948, and

now was turning to the neo-supernaturalism of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner."[71]

Henry would critique the liberal view of revelation, sin, and the person of Christ.

Walvoord again would give Henry high praise for his latest book. . . . "With

unusual insight, the author unmasks the inadequacy of liberal concepts of revelation

and demonstrates the necessity and importance of Biblical revelation."[72]

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[68] Cf. William Bates, "The Writings and Publications of Carl F. H. Henry: A Preliminary List," Henry Center, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. http://www.henrycenter.org?carl_henry_pub_works.php (accessed September 17, 2007).

[69] Gale Reference Team, "Contemporary Authors-2004 Biography – Henry, Carl F(erdinand) H(oward) (1913-2003), http://media-server.amazon.com/exec/drm/amzproxy.cgi/MjgwIItVfUj4om38Kzcr2z/03gK (accessed April 12, 2007).

[70] Carl F. H. Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948).

[71] House, "Remaking the Modern Mind: Revisiting Carl Henry Theological Vision," 9.

[72] John F. Walvoord, reviews of *The Protestant Dilemma* by Carl F. H. Henry," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 106, no.423 (July 1949): 377. A criticism of Henry's *The Protestant Dilemma* is found in a review by Earl E. Zetterholm, review of Carl F. H. Henry: *The Protestant Dilemma*," *Westminster Theological Journal* 12 (November, 1949): 117. The reviewer criticizes Henry in "his almost complete refusal to deal with dialecticsm's divorce from history from the Christian faith and to deal with the theology of dialecticism on the basis of that divorce. . . . But are the dialectical views . . . any higher than their liberal predecessors? Liberalism was at least somewhat willing to rest its case on the dictates of history. . . . But the dialecticians refuse to take any cognizance of history. Such a procedure involves them in an even baser denial of the high doctrines of orthodoxy. This is the thing that Dr. Henry apparently, in company with the greater part of fundamentalism, has failed to appreciate." What may have been in weakness in Henry's critique of neo-orthodoxy in the present work under review was certainly rectified in *GRA* as neo-orthodoxy and its anti-historical bias was treated at length.

Augustus Cerillo Jr. and Murray W. Dempster write incisively of Henry's shaping influence and his importance to the development of evangelicalism: "During these formative years of evangelical renewal Carl F. H. Henry, more than any other individual, led the way in formulating the apologetic for a socially relevant evangelicalism. His early writings are routinely cited as the main instigators in the awakening of contemporary evangelical social concern."[73] Cerillo and Dempster would go on to say that:

> More important than Henry's NAE involvement for the long-term resurgence of social and political concern among evangelicals was his scholarly work. . . . Henry gave formative intellectual direction to the evangelical cause. Appalled that the Biblical world-life view no longer shaped modern cultural, intellectual and political thought, Henry in 1946 wrote *Remaking the Modern Mind* to confront the naturalistic and humanistic assumptions underlying much of modern life. . . . If in Remaking the Modern Mind Henry challenged the philosophic assumptions of modern thought, in The *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947) he summoned his fellow evangelicals to develop Biblically-based contemporary worldview and social ethic. This volume covets for the whole evangelical movement Henry wrote, a new life and vigor on the destitute world front.[74]

House writes, "*The Protestant Dilemma* asserted Henry's conviction that that explication of the implications of the full authority of the Bible is the key to the problems of revelation, sin, and the life and work of Christ."[75] These were the major issues that Henry addressed in the book. *Remaking the Modern Mind*, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* and *The Protestant Dilemma* set the ground work and laid the foundation for much of what would follow in *GRA* These three

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[73] Augustus Cerillo Jr. and Murray W. Dempster, "Carl F. H. Henry's Early Apologetic For An Evangelical Social Ethic, 1942–1956," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34, no.3 (September 1991): 366.

[74] Ibid.

[75] House, "Remaking the Modern Mind: Revisiting Carl Henry's Theological Vision," 11.

books also set his conviction that Christian theology should be philosophically tenable and applied in a worldview that intersects life at the crossroads.[76] In this fundamental commitment of Henry one can see the influence of Brightman[77] and also the influence of James Orr:

> It was James Orr's great work, *The Christian View of God and the World*, used as a Senior text in theism, that did the most to give a cogently comprehensive view of reality and life in a Christian context. . . . What I do maintain is that all Christian learning must be for the sake of worship and service to God in the world, and that we are deceived if we think that our own schematic skills or speculative theories or politico-economic proposals make the Bible meaningful and credible to the contemporary world. The case for Christianity does not rest upon our ingenuity; it rests upon the incarnate and risen Lord. The Bible is meaningful as it stands; it is we, not the Scriptures, that need to be salvaged. Unless evangelical education understands Christianity's salvific witness in terms of the whole self-intellect, volition, emotion, conscience, imagination-and of the world in its total need-justice, peace, stewardship and much else-it cannot adequately confront a planet that has sagged out of moral and spiritual orbit.[78]

This understanding would guide Henry for the rest of his remarkable career.

2.6   Theological Maturation

The 1950s would continue to be a very productive time for Carl Henry. His William Bell Riley Lectures at the Northwestern Schools would be released at *The Drift of Western Thought.*[79] In this book Henry reiterates in a much tighter fashion much of what he had written his earlier three volumes that have been addressed. Also in 1951 his dissertation from Boston University was published. In this volume entitled *Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology*, Henry identifies the

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Cf. pp 12–15 of chapter 2.

[78] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 75–76.

[79] Carl F. H. Henry, *The Drift of Western Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951).

philosophical underpinnings (neo-Kantian presuppositions) that opened the door for

theological compromise.[80] Henry in the introduction would say that "Augustus H.

Strong had sought to at the turn of the century of to mediate between the two

spheres, by an appeal to the idealistic tradition as well as to the Christian

revelation."[81] Strong attempted to meditate "orthodox rationalism and

historicism."[82] Unfortunately, his attempt failed; and in part due to his apparent

fuzziness, he has in many ways been left to the dustbin of history.[83] Henry's

analysis of Strong's theological method really brought into focus for Henry the

importance of epistemology. As Hart brings out in his review of Wacker's book on

Strong;

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[80] Grant Wacker, *Augustus H. Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 8. See also *The Drift of Western Thought*, 53–54. See also Ronald H. Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1982), 17–34. Nash gives a condensed but very helpful view of the history of the philosophical development starting with Hume and ending with Kant and Ritschl. Nash shows the effect that their thinking had on the theological world. Gary Dorrien, *The Barthian Revolt in Modern Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 14–46. Dorrien highlights the effect that Kant's philosophy had on theology. He chronicles the development of liberal theology that eventually lead to the development of neo-orthodoxy. Barth would lead the break from liberal theology by the development of "crisis theology." But it would Barth's teacher, Herrmann who had a thorough going commitment to neo-Kantian epistemology who set the stage for Barth's attack on liberalism. "Herrmann adopted an outright Kantian account of the kinds of knowledge knowable to philosophy while insisting that the reality known to true religion is another kind of knowledge. Kantian philosophy saved a place for religion by reducing faith to a postulate of morality, but this strategy rendered reality known to religious faith as an object of human creation" (p.19). Henry would react strongly to this type of theology. It will be taken up in more detail in a later chapter.

[81] Henry, *Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology*, preface. Mark Noll adds to this observation of Strong in *Between Faith and Criticism* when he writes that Strong, a theological idealist, who under the influence of Borden P. Bowne adopted a view that all reality was personal, and God was the ultimate person. Bowne opposed all forms of evolutionary naturalism or simple materialism as violating the essential nature of reality. But he also opposed dogmatism or literalism. What really mattered was the development, expression and realization of personhood. Strong adopted this perspective and in doing so became less reliant on static-mechanistic apologetic theories of the 18th and 19th centuries. Strong wrote "ideas of development, so long as they could be tied to the divine, were no threat", (49).

[82] D. G. Hart, "Book Review: Grant Wacker: *Augustus H. Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*," *Westminster Theological Journal 48* (Spring 1986): 202.

[83] Ibid., 201.

The real source of Strong's theological elusiveness is the clash in epistemic assumptions that was raging throughout the western world: the conflict between orthodox rationalism and historicism. This conflict is the focus of Wacker's study and Strong serves as the proving ground. The historicist belief that "all creations of the human mind and heart are products of the historical processes that fashioned them; that all ideas, values, institutions, and behavior patterns known to human beings are produced by human beings, and therefore bear the imprint of the historical setting in which they emerge, posed a fundamental challenge to American Protestants, especially concerning the nature and authority of Scripture." Amplifying George Marsden's argument that the modernist-fundamentalist controversy was actually an epistemological rather than a doctrinal quarrel, Wacker uses Strong to demonstrate the antagonism between the ahistorical assumptions of Protestant orthodoxy and the historicist presuppositions of modern thought.[84]

This disjunction in presuppositions will be addressed in greater detail in chapter 3.

Henry saw that in Strong's thought there were two distinct periods of theological development. The first stage that encompassed the years (1876–1894) were beliefs that were "uncompromisingly fundamentalist." The second stage in the years (1894–1922) placed greater emphasis on "divine immanence which characterizes idealistic thought."[85]

Henry traced in chronological order the development in Strong's thought. *Strong's Lectures on Theology* (1876) was his first effort at a systematic theology. Henry observes that Strong was "essentially fundamentalist in its insistencies, to which he adhered at that time."[86] Strong's *Systematic Lectures* underwent numerous revisions until 1907, which was the final revision. The 1907 revision showed the

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[84] Ibid., 201–202.

[85] Henry, *Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology*, 15–16.

[86] Ibid., 13.

definite influence of the personalistic approach. Henry took careful pains to define

Strong's understanding of personalism:

> The designation of "personalistic idealism" is applied with some reserve, but
> it will appear, nonetheless justifiably. The reserve grows out of the
> circumstance as the specific time of Strong's idealistic affinities,
> personalism or personalistic idealism was not a common designation, and
> Strong himself assigned the phrase "ethical monism" to his view. But in our
> day the words "personalistic idealism" serve to identify one's position
> almost at once as involving a spiritual view of reality, whereby all existence
> is regarded as the nature of conscious experience, and an insistence that
> individual selves are not parts of God, as attested by man's freedom and his
> moral failure. Since this combination of "metaphysical monism" and
> "psychological dualism"—to use Strong's characterization—is represented
> today by the personal idealists, and since it was espoused influentially in
> Strong's day by Borden P. Bowne, who applied the term "personalism" to
> his system in 1905, the designation "personalistic idealism" is employed in
> the interest of clarity from a contemporary perspective.[87]

It is at this point that Henry identifies the weakness that Strong's embracing

of personal idealism becomes most apparent. It is in Strong's epistemology that

paves the way for the eventual eroding of sure theological footing. Henry

consistently asserted the sure footing of a world-life view anchored in biblical

theism. In *Remaking the Modern Mind,* Henry writes that in some "forms of

idealism the Absolute is identified as the world as a whole, transcending each

particular part, but not transcending the natural universe, and in some writers the

identification of the Absolute and the world is not so clear. They will speak of God

as creative; they will allow God to have thoughts that are not part of external nature;

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[87] Ibid., 12–13.

and thus they will try to preserve the concept of transcendence."[88] He will go to

identify that idealism is, in fact, an inconsistent form of humanism.[89]

       This change in mooring from biblical theism to one of the variant forms of

humanism has resulted in a replacement from prayer to a supernatural Person to a

harnessing of natural forces by human cooperation. The effect is that religion is

excluded from the human experience and human values are found in science,

morality and art.[90] Henry goes on to develop his argument that in spite of the fact

that the temper of the day (1940's) was overtly humanistic, there were calls for

religious instruction in public schools. This, however, brought with it a serious

question; what religion should be taught? In the United States at this point in

history the largest segment of American Protestantism was modernistic in its

philosophical/theological moorings.[91] In Volume V of *GRA*, Henry traces the effect

of personalism:

> Yet the epistemological priority of special revelation is obscured even by
> some evangelical theologians who avoid the errors of Aristotelian
> conceptualism and Brightman personalism. Hodge, who frequently invokes
> the common consensus of mankind on philosophical issues, and even more
> notably A.H. Strong, in view of his later conscesssions to personalism of the
> Lotzean-Bowne variety, detail the divine attributes by a mixed appeal to
> general and to scriptural revelation, leaving us unsure whether the nature of
> God can be adequately expounded through both approaches and whether
> either of has priority in the definitive exposition of the divine nature.[92]

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[88] Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind*, 9.

[89] Ibid.,10.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., 19–118; *The Protestant Dilemma*, 17–29. See also Toon, *The End of Liberal Theology*, 45–80.

[92] Henry, *G.R.A.,* 5:134.

It was the ability to penetrate deeply to the foundational issues that gave

Henry a rising voice in the development of neo-evangelicalism. Henry would

toward the end of his long and distinguished career put in a condensed form the

essence of disparate forms of theological approach that led to the cacophony of

theological voices that were heard in the twentieth century. Henry's skill in

dissecting the views of the competitors of orthodox Christianity will be given more

attention in chapter 5. However, in light of his penetrating critique of the weakness

of Strong's theology, and the effect that Orr had on Henry in making the case for

the Christian life–view, it would behoove one to look quickly at the relationship

between revelation and reason. The exposition of this relationship would occupy

considerable space in the theological writings of Henry throughout his career.

Henry offers a more viable way to do theology and after critiquing to deficient

views proffers what he considers to be the "3rd way."[93]

2.7   A Theological Via Media

In his Rutherford Lectures (1989), Henry discusses the three prominent

views of looking at the relationship of revelation and reason: "the Tertullian way,

the Augustinian way, and the Thomistic way."[94]

> The so-called Tertullian view . . . excludes rational tests as inappropriate to
> revelation; indeed revelation, it is said, confronts human reason as an
> absurdity or paradox and must be accepted solely on its own intrinsic
> ground. Accordingly to this fideistic approach, to seek in any way to justify
> revelatory faith on the basis of reason is to misconceive its nature; divine
> revelation calls for sheer faith in what necessarily confronts human reason

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[93] Henry, *GRA,* 1:392

[94] Henry, *Toward A Recovery of Christian Belief*, 103.

as a paradox. Christianity requires belief, so fideists claim, in what confronts the unregenerate mind as essentially absurd. In the fideist view, divine revelation cannot and must not be rationally tested for validity and truth. No preliminary validation is proper that admits or allows revelation only on rational or logical grounds.[95]

The Tertullian way was never typically Christian until it was appropriated by neo-orthodoxy and existential theologians. Tertullian's famous statement, "What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?" was answered by Henry in his book *Remaking the Modern Mind*. In that volume Henry dedicated it to the "Three Men of Athens." Those three men as already mentioned charted a course that Henry followed that Christians need to interact with the culture, and in principle philosophical engagement was a vital component of that interaction. Henry notes that Tertullian's emphasis falls not merely on the priority of faith but insists on a "radical disjunction between faith and reason: Christianity requires belief in what to the unregenerate mind seems absurd."[96]

Henry first proffered this view in *Remaking the Modern Mind* when he wrote that Christianity has long insisted on the intelligibility of its worldview. Tertullian's statement, "*Credo quia absurdum*" (I believe in the absurd) was never the dominant position of the early Christians. Christianity has never placed a premium on irrationality. Henry wrote, "Religious faith does not demand the cessation of reason, but lifts reason beyond the confinement of an intellect limited by finitude and darkened by sin."[97]

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[95] Ibid.

[96] Henry, *GRA*, 1:182.

[97] Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind*, 223.

The second view—the Augustinian way—lifted the intellect by working in concert with faith and revelation. The Augustinian way was followed broadly by Anselm, Luther and Calvin. It affirms that revelation and faith have a working relationship. Augustine's axiom of "*Credo ut intelligam*" (I believe in order to understand) highlights the implications of the biblical view. Henry writes, "Augustine emphasizes both the priority of belief and its incompleteness without understanding (or reason). Faith is a step on the way to understanding."[98] Like the Tertullian way, the Augustinian way begins with faith, but it steers clear of fideism. This view does not embrace the earlier position that there is a disjunction between faith and reason. Further it does not hold that divine revelation confronts human reason in a paradoxical way. The Augustinian way asserts that "humanity can comprehend God's revelation and moreover, can comprehend it prior to regeneration or special illumination by the Holy Spirit. Mankind in its present condition is capable of intellectually analyzing rational evidence for the truth value of assertions about God."[99]

> I believe in order to understand succinctly summarizes the Augustinian view of the relationship between faith and understanding. "Believe in order to understand" is the emphasis; without belief one will not understand. Reason still has its task, but on a new foundation and within a new climate. The revelation of the living God is the precondition and starting point for human understanding; it supplies the framework and corrective for natural reason.[100]

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[98] Henry, *GRA*, 1:183.

[99] Henry, *Toward A Recovery of Christian Belief*, 105. In this volume Henry does address *a priorism*, as he does in *GRA,*, vol 1 as methodology. At this point we do not want to delve into the theological methodology that will be examined in chapters 4 and 5.

[100] Henry*, GRA*, 1:183. This impinges on Augustine's *Logos* doctrine. It will be addressed in chapter 5. For a more detailed treatment of the *Logos* doctrine, cf. Ronald H, Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Lima, OH: Academic Renewal Press, 2003); and Gordon H. Clark, *The Johannine Logos* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1972, 1999).

The third view is known as the Thomistic way. The statement that summarizes this way is "*intelligo ut credam*" (I understand in order to believe). Henry writes that "the Thomistic way . . . made room for natural or philosophical theology as preparatory for revealed theology."[101] Thomas invokes philosophical theology or metaphysics that is open to anyone as the starting point for faith in God. Thomas uses a natural theology to argue for the existence of God. All of his arguments are based on sense observation with no reliance on divine revelation.[102] Henry makes this comment on Aquinas:

> Thomas Aquinas affirmed that, by reason alone, man can attain to the knowledge of the existence of God, the existence of the soul, and immortality; his "five-fold proof," developing Aristotelian premises, by which he sought to mediate Christianity to the Gentiles, provided a logical demonstration of God's existence, he affirmed. [103]

Henry makes this sobering observation of the Thomistic way:

> The modern mind by and large finds the Thomistic proofs unconvincing; those who hold them are, in the great majority, identified with a church which makes a denial of their cogency a serious offense. . . . Once the Thomistic "mediating proofs" lost their power of logical demonstration, many of those whose thinking was colored by Thomistic tradition felt Christianity was without further defense. In its appeal to natural reason, the Thomistic pattern contained within itself the seeds of its destruction.[104]

Given Henry's commitment to revelational epistemology and the effect that it could have in evangelicalism if asserted as a fundamental axiom offers a rival to the current emphasis on evidentialism that is in vogue within evangelicalism:

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[101] Henry, *GRA.,* 1:184.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind*, 231.

[104] Ibid.

The time is ripe to recanvass evangelical rational theism with its emphasis on the revelation and manifestation of the Logos as the critical center of theological inquiry. A new prospect for systematic theology is at hand, and a growing demand exists for a comprehensive world-view that does full justice to the real world of truth and life and experience in which man must make his decisions. In the Western world today only three major options survive. Sooner or later one of these will carry off the spiritual fortunes of the twentieth-century world. Each of these views, significantly, holds that man can know the ultimately real world. But each differs from the others in important ways about ultimate reality. One view is Communism, which dismisses the supernatural as a myth. The other views, to which neo-Protestant agnosticism has forfeited the great modern debate over the faith of the Bible, are Roman Catholicism and evangelical Christianity. The really live option, in my opinion, is evangelical rational theism, a theology centered in the incarnation and inscripturation of the Word (a theology not of the distorted Word but of the disclosed Word). This, I feel, offers the one real possibility of filling the theological vacuum today.
Evangelical Christianity emphasizes:
The universal as well as once-for-all dimension of Divine disclosure.
Authentic ontological knowledge of God.
The intelligible and verbal character of God's revelation.
The universal validity of religious truth.[105]

Henry makes this following application in light of the assertion of "evangelical

rational theism:"

> For Americans, the problem of God is more decisive for human life, liberty and happiness than the issues of the American Revolution two centuries ago. For Protestants, the problem of God is more decisive than the issues of the Protestant Reformation four and a half centuries ago. For Christians the problem of God is as decisive as the confrontation by Christ's disciples of the polytheistic Greco-Roman culture of their day, and of their own preparatory Hebrew heritage. For modern man come of age, the problem of God is no less decisive than was that ancient conflict between man's trust in the gods of pagan superstition and trust in the revelation of the sovereign Creator-Redeemer God. The problem of God now stands before us as the critical problem of the next decade, and it is the fundamental issue for all mankind.[106]

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[105] Carl F. H. Henry, "Where is Modern Theology Going?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 11, no.1 (Winter 1968), 11–13.

[106] Ibid., 13.

As Henry was writing this article in 1968, he may not have known how prophetic his words could be at the beginning of the twenty-first century when post-modern man still struggles, and maybe even to a greater degree, with the problem of God.

2.8   Institutional Development

Aside from Henry's early theological works that served notice of the rising theologian's acumen and influence, it would be two other events that would accelerate his growing influence: becoming a founding faculty member of Fuller Theological Seminary and later becoming the founding editor of *Christianity Today*. While these two ventures will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, it is necessary that they are mentioned here. It was the publication of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* that launched Henry into national prominence. But it would be his participation and influence in these two early evangelical ventures that would give Henry a platform for lasting influence. It is to the founding of Fuller that focus now turns.

2.8.1   Fulfilling Fuller's Vision

Charles Fuller articulates his vision to Wilbur Smith in the following letter:

I agree with you perfectly that if this school is to be, it should be the best of its kind in the world. It should stand out first, as being absolutely true to the fundamentals of the faith and second as a school of high scholarship. It note the four suggestions you mention which should dominate-particularly the study of the atoning work of Christ. I agree with you perfectly. Oh, brother, God has so laid on my heart the need for this type of school for training men for the preaching of the Gospel in these terrible days but I am not qualified to plan such a curriculum. I see this great need but I am not an educator. I must have help of men of like vision.
Charles E. Fuller to Wilbur Smith, October 7, 1946.[107]

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[107] George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 13. Marsden here in this volume provides a

Charles E. Fuller was an internationally known evangelist who had a vision

of a first rate academic institution committed to the fundamentals of the faith. Fuller

acting on this vision to have a school that affirmed the fundamentals of the faith and

coupled with a commitment to excellence in scholarship, found the cadre of

academics that would launch Fuller Theological Seminary.[108] Fuller was a

renowned radio evangelist who counted a nationwide radio listening audience.

Fuller ministered for decades on the radio and in evangelistic meetings held across

the United States. It would be late in his ministry that Fuller believed he was being

led by God to start a school that would be first rate in scholarship and at the same

time hold to the fundamentals of the faith.[109]

There were also other factors at play that lent itself to the timing being right

for the launch of the new school. Fuller's biographer records, "A common

complaint in the 1940s during the developing new evangelicalism was

fundamentalism's lack of scholarship and general lack of ability."[110] In light of the

scholarship that just a generation or so earlier was displayed by Hodge, Warfield,

Machen and the publication of *The Fundamentals (1910-1915)*, it is in fact

shocking that the perception could have shifted so dramatically in such a relatively

comprehensive account of the founding of Fuller Seminary, the many personalities involved in its founding and its impact in evangelicalism. Marsden notes (ix) that Donald Dayton criticizes his work for "giving too much emphasis to the doctrinal controversies over 'orthodoxy,' especially the battle over the battle." Donald Dayton, "The Search for the Historical Evangelicalism: George Marsden's History of Fuller Seminary as a Case Study," *Christian Scholar's Review* 33 (September 1993): 12—33.

[108] Daniel P. Fuller, *The Story of Charles E. Fuller: Give the Winds a Mighty Voice* (Waco, TX: Word, 1972), 189–227.

[109] Ibid., 116–96.

[110] McCune, "The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings," 121.

short period of time.[111] There are several factors that attributed to this perception.

On the popular level the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial in Dayton, Tennessee, had a lasting impact on fundamentalism. The press coverage was intense, on par with the coverage that Charles Lindbergh's transatlantic flight received. While John Scopes was found guilty of teaching evolution, a violation of Tennessee state law, a decision that was reversed on appeal; the real losers were those that held to fundamentalist doctrine— namely, the Genesis account of the creation of the universe. Clarence Darrow, an ACLU lawyer who represented John Scopes, embarrassed William Jennings Bryan during the trial. A more lasting and damaging outcome of the trial was the "press's caricature of fundamentalists as rubes and hicks and discredited fundamentalism and made it difficult to pursue further serious aspects of the movement."[112]

In covering the trial, H. L. Mencken painted a picture of the fundamentalist position that misrepresented it to the degree that if would not recover. Marsden notes,

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[111] Mark Knoll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 11–46. The relationship of fundamentalism and the new evangelicalism will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

[112] George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 60. This popular notion that Scopes Trial had the major negative effect is disputed. Gerald Priest, a professor of Historical Theology at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary writes, a "careful examination of the facts indicate that this stereotype is undeserving of both Bryan and the fundamentalist movement. In his masterful evaluation of the trial, Paul Waggoner documents the fact that during the first few years following Dayton (19251931), 'critical observers did not regard the Scopes trial as a turning point in the fundamentalist controversy.' It was not until what he calls the 'second phase,' running from 1931 to about 1965, that the critical view, or 'new consensus' view as he calls it, came into vogue" cf. Gerald Priest, "William Jennings Bryan and the Scopes Trial: A Fundamentalist Perspective" *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal 4* (Fall 1999): 72. Mark Noll writes that more significantly for the change in the perception of fundamentalism was that change in the universities and colleges in the United States from 1865 to 1900. Additionally, the internal effect of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy that had two parts—first general legacies left to the intellectual life by fundamentalism and second, the specific intellectual problems created by the widespread adoption of Holiness, Pentecostal and dispensational theologies. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994),109–45.

Two things had changed in the image of fundamentalism now presented by Mencken. Its meaning had expanded considerably. "Fundamentalism" now applied to almost every aspect of American rural or small-town Protestantism. Only those facets that might include a modicum of intellectual respectability, integrity, or social value were excepted. Fundamentalism thus ceased to refer to specifically to groups within identifiable Protestant traditions and organized in opposition to modernism. . . . Another consequence of the Menckenesque caricature of fundamentalism that held sway after 1925, was the obscurantist label that would ever after stick to fundamentalist. . . . Whatever they said would be overshadowed by the pejorative associations attached to the movement by the seemingly victorious secular establishment.[113]

To combat this widespread perception, Fuller knew he needed to find the right man. What compelled this successful radio evangelist to want to start a theological school? Fuller's answers in this quote, "When Fuller was asked what the great ambition of his life was he often replied, 'My ambition is to see the world evangelized in this generation. I believe two things must be done before my responsibility has been fulfilled. First, to seek to be as effective as possible in preaching by radio; and second, to train other to preach."[114]

Fuller was a man of vision and action. However, he was also a man who knew his limitations. Driven by what he considered to be a mandate from God to start a theological school to train men to preach the Gospel, he was realistic about his self perceived qualifications. In a letter in 1946 Fuller solicited suggestions for the "right man" and even at times would suggest to those to whom he wrote was in fact "the right man:" Fuller's passion is clearly evident in this quote, "Oh, brother God has laid so heavily on my heart the need for this type of school for training

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[113] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 187–88.

[114] Fuller, *The Story of Charles E. Fuller*, 188.

men for the preaching of the Gospel in these terrible days, but I am not qualified to plan such a curriculum. I see this great need, but I am not an educator. . . . But I am confident this is God's plan, but it may not be His time."[115] But in time Fuller would meet the right man who would undertake the task of starting a theological school for the training of men to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Harold John Ockenga, pastor of Park Street (Congregational) Church in Boston (1936–1969) would be that man.[116] Ockenga was a man uniquely qualified for this task in Fuller's opinion.

In February of 1947 in the Palm Springs home of the Fullers, Ockenga and his wife spent three days of rest and relaxation with the Fullers. While on this holiday, Fuller took the time to show Ockenga property in Pasadena that would be the future home of the school, and then drove the Ockengas to Palm Springs. While there the two men talked about their vision for the school. It was apparent that the two of them were in harmony on what they believed to be essential for the school: scholastically sound training in scriptural exegesis, theology, and church history coupled with a vision for missions and evangelism.Ockenga believed that "the needs of the school would be served best by providing postgraduate theological training on the seminary level."[117] When questioned whether or not there were men available with the necessary academic credentials to start a seminary, Ockenga

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[115] Ibid., 197.

[116] Harold Lindsell, *Park Street Prophet: A Life of Harold John Ockenga* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1951); and Joel A. Carpenter, ed., *Two Reformers of Fundamentalism: Harold John Ockenga and Carl F. H. Henry* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988).

[117] Fuller, *The Story of Charles E. Fuller*, 198.

listed off a dozen or so men who would more than meet the necessary qualifications.

Ockenga was an energetic and capable leader. He had the academic credentials. He had attended Princeton Seminary and graduated from Westminster Seminary in 1930. At Princeton and Westminster, Ockenga studied under J. Gresham Machen and Corneilus Van Til. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh in 1939. He had been an assistant to Clarence MacCartney at First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh and was then called as pastor of Park Street Church in 1941.[118] Ockenga's fundamentalist credentials were concrete. He was concerned about the future of fundamentalism and developed a plan to carry it in to the future.

In 1942 Ockenga and J. Elwin Wright co-founded the National Association of Evangelicals. Leading up to this time there had been several associations or unions that had formed in an attempt to carry forward the fundamentalist doctrine that had come under attack during the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and the ensuring cultural fallout of the Scope Trial.[119] Ockenga and Wright did not want to perpetuate the separatist line that others had continued by separating from each other. Rather the NAE would still stand fast for orthodox doctrine but do so without the separatist mentality that had come to characterize and identify their fundamentalist brethren.

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[118] McCune, "The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings," 111. For an informative account of Clarence MacCartney, see Bradley J. Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[119] Rolland D. McCune, "The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part One): Historical and Theological Antecedents," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal 3* (Fall 1998): 19–35.

Ockenga had a deep desire and strong passion to see an evangelical revival take place not only in his city of Boston but also across the nation. He was one of the organizers in 1939 and 1941 of Charles Fuller's radio rallies in the nation's largest cities and arenas.[120] He had formulated a plan that was to meet this need for revival: "First, unity; fundamentalism faced a terrible indictment for its failures, divisions, and controversies. Rugged individualism was a millstone that must be repudiated. Second, doctrinal purity, an emphasis on the cardinal evangelical doctrines of Christianity. And third, consecrated love."[121]

As might be expected the NAE was criticized from both the right and the left. However, this criticism served to solidify in the hearts and minds of Ockenga and others that the time was ripe for those "who were convinced that the fundamentalism of the 1920s and 1930s was not suitable for the new generation of evangelicals and their vision for the future."[122] McCune quotes Weber:

> By the 1940s . . . many more moderate fundamentalist were convinced that their movement had become needlessly marginalized. They longed for the days when evangelical religion really mattered in American culture and decided to rid fundamentalism of its excesses and negative image and create a new evangelicalism.[123]

2.8.2 Finding the Right Men-Fuller Seminary

The focus shifts to Ockenga and Carl Henry as they along with a few other "Fundamentalist Stars" form Fuller Theological Seminary. "In May of 1947, radio

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[120] Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 189.

[121] McCune, "The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings," 112.

[122] Ibid., 114.

[123] Ibid., 115.

evangelist, Charles E. Fuller, Harold John Ockenga, Wilbur M. Smith, Everett F. Harrison, the New Testament professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, and I met at the Palmer House in Chicago to talk and pray about launching an evangelical seminary in California in September of 1947 or 1948."[124] Those talks would turn into substantive action that would change the face of the movement known at neo-evangelicalism:

> "Neo-evangelicalism was born in 1948 in connection with a convocation address which I gave in the Civic Auditorium in Pasadena. While reaffirming the theological view of fundamentalism, this address repudiated its ecclesiology and its social theory. The ringing call for a repudiation of separatism and the summons to social involvement received a hearty response from many Evangelicals. . . . It differed from fundamentalism in its repudiation of separatism and its determination to engage itself in the theological dialogue of the day. It had a new emphasis upon the application of the gospel to the sociological, political, and economic areas of life."[125]

Carl Henry would reflect back on this time during his autobiography and write of this time by saying:

> At that time Ockenga coined and approved the term neo-evangelical which in short order Bob Jones, Sr., and Carl McIntire and other fundamentalist critics targeted for abuse. The term, they argued, signified a compromise of biblical orthodoxy and so-called "old-time religion." I myself has previoulsy written of a "new evagenicalism: that reaffirmed cognitive and apologetic concerns and social engagment, although I used the term "evangelical" in and of itself adequate, preferrable and noncontroversial. In the series of essays on "The Vigor of the New Evangelicalism" tha appeared in Christian Life and Times between January and April of 1948, I noted: "The new evangelicalism voices its plea for a vital presentation of redemptive Christianity which does not obscure its philosophical implications, its social imperatives, its eschatological challenge, its ecumenical opportunity and its revelational base." Apart from such emphases, I added, fundamentalism's "forward march" will merely "mark time."[126]

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[124] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 114.

[125] Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), foreword.

[126] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian,* 117.

That Henry and Ockenga were in lock step on their vision for what would become

Fuller is evident from a famous sermon that Ockenga preached entitled "Can the

Fundamentalist Win?" Ockenga very cleverly borrowed from Henry Emerson

Fosdick's sermon title of 1922 "Shall the Fundamentalist Win?"[127] In doing so,

Ockenga did for the neo-evangelicalism what Fosdick did for the liberals of his day.

Both sermons were a call to arms. Ockenga's opening left little room for

reconciliation when he said that "fundamentailsm had been weighed in the balances

and found wanting."[128] Ockenga's complaint with the old guard fundamentalist was

not with their doctrine, but rather with their attitude. The separatist mood of the

fundamentalist camp has left the movement "alone and aloof."[129] Ockenga's

preface to *Henry's Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* furthered

cemented the break between the two groups:

> Fundamentalism in two generations will be reduced either to a tolerated cult
> status or, in the event of Roman Catholic demoniation in the United States,
> become once again a despised and oppressed sect. The only live alternative,
> it appears to me, is a rediscovery of the revelational classics and the
> redemptive power of God, which shall lift our jaded culture to a level that
> gives significance again to human life. . . . Those who read with competence
> will know that the "uneasy concience" of which I write is not one troubled
> about the great Biblical verities, which I consider the only outlook capable
> of resolving our problems, but rather one distressed by the frequent failure
> to apply them effectively to crucial problems confronting the modern mind.

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[127] Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy*, 9-11. In this brief account, Longfield sets the stage for the explosive sermon preached by a liberal Baptist preacher at the First Presbyterian Church of New York City, New York. Longfield cites a biographer of Fosdick that in the preaching of the sermon it launched the Presbyterian controversy. See also Robert M. Miller, *Harry Emerson Fosdick: Preacher, Pastor, Prophet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[128] Jack Heberer, "Evangelicals on the Ockenga Trail," *Presbyterian Outlook* guest view point of February 10, 2003. http://www.pres-outlook.com/HTML/haberer021403.html (accessed February 4, 2008).

[129] Ibid.

It is an application of, not a revolt against, fundamentals of the faith, for which I plead.[130]

Ockenga elaborated further on the distinction of evangelicalism:

> The new evangelicalism breaks with . . . three movements. The new evangelicalism breaks first with neo-orthodoxy because it (evangelicalism) accepts the authority of the Bible. . . . He (the evangelical) breaks with the modernist . . . in reference to his embrace of the full orthodox system of doctrine against that with the modernist has accepted. He breaks with the fundamentalist on the fact that he believes that the Biblical teaching, the Bible doctrine and ethics, must apply to the social scene, that there must be an application of this to society as much as there is an application of it to the individual man.[131]

Ronald H. Nash would say of evangelicalism, "It is our contention that evangelicalism is not 'new.' On the contrary, evangelicalism is a contemporary movement that is rooted deeply in the foundations of historic Christianity. It is simply and plainly Christian orthodoxy speaking to the theological, social and philosophical needs of the twentieth century."[132] Ockenga would underscore this point in an article where he would list the objectives of evangelicalism:

(1) Evangelicals want to see a revival of Christianity in the midst of a secular world which, because of its loss of contact with God, is facing imminent destruction.
(2) Evangelicals want to win new respectability for orthodoxy in academic circles. This requires the production of dedicated scholars who will be prepared to defend the faith on the intellectual's own ground.
(3) Evangelicals want to recapture denominational leadership from within the larger denominations rather than completely abandon these denominations to the forces of contemporary liberalism.
(4) Finally, evangelicals want to make Christianity the mainspring in societal reforms that it once was and that it ought to be.[133]

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[130] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, xv, xviii.

[131] Ronald H. Nash, *The New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), 14.

[132] Ibid., 177.

[133] Ibid.

With this distinction in mind and a firm commitment to academic excellence, Fuller

Theological Seminary opened its doors in September of 1947.

As with most endeavors they are started with excitement, enthusiasm and

great prospects for the future. This one was no different. Many things were still

unsettled in May of 1947— Ockenga was non-committal on being a resident

president, no registrar, the recent of purchase of the Cravens Estate, Henry and

others were still in other positions on the other side of the country (Fuller was to be

located in Pasadena, California). Henry wrote, years later albeit, of those days in

anticipation of the opening of Fuller:

> A common conviction gripped us of the need for what we envisioned: an
> evangelical seminary of uncompromising academic and spiritual priorities,
> and that granted professors built-in time for research and writing. Each of us
> knew that only the sovereign God could create such a seminary *ex nihilo* in
> less than four months. A spiritual imperative urged us on.[134]

Fuller Theological Seminary would play an important role in the development of

evangelicalism, a treatment that will await chapter 4. However, it would soon be

clear that the founders of Fuller Theological Seminary would exert a great influence

on evangelicalism and Carl Henry would be an architect in chief.

Henry would stay on at Fuller until 1956. It would be his move to be the

founding editor of *Christianity Today*, a new magazine venture that would propel

Henry to the very center of evangelicalism and give him a major platform in

shaping evangelicalism.[135] The idea for *Christianity Today* was Billy Graham's.

The seed had been planted by Wilbur Smith, a member of the founding faculty at

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[134] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 115.

[135] Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative Models of Response,"
110.

Fuller Theological Seminary. In 1951, Smith wrote in a letter to Graham giving him the vision for what would become *Christianity Today*: "We need a periodical so important that it would be absolutely indispensable for every serious minded Christian minister in America."[136] Smith may have planted the seed, but it would Graham in conjunction with his father-in-law L. Nelson Bell, that would put water on the new venture. The new magazine would be modeled on the *Christian Century*. Graham, who was receiving heavy criticism from both the right and the left in 1953, said that he was awakened in the middle of the night and went to a desk and outlined his plans for the new magazine. It would be an evangelical counterpart to the *Christian Century*. It would give "theological respectability to evangelicals" and show that among other things that there was a "concern for scholarship among evangelicals."[137] Graham and Bell approached J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil in regard to financially backing the proposed magazine. With Pew in financial support, the magazine began to take shape. Wilbur Smith had turned down the initial offer of being the founding editor. Smith and Henry were on the faculty at Fuller, and Henry records that Smith volunteered to him that Smith thought he [Henry] has the necessary training and gifts to "make it go."[138]

Henry took a one year's leave of absence from Fuller to become the founding editor of *Christianity Today*. Located in Washington D.C., theological

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[136] Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 158.

[137] Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 48.

[138] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 145.

conservatives now had a vehicle to promulgate their theological perspective. In the first issue, Henry outlined the magazine's goals:

> It will expound and defend the basic truths of the Christian faith in terms of reverent scholarship and of practical application to the needs of the present generation. *Christianity Today* will apply the biblical revelation to the contemporary social crisis, by presenting the implications of the total Gospel message for every area of life. This Fundamentalism has failed to do. The new publication will set forth the unity of the Divine revelation in nature and Scripture and will further seek to supplement seminary training with sermonic helps, pastoral advice, and book reviews by leading ministers and scholars.[139]

2.9   Conclusion

Carl F. H. Henry had arrived on the theological scene in the United States of America at a very opportune time. Having experienced a radical conversion, the young journalist set off on a career in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Henry pursues theological education in the context of the aftermath of the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy. The effects of the controversy were probably more pronounced in the Northern United States, affecting the Northern Presbyterians and Baptists to a greater degree than elsewhere in the country.

The controversy centered over the proper view of the Bible and its authority. The influence of the divine immanence (which annulled the distinction between the natural and supernatural), evolutionary theory and a higher critical view of the Scriptures caused a fissure in the foundation of Protestant Christianity in America.

While pursuing his theological education, Henry would meet, what would become his life long mentor, Gordon Clark, his wife, Bill Graham, and Edward John Carnell. These people would play a prominent role in the life of the

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[139] McCune, "The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two)," 143.

developing theologian. Henry's theological education, combined with his keen mind and journalistic skills would uniquely prepare him to meet this challenge to orthodoxy.

Henry would obtain degrees from Wheaton and Northern Baptist Seminary but it would be his study at the Boston University, studying under personalist philosopher Bordon Parker Bowne, that would serve to give Henry the academic standing that was, in his opinion, so desperately needed among those of a fundamentalist persuasion. Henry's Ph.D. dissertation critically examined A. H. Strong's wedding of orthodox theology with the new advances of contemporary theology (e.g., influence of the divine immanence, evolutionary theory and a higher critical view of the Scriptures). Henry's view was that Strong made too many concessions to the new theological theories that seriously eroded the foundations of scriptural authority.

Even before graduating from Boston University, Henry begins work on the first of three major works that would establish him as a leader in what would become known as neo-evangelicalism. The first work, *Remaking the Modern Mind* (1946), and the third work, *The Protestant Dilemma* (1948), established Henry's basic theological position and highlight his acute ability at critiquing decisively competing views that are divergent from the historic orthodox Christian position. It would be the second book, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947) that would launch Henry onto the scene of national prominence.

The Uneasy Conscience issued a call for fundamentalist to re-engage culture in fulfilling the Great Commission. As a consequence of the

Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy, fundamentalists had withdrawn from the culture. As caricatured by the Scopes Monkey Trial, fundamentalists were seen as obscurantist and uneducated. Henry, in *The Uneasy Conscience,* called for a re-engagement of the culture through social ministries and pursuit of theological education.

Two other events that would involve Henry would further cement his role as a leading evangelical theologian and leader. Henry became a founding faculty member of Fuller Theological Seminary and would be the founding editor of *Christianity Today*. Fuller was to be a theological school of the highest order. It would provide the theological status that was lacking in the fundamentalist world. Likewise, *Christianity Today* was founded as a conservative counterpart to the liberal magazine, *The Christian Century*. Carl Henry was an integral part in both new developments.

CHAPTER 3   **The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism:**
         An Exposition

3.1 An Evangelical Renascence

The term "Neo-evangelicalism" was coined by Harold John Ockenga in the

inaugural convocation address of Fuller Theological Seminary in October of 1947 in

Pasadena, California. But like any word, it needs context for it to have meaning. It

would be Carl F. H. Henry in the publication of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern*

Fundamentalism that would give neo-evangelicalism meaning and context. The term

was used "to represent the distinctiveness of the new viewpoint in contrast with

liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, the old evangelicalism, and especially fundamentalism."[1]

Distinctive it would be. Ockenga would write of the new distinctive and Henry would

be the one to give neo-evangelicalism its fullest expression.

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[1] J. A. Witmer, "Book Review. Neo-Evangelicalism by Robert P. Lightner," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 119, no.475 (July, 1962): 273. For a representative sample of the literature discussing "North American Protestant Fundamentalism." See Stewart G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1963); Norman Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy 1918-1931* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954); Ernest Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Intepretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," *Church History* 35 (March, 1967): 66–83; Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970); LeRoy Moore, "Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen," *Church History* 37 (June, 1968): 195–202, C. Allyn Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976); Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*; George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*; Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*; Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy*; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again;* Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Nancy Ammerman, *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Pres, 1987); Alan Peskin, *God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist School* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Emmanuel Sivan, "The Enclave Culture," eds. Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalism Comprehended* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Chap 1. For theological studies see James Barr. *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia; Westminster, 1978); and Kathleen Boone, *The Bible Tells Them So: The discourse of Protestant Fundamentalism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989); Harriett A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

John Walvoord wrote a review of Henry's book, *The Uneasy Conscience*, and in that review highlighted what would be the book's major impact: "Dr. Henry's latest book may well prove to be one of the most provocative volumes to come from the evangelical press for some time. The thesis of the book is well expressed in the title-Fundamentalist have or at least ought to have an uneasy conscience in regard to their silence concerning the Christian answer to the political, social, and moral problems of our day."[2] Walvoord had an inkling, but could he have known what would be said of this volume in the years to come? Russ Moore, in presenting a paper to the Evangelical Theological Society in 2000, said this regarding *The Uneasy Conscience*, "The theological manifesto of the neo-evangelical "third way" was Carl F. H. Henry's *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, a book which called for political activity not because of a pragmatic need to 'save America,' but because evangelical theological convictions demanded such action."[3] *The Uneasy Conscience* has been called "the manifesto of neo-evangelicalism."[4] This volume of Carl Henry has also been recognized as the work that "set the agenda for the new evangelical theology."[5] Gary Dorrien in *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* writes that Henry, following the critique of Ockenga, "published a manifesto for a new fundamentalism that echoed this perception of the fundamentalist crisis. *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* depicted an existing American

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[2] John Walvoord, "Book Review-The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 104 (July 1947): 362.

[3] Russell D. Moore, "From the House of Jacob to the Iowa Caucuses: Is There a Place for Israel in an New Evangelical Public Theology?" A paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society (Nashville, TN: November 16, 2000), 3.

[4] White, *What is Truth?,* 87.

[5] Anderson, "Carl F. H. Henry," 490.

fundamentalism as a marginalized retreat from the gospel mission to spread

righteousness throughout the world."[6] In contradistinction to the fundamentalist

tendency to withdraw and separate itself from the perceived evils of the world and a

less than doctrinally pure church, Henry wrote that authentic fundamentalism would

"reclaim the social mission of the gospel, discard those elements of contemporary

fundamentalism that cut 'the nerve of world compassion,' and rethink the importance

and nature of eschatological hope in Christian faith."[7] Bob Patterson in his biography

of Carl Henry notes the importance of *The Uneasy Conscience*:

> Better than anyone else, Henry articulated the weaknesses of fundamentalism, and firmly repudiated them. In 1947 he published a book, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, to point to the harsh treatment, a spirit of lovelessness and strife that had brought about the bankruptcy of fundamentalism. The fundamentalist had seen the heresy in liberal untruth but not in fundamentalism's unloveliness. In this "manifesto" of the new evangelicals Henry did two things that the fundamentalists had been unwilling to do: he criticized the fundamentalist theological tradition and he pointed the conservatives in some new directions.[8]

3.1.1   A Theological Manifesto

Joel A. Carpenter said of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*

that it was the "theological 'manifesto' of the nascent movement. Fundamentalism

was in danger of degenerating into a nega-tivistic irrelevance. . . . Henry argued that

'nothing is so essential among Fundamentalist essentials as a world relevance for the

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[6] Gary Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 53. Ockenga would had said in June of 1947 that fundamentalism as a movement was "fragmentation, segregation, separation, criticism, censoriousness, suspicion, [and] solecism."

[7] Ibid.

[8] Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry*, 39.

Gospel.'"[9] The lasting impact of the book would have had to have been surprising to

Henry when he wrote the book, because in his autobiography, *Confessions of a*

Theologian, he compared the book to one that Edward John Carnell had just written.

Henry said Carnell's book, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, was "durable,"

and his own book "seemed but a tract for the times."[10] Henry's work was not the first

that called for a vigorous intellectualism. Wilbur Smith, a colleague of Henry's on the

faculty at Fuller, had in 1945 published a book entitled *Therefore Stand: A Plea for a*

Vigorous Apologetic in the Present Crisis of Evangelical Christianity.[11] In Smith's

book he calls for "a new center of scholarship and academics that could turn out men

for the powerful defense of the faith in the great citadels of unbelief in our country,

and who would produce a stream of high caliber literature in defense of the faith."[12]

What made Henry's book a "manifesto?" It is to the answer that this study now turns.

3.1.2   Evangelical Direction and Fuel

Timothy George, writing with the perspective of history, makes the evaluation

that *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* gave direction and fuel for

the fledgling evangelical movement. *God, Revelation, and Authority* may be the

magnum opus of Henry's literary and theological career, but it was *The Uneasy*

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[9] Douglas Firth, "Book Review: The Two Reformers of Fundamentalism: Harold John Ockenga and Carl F. H. Henry," ed. by Joel A. Carpenter," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 33, no. 3 (September 1990): 414.

[10] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 121.

[11] Wilbur M. Smith, *Therefore Stand: A Plea for a Vigorous Apologetic in the Present Crisis of Evangelical Christianity* (Boston: W. A. Wilde, 1945), 498–507.

[12] Rolland D. McCune, "The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings," 128.

Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism that breathed fire into a developing

evangelicalism by "rejecting the failed theology of liberalism, discredited by the

devastation of two world wars, but also calling on fellow conservatives to a positive

engagement with society and culture."[13] George goes on to quote Henry as he looked

back at the beginning of the evangelical movement:

> What distressed the growing evangelical mainstream about the fundamentalist
> far right where its personal legalisms, suspicion of advanced education,
> disdain for biblical criticism per se, polemical orientation of theological
> discussion, judgmental attitudes toward those in ecumenically related
> denominations, and an uncritical political conservatism often defined as
> "Christian anticommunism" and "Christian capitalism" that, while politicizing
> the Gospel on the right, deplored politicizing it on the left.[14]

Joel Carpenter puts *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* into

historical and theological perspective by noting with its publication and with the

publication of *Remaking the Modern Mind*, Henry laid out a two–pronged agenda.

This two pronged agenda "called for the rescue of western civilization through a

powerful reassertion of an evangelical Christian 'world and life view,' and for the

reformation of fundamentalism in order to equip it for that task."[15]

> *Remaking the Modern Mind* (1946) was a sweeping examination of modern
> thought fashioned somewhat after the grand surveys of contemporary sages
> Jacques Barzun, Arnold Toynbee, and Reinhold Niebuhr. In it Henry argued
> that western culture was in a state of collapse and that its foundational
> humanistic faiths could no longer sustain it. In the midst of this crisis, Henry
> asserted, orthodox Christianity faced a historic opportunity to show that the
> "controlling ideas of the Hebrew-Christian world-life view" could the meet
> the cultural challenge. In *The Uneasy Conscience*, however, Henry argued that
> fundamentalism could not take up this challenge. It was more interested in
> curbing individual sin than combating social evil, more interested in divining

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[13] George, "Inventing Evangelicalism."

[14] Ibid.

[15] Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 199–200.

all the details surrounding the Second Coming than working to advance Christ's kingdom. Fundamentalism's ethical and social irrelevance was a scandal, for it trivialized the Gospel and abandoned the field of social reform to secularists and religious liberals. Yet fundamentalism could be redeemed, Henry insisted. If it recovered an evangelical social ethic and followed through on it, the world would witness another Reformation.[16]

3.2   Fundamentalist Flaws

Henry in *The Uneasy Conscience* levels his critical journalistic eye at the surface level weaknesses and inconsistencies of fundamentalism. He points out that fundamentalism rightly or wrongly was perceived as "anti-ecumenical spirit of independent isolationism, an uncritically-held set of theological formulas, and an overly-emotional type of revivalism."[17] Henry finds this perception all the more remarkable and lamentable given the attribution of "fundamentalist" was in light of doctrinal fidelity to the historic evangelical doctrinal fundamentals of modern orthodoxy. It was also seen in its historical context by the application made by the likes of J. Gresham Machen, whose articulate and vigorous defense of the relevance of the Christian message to world crises had so soon been forgotten.[18]

Henry recognized and argued for the consistent and realistic position that fundamentalism took in relation to the condition of man. In contradistinction to the vacuous and empty evaluation of mankind that liberalism offered, fundamentalism's answer that only the God of the Scriptures could rescue mankind from the disaster that imminently awaited him (especially in light of two world wars and now with the

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[16] Ibid., 200.

[17] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience,* 5.

[18] Ibid., 5-6. Cf. J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923, 1972).

looming threat of communism that faced the west), it was beyond comprehension that fundamentalism abdicated its mandated responsibility to meet these issues head on and instead focused, almost exclusively, on individual sins rather than social evil.[19]

3.2.1   Fundamentalisms Failure to Address Societal Ills

Henry points out in the concluding first section of *The Uneasy Conscience* that as a result of fundamentalism's inability, or unwillingness to address social ills, it has left the modern on–looker with a perception that there is something inherently deficient in the world-life view of historic orthodox Christianity. Additionally, there is an ingrained perception of pessimism that pervades fundamentalism's view of humanity that renders any practical social remedy impractical. The consequence of this perception was that in 1947 there was to Henry's view a massive void in the struggle for the heart and mind of modern mind that needed to be addressed. Henry was convinced evangelical Christianity had the answer and the impetus to step into the vacuum created by the aloofness and militancy of present day fundamentalism. He would not stand by and witness the dismissal of this expression (historic orthodox Christianity) of the Great Tradition with the view that humanitarianism has evaporated from Christianity:[20]

> Those who read with competence will know that the "uneasy conscience" of which I write is not one troubled about the great biblical verities, which I consider the only outlook capable of resolving our problems, but rather one distressed by the frequent failure to apply them effectively to crucial problems

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[19] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 7-8.

[20] Ibid., 10-11.

 confronting the modern mind. It is an application of, not a revolt against, fundamentals of the faith, for which I plead.[21]

In chapter 2 of *The Uneasy Conscience* Henry starts to build the case for a vibrant expression of "The Great Tradition" that can readily meet societal ills. He is troubled by the mounting awareness that given the global issues faced during the last part of the 1940s how a "world changing message narrowed its scope to the changing of isolated individuals."[22] Henry calls for a return to the passion of the early Church:

> A globe changing passion certainly characterized the early church, however much it thought within a redemptive pattern centering in Christ's substitutionary death and bodily resurrection. Had it not been so, Christianity would not have been the religion of the then-known world within three centuries. Some sort of a world passion had made the Christian message pertinent enough for rulers to want to bring their subjects in subjection to it. A Christianity without a passion to turn the world upside down is not reflective of apostolic Christianity.[23]

This situation is even more remarkable when one takes note of the fact that non-evangelicals operate with a misplaced and naïve confidence in man, growing out of a superficial view of reality. The evangelical believes that "the liberal, humanist, and the ethical idealist share a shallow sense of the depth of world need and an over-optimism concerning man's own supposed resources for far reaching reversal even of admitted wrongs."[24] And yet there was a despair and pall that hung over modern fundamentalism. It was despair that was rooted in the premillennialist and

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[21] Ibid., preface.

[22] Ibid., 14. Father Richard John Neuhaus writing in *First Things* magazine noted that prior to the publication of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, the default position of fundamentalism/evangelicalism was that "the only way to change the world is to save individuals one by one." Richard John Neuhaus, "While We're at It," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* (August 1990), 90.

[23] Ibid., 16.

[24] Ibid., 15.

amillennialist view. It was a view that there would be no appreciable wide spread

positive response to the Gospel. Henry writes:

> It should be emphasized that this despair over the present world order grows,
> for contemporary Fundamentalism, not out of any lack of confidence in the
> ability of the super-naturalistic Gospel. Rather, it issues from the fact that the
> Scriptures, as interpreted by premillenarians and amillenarians, hold forth no
> hope for the conversion of the whole world, and center upon the Second
> Coming of Christ as crucial for the introduction of a divine kingdom. The
> despair over the present age, then, is grounded in the anticipated lack of
> response to the redemptive Gospel, rather than any inherent defect in the
> message itself.[25]

Here was a problem that needed to be addressed, and Henry would address

this duality within evangelicalism for many years. The problem was not resolved

successfully by the early fundamentalists. However, the liberals had no better

solution. Liberalism deprecated supernaturalism, enthroned humanism, and ushered

in a thoroughgoing naturalism. In spite of its optimistic prognostications,

liberalism/humanism was left in the debris of the destruction fostered in two world

wars. Unfortunately for the fundamentalist, even though the inability of the

liberal/humanistic view of man was awash in failure, fundamentalism had forfeited a

golden opportunity to take center stage. "Fundamentalism became increasingly

absorbed in resistance to non-evangelical humanism as a deceptive competitor for the

commitment of the multitudes, and because of its prophetic cheerlessness about the

present age came more and more to narrow its message for the 'faithful remnant' that

would be called out of the godless world context."[26] Ronald Nash's observation in

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[25] Ibid., 18.

[26] Ibid., 18-19. After WWII the leaders of the then fledgling evangelical movement realized
that something more was needed than alliances against liberalism on the left, obscurantist
fundamentalism on the right and a rising tide of secular humanism. Henry's *The Uneasy Conscience*,
therefore, insisted that a socially and politically engaged evangelicalism could not penetrate society as

The New Evangelicalism (1963) wrote that fundamentalism, while seeking to defend

and preserve the orthodox message of the Scriptures from modernism, had failed to

continue the Apostolic and historic evangelical emphasis of cultural engagement. As

important as it was evangelicals to critique this weakness of fundamentalism, they

were insistent that they were in no way departing from the "'fundamentals' of the

faith."[27]

The main thesis of *The Uneasy Conscience* is, according to House,

"disarmingly simple."[28] House's analysis of the strategic and visionary contribution

of *The Uneasy Conscience* is very insightful:

> Henry argues that Fundamentalism's conscience is uneasy because it has
> neglected its God-given, biblically revealed mandate to engage the major
> cultural issues of the day in a biblically ordered manner. To support his thesis,
> Henry claims that Fundamentalism too often reduced ethical instruction to a
> list of "do's" and "don'ts" such as "don't smoke," "don't drink," and "don't
> go to the movies." This approach left the movement voiceless on social
> matters like sexual ethics, labor concerns, and political integrity. He noted that
> an overly negative view of what the church could accomplish before Christ's
> return partly fuelled this mentality, and claimed that concern for social ills had
> been illegitimately subsumed by the legitimate desire to win lost persons and

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long as the movement itself was saddled with internal theological skirmishes. According to Moore, Henry clearly saw that second and third degree separation would undue the "fledgling evangelical movement" as it had the fundamentalist movement. Henry further saw that a major threat against evangelical cohesion were the skirmishes between Reformed and dispensational theologies: "This lack of cohesion was even more important given that the bone of contention between evangelical covenantalists and evangelical dispensationalists was the concept Henry identified in Uneasy Conscience as most fundamental to an articulation of Christian sociopolitical engagement: the Kingdom of God" ("The Neo-Fundamentalism of the Evangelical Left," 4). Moore then goes to quote Sydney Ahlstrom, "[Dispensationalism] aroused strong resistance among American Protestants by denying what most evangelicals and all liberals firmly believed-that the Kingdom of God would come as a part of the historical process. They could not accept the dispensational claim that the all Christian history was a kind of meaningless 'parenthesis' between the setting aside of the Jews and the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom. This claim aroused violent reactions because it provided a rationale for destructive attitudes and encouraged secession from existing denominations. Especially objectionable was the tendency of dispensationalists to look for the Antichrist among the 'apostate churches' of this 'present age.'" Moore, "The Neo-Fundamentalism of the Evangelical Left," 4–5.

[27] Nash, *The New Evangelicalism*, 30.

[28] House, "Remaking the Modern Mind: Revisiting Carl Henry's Theological Vision," 8.

see them transformed. In other words, it was fine to help a drunkard get saved and sober, but it was not fine to take on the liquor trade as an industry or alcoholism as a social problem.

Most importantly, Henry claimed that Fundamentalism's belief in God's inerrant word compelled them to apply the scriptures to all of life. It is this point that takes Henry's indictment from the simple to the complex. Two points illustrate this complexity. First, his assertions about the Bible force fundamentalists and evangelicals to base their movements *completely* on biblical fidelity. Otherwise, criticizing liberals for biblical infidelity is a simple case of hypocrisy. Second, his approach forces believers into the difficult world of constantly forming a truly biblical worldview truly relevant to the times. Put another way, his claims make Christians become Bible saturated, theologically knowledgeable, applicationally adept, and socially committed individuals who want to build a better world, not just make a better life or small community. Claiming that the Bible both commands us to act and directs those actions takes Christians out of the realm of simplistic conversionism.[29]

Henry's blueprint would be played out in for the next five decades as Henry gave full expression to his basic axioms of divine revelation and the true and living God with all its implications.

3.3   Agents of Change

Fundamentalists had withdrawn from society and in doing so abdicated their biblically mandated assignment of cultural change. Cultural change would come as individuals were changed by the power of the Gospel. The effect of liberalism with its optimistic humanistic foundation, now discredited by the smoking embers of two world wars, had been long opposed by those that stood on the solid foundation of supernatural revelation. Henry gave voice to a rising concern among those that clung to the fundamentals of the faith. In 1947 Henry sensed a "troubled conscience in the modern liberal, growing out of his superficial optimism. . . . But so is the uneasy conscience of the modern fundamentalist, that no voice is speaking today as Paul

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[29] Ibid., 8.

would, either at the United Nations sessions, or at labor-management disputes, or in strategic university classrooms whether in Japan or Germany or in America."[30]

In *The Uneasy Conscience*, Henry insisted that the Christian message at its core is an ethical one. In chapter three Henry issues a provocative statement: "For the first period in its history, evangelical Christianity stands divorced from the great social reform movements."[31] Walvoord made the comment that Henry "intended this volume to provoke discussion and his purpose has already been fulfilled."[32] Henry desired more than just discussion. He was intent on seeing discussion move to a plan of action. He identified a foundational weakness that had manifested itself in the Fundamentalism of the 1940s. The fundamentalism of Henry's day had divorced itself from any identification with "the humanistic moralism of modern reformers."[33] And yet it was those very same "humanistic moralistic modern reformers" that were at the forefront of addressing the societal ills. This lack of engagement with the pressing issues of the day largely regulated "Protestant evangelicalism" to a

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[30] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 25. Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (Grand Rapids:. Eerdmans, 1957). In 1957 Henry would publish *Christian Personal Ethics* that would address in a more systematic and thorough treatment the implications of Christian social engagement. In this work Henry draws out the effect of "two convictions: that speculative ethics are impotent because segregated from revelation, and that Christian ethics are impoverished when unrelated to problems of secular morality (p. 16). Part I deals with speculative philosophy and shows its inadequacy. Part II systematizes Christian personal ethics," C. C. Ryrie, "Review of *Christian Personal Ethics* By Carl F. H. Henry" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115, no. 457 (January 1958):84–86. . Henry's develops these two convictions in the following way: "Naturalistic ethics involve 'the animalization of the moral life.' Idealistic ethics involve its "deification." The irrationalism of existential ethics merely intensifies the dilemma thus posed. The biblical ethic alone is able to resolve the ethical paradoxes without getting caught on either horn of this historical dilemma and without lapsing into irrationalism. This is due to its revelational origin as against the speculative origin of secular ethics." Arthur Holmes, "Review of Carl F. H. Henry: *Christian Personal Ethics*" *Westminster Theological Journal* 20, no. 2 (May 1958): 223.

[31] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 27.

[32] Walvoord, "Review of Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*," 362.

[33] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 28.

secondary or even more subordinate role when trying to "challenge the weaknesses of the prevailing cultural mood."[34] The present situation was nothing less than shocking to Henry. He noted that it was only in the present day, unlike earlier periods of Christian history where the implications of the Gospel message was seen in active social engagement, that modern fundamentalism had nothing to say to the modern mind on the great social issues.[35] Henry believed that contrary to the fundamentalist tendency to separate, Christians were to engage culture with a passion. In light of the biblical revelation Christianity that does not possess "a passion to turn the world upside down is not reflective of apostolic Christianity."[36] Henry maintained this position even when the attacks of the "militant fundamentalist" turned their sights on him and other "new evangelicals."

Contrary to the separatist element in fundamentalism, Henry in *The Uneasy Conscience* said that regardless of "the details of one's eschatology, the Christian worldview impels believers out into the world for the cause of Christ, to bring truth and justice into every area of life. Henry believes that both 'in Old Testament and New Testament thought there is but one sure foundation for a lasting civilization, and

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 30. Writing some years later Curtis Hutson, editor of the *Sword of the Lord* magazine, said, "Our responsibility is spiritual, not social; but the New Evangelicals have become increasingly enamored with the liberal line of a social conscience. . . . In the December 8, 1957, news release of Dr. Ockenga, he said, 'The New Evangelicalism differs from fundamentalism in its willingness to handle the social problems which fundamentalism evaded.' He went on to say, 'Fundamentalism abdicated leadership and responsibility in the societal realm and thus became impotent to change society or to solve social problems.' Purely social work is being given an unbiblical prominence in the New Evangelical circles. The church was never called to make the world a better place in which to live. We [fundamentalists] do not have a cultural or political mandate." Curtis Hutson, *New Evangelicalism: An Enemy of Fundamentalism* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1984), 17.

[36] Hutson, *New Evangelicalism*, 16.

its cornerstone is a vital knowledge of the redemptive God."[37] In that same vein

Henry continues to argue that societal change is exactly what Christians are called to

do:

> Hebrew-Christian thought, historically, has stood as a closely-knit world and life view. Metaphysics and ethics went everywhere together, in Biblical intent. The great doctrines implied a divinely related social order with intimations for all humanity. The ideal Hebrew or Christian society throbbed with challenge to the predominant culture of its generation, condemning with redemptive might the tolerated social evils, for the redemptive message was to light the world and salt the earth. No insistence on a doctrinal framework alone was sufficient; always this was coupled with most vigorous assault against social evils. . . . This theologico-ethical emphasis runs thorugh the Hebrew-Christian outlook. The ultimate values of Biblical supernaturalism are unchanging. New Testament ethics was no more entirely new than New Testatment doctrine. The moral, as well as metaphysical, concepts had their Old Testament foregleams, simply because the Biblical view as a whole was rooted in the creative and relational and regenerative God.[38]

Groothuis puts this aspect of Henry's thought into perpsective when he says

that "in order to recapture the mandate [the Christian life and worldview], Henry

charts a course that steers between the social pessimism and sectarianism of

fundamentalism and the desupernaturalized social gospel of liberalism."[39]

McCune comments on the essence of Henry's thought at this point: "Henry

derived his cultural agenda from the social comments of the Old Testament prophets,

John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth, and the Apostle Paul. But more to the point

theologically, Henry extracted his social imperative from the central message of Jesus

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[37] Ibid., 31.

[38] Ibid., 30-31.

[39] Douglas Groothuis, "Review of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*," Denver Seminary (accessed February 27, 2008).

Christ which concerned the kingdom of God."[40] Henry understood Christianity that was faithful to the "faith once delivered to all the saints" was as concerned about individuals as it was about whole cultures. Henry rejected the view that fundamentalism had embraced the view of indifference to social evils. He would write:

> if Fundamentalism is to express the genuis of the Christian tradition it would need to reassert: (1) That Christianity opposes any and every evil, personal and social, and must never be represented as in any way tolerant of such evil; (2) That Christianity opposes to such evil, as the only sufficienct formula for its resolution, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit.[41]

This view piont is demanded by the worldview contained in the Scriptures.

3.4   Dispensational Pessimism

In the next chapter entitled, "The Apprehension Over Kingdom Preaching," Henry takes to task the dispensationalist view of premillinenialism that had become the dominant eschatological view in fundamentalism:

> In dispensational Fundamentalism, the keynote of the postponement theory is "no kingdom now, but rather a future kingdom." Therefore modern Fundamentalism has not shared the sentiment for an immediate and forced bringing in of the kingdom. That mood, rather characterized modern liberalism, with its strategy for abolishing social inequities.[42]

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[40] McCune, "The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings," 118.

[41] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 40.

[42] Ibid., 42. According to the postponement theory, Jesus was to set up the Davidic kingdom at His first coming but, due to His rejection, the "mystery form" of the kingdom was introduced. As a consequence, the divine plan during this church age is concerned, it is said, only with "calling out" believers. This theory has gained wide support in the north during the past two generations; many persons automatically identify if not only with all premillennialism, but will all Fundamentalism. Johannes Weiss, Albert Schweitzer and others of the so-called "consistent school of eschatology," contend that Jesus, viewed as a gifted human prophet merely, preached only a future eschatological kingdom—a view that has remote affinities to the postponement theory with its one-sided futurist

Consequently, Henry notes that this lack of kingdom preaching in fundamentalist pulpits has created a class of spectators rather than empowered ambassadors. In reaction to the kingdom now preaching of liberalism, that based their optimism on a new social order of human making, modern fundamentalism "increasingly reflects a marked hesitency about kingdom preaching."[43] Henry records a warning that he received from a "Fundamentalist spokesman" when this book was first projected as a series of articles. The warning was "to stay away from the kingdom."[44] The reason for this warning is that at the time the whole concept of the kingdom of God carried too much liberal baggage for most fundamentalists: "There is a growing reluctance to explicate the kingdom idea in fundamentalist preaching, because a kingdom now message is too easily confused with the liberal social gospel, and because a kingdom then message will identify Christianity further to the modern mind in terms of an escape mechanism."[45] Henry believed it was his duty to call for a re-examination and re-study of the whole kingdom issue. This was in keeping with the teachings of Jesus Christ as the kingdom was frequently on his lips: "Yet no subject was more

emphasis, though of course there is here no thought of any offer of the kingdom to the Jews. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 47.

[43] Ibid., 43. In *Christian Personal Ethics*, Chapter 12 provides an excellent treatment of the Sermon on the Mount, its present literal relevance and its conflicting interpretations. The kingdom of God has both an individual and a social significance, in both the present and the future. Henry regards a premillennial eschatology as implied in the social significance of the biblical ethic and as mediating between the unwarranted optimism of postmillennialism and the pessimism of amillennialism. "A historical fall and a historical redemption would combine to suggest the reign of Christ at some point in history for a complete exhibition of his triumph." There will be "a new spirit infused into family, labor and governmental relations, and into literature, music, the arts, and the whole domain of culture" Holmes, "Review of Carl F. H. Henry: *Christian Personal Ethics*," 226.

[44] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 46.

[45] Ibid.

frequently on the lips of Jesus Christ than the kingdom. . . . It appears as the central

theme of His preaching."[46]

Henry goes on to give a more detailed explanation and application of kingdom

preaching and its import for the contemporary scene:

> No study of the kingdom teaching of Jesus is adequate unless it recognizes
> His implication both that the kingdom is here, and that it is not here. This does
> not imply an ultimate paradox, but rather stresses that the kingdom exists in
> incomplete realization. The task of the Bible student is to discover (1) in what
> sense it is here; (2) in what sense it is to be further realized before the advent
> of Christ; and (3) in what sense it will be fully realized at the advent of Christ.
> . . . The main difference between the kingdom of God *now* and the kingdom of
> God *then* is that the future kingdom will center all of its activities in the
> redemptive King because all government and dominion will be subjected to
> Him. The difference overshadows the question, however important, whether
> the future kingdom involves an earthly reign or not.[47]

It was also fundamentalism's eschatology that had resulted in this class of

spectators: "It was the failure of fundamentalism to work out a positive message

within its own framework, and its tendency instead to take refuge in a despairing

view of world history, that cut of the pertinence of evangelicalism to the modern

global crises."[48] Henry further criticized modern fundamentalism's aloofness. Having

already noted their indifference to social evils with a disproportionate emphasis on

personal sins, identified through a "do's and don'ts list," he made a proposal that he

hoped would redirect fundamentalism's redemptive word into a proper temporal

focus.[49] Henry closes this chapter with several recommendations:

> Contemporary evangelicalism needs (1) to reawaken to the relevance of its
> redemptive message to the global predicament; (2) to stress the great

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., 48–49.

[48] Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry: The Makers of the Modern Theological Mind,* 43.

[49] Ibid.

evangelical agreements in a common world front; (3) to discard elements of its message which cut the nerve of world compassion as contradictory to the inherent genius of Christianity; (4) to restudy eschatological convictions for the proper perspective which will not unnecessarily dissipate evangelical strength in controversy over secondary positions, in a day when the significance of the primary insistences is international.[50]

3.5 Cultural Engagment From the Cross

Following the exposition and applicaton of the import of a kingdom message, Henry then spends the next chapter entitled "The Fundamentalist Thief on the Cross" challenging the fundamentalist camp to re-engage culture with supernatural verities contained in the Scriptures. The reality is that man must come to terms with Jesus Christ. Henry gives a clarion call "to bring men everywhere to a knowledge of Jesus Christ."[51] After bringing a challenge that would resonate with fundamentalists, Henry then enumerates fundamentalist tenets that show how distorted it is to view fundamentalism in terms of eschatology only. Those tenets are:

(1) purposive and moral as over and against a purely mathematical uinverse
(2) a personal God as against an impersonal god
(3) divine creation as over against a naturalistic evolution
(4) man's uniqueness as a divine endowment rather than human achievement
(5) man's predicament is not an animal inheritance nor a necessity of his nature but rather a consequence of his voluntary revolt against God
(6) salvation can only be provided by God as against the view that man is comptent to save himself
(7) the Scriptures are a revelation lighting the way to the divine incarnation in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of mankind, as against the view that they stand among many records of religious experience without a difference in kind
(8) history is bound up with man's acceptance or rejection of the God-man, rather than that history is primarily what happens among nations

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[50] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 53–54.

[51] Ibid., 56.

(9) the future is not an open question, but that world events move toward an ultimate consummation in a future judgment of the race.[52]

Having these foundational beliefs safe guarded and grounded in the Holy Writ, the fundamentalist is without excuse in not engaging culture with these transformational truths. In advancing themes found in *Remaking the Modern Mind,* in the chapter entitled, "The Struggle for a New World Mind," Henry champions intellectual engagement with the secular world. This chapter would be played over and over in the ensuing years as Henry lays out a blueprint of intellectual engagment in theory and what he hoped would be practice. The first step is the development of competent literature in every field of study, on every level from grade school through the university that adequately presents each subject with its implications written from the perspective of the Christian and non-Chirstian view. Second, evangelicalism must prioritze the development of higher institutions of learning in order to counteract the endoctrination that occurs at state sponsored educational institutions. In order for this to become a reality, evangelical churches will have to redistribute on a massive scale the resources that God has entrusted to the church in the United States. The effect of this shift in educational paradigms will be that Christian expansion will find a more hospitable environment due to the impact of the spread of Christian convictions.[53]

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[52] Ibid., 57–58.

[53] Groothuis, "Book Review: The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism," web page. Groothuis in this review quotes from a J. Gresham Machen sermon entitled "The Scientific Preparation of the Minister," which preceded Henry but foreshadows the thrust of this chapter:

> False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or the world to be controlled by ideas which . . . prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. (Published in *The Princeton Theological Review*, XI, 1913).

In the next chapter entitled "The Evangelical Formula of Protest," Henry asserts that due to the confusion of non-evangelical thought of their vision for an utopian world the time was ripe for evangelical re-assertion of its supernartual answer to the foundational problem of mankind. Hnery asserted, "No framework is really relevant today unless it has an answer to the problem of sin and death in every area of human activity."[54] The evangelical options supplies that answer. But given the fact that evangelicalism has lost its prophetic voice to deal with all manner of society ills, how can evangelicalism reassert itself? Henry lays out a straightforward program to regain the platform that evangelicalism had in the nineteenth century:

> The path of the evangelical action seems to be an eagerness to condemn all social evils, no less vigorously than any other group, and a determination (1) when evangelicals are in the majority, to couple such condemnation with the redemptive Christian message as the only true solution; (2) when evangelicals are in the minority, to express their opposition to evivls in a "formula of protest," concurring heartily in the assault on social wrongs, but insisting upon regenerative context as alone able to secure a permanent rectification of such wrongs. Thus evangelicals will take their stand against evil, and against it in the name of Jesus Christ the deliverer, both within their own groups and within other groups. To do this, is to recapture the evangelical spirit.[55]

Henry was forthright in the concluding sentence of this section in that after having laid out a "formula of protest" he concludes by saying "just how to express such a protest in a positive way rather than a negative way, beyond a minority committee report, remains to be studied."[56]

The final chapter, "The Dawn of a New Reformation," Henry puts on par the need for a new reformation with the need for the first Reformation of the sixteenth

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[54] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, 77.

[55] Ibid., 79.

[56] Ibid.

century. It is Henry's view that the need for a vital evangelicalism was proportionate to the need found in the world. Not only must evangelicals address man's spiritual need but also they must address the politico-economic and sociological need as well. An evangelicalism that ignores the totality of man's conditions is an evangelicalism that has lost its savor and is in danger of being cast out. Henry writes that the implications are clear:

> The battle against evil in all its forms must be pressed unsparingly; we must puruse the enemy, in politics, in economics, in science, in ethics— everywhere, in every field, we must pursue relentlessly. But when we have singled out the enemy—when we have distangled him from those whose company he has kept and whom he has misled—we must meet the foe head on—gift in Gospel armour. Other may resist him with inadequate weapons; they do not understand aright the nature of the foe, nor the requirements for victory. We join them in battle, seeking all the while more clearly to delineate the enemy, and more precisely to state the redemptive formula.[57]

Henry calls for action. Unlike non-evangelical options, which declare success when a resolution is passed or when a book was written, action is what Henry is calling for from the evangelical camp. The primary means is the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Man's problems, whether individual or social, are best met by the redemptive message that was declared and embodied in Jesus Christ. The answer for today's problems are just like the answer that was provided by the apostolic church for its society. When the message of Jesus Christ is "out-lived" in the twentieth century just as it was in the first century, "the modern mind will stop casting about for other solutions."[58]

The problems that are faced by contemporaty society are much more complex than the problems faced in the first century. Henry's assessment is insightful:

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[57] Ibid., 86.

[58] Ibid., 89.

The great contemporary problems are moral and spiritual. They demand more than a formula. The evanglelicals have a conviction of absoluteness concerning their message, and not to proclaim it, in the assault on social evils, is sheer inconsistency. But the modern mood is far more likely to react first on the level of Christianity as a life view, than at the level of Christianity as a world view. Obviously, from the evangelical viewpoint, the two cannot be divorced. But from the non-evangelical viewpoint, a baptism of pentecostal fire resulting in a world missionary program and a divinely-empowered Christian community would turn the uneasy conscience of modern evangelicalism into a new reformation-this time with ecumenical significance.[59]

3.6 The Uneasy Conscience Revisited

When Henry finished writing *The Uneasy Conscience* in 1947, he had big dreams for what evangelicalism could become. The time was ripe. The message was exactly what was needed for the social and individual needs that were being faced. The message and challenge were bold. But what was the effect? For a more detailed look at part of the answer to the question the following chapter will address, but in 1988 Henry would take a look back in a chapter entitled "The Uneasy Conscience Revisted" in his book *Twilight of a Great Civilization*. In *Twilight of a Great Civilization*, Henry warns of coming barbarian invasion, in rejecting fixed truth based upon the God of creation as revealed in the Bible, that threatens the very foundation of Western Civilization:[60]

Modernity deliberately experiences this new [pagan] morality as an option superior to the inherited Judeo-Christian alternative. What underlies the atheistic commitment to novel sexual and marital and political patterns is a stultification of Biblical conscience, an irreligious redefinition of the good, a profane will set. . . . A half-generation ago the pagans were still largely threatening at the gates of Western culture; now the barbarians are plunging into the . . . mainstream. As they seek to reverse the inherited intellectual and

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[59] Ibid.

[60] Carl F. H. Henry, *The Twilight of a Great Civilization* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988), 15–16.

moral heritage of the Bible, the Christian world-life view and the secular world-life view engage as never before in rival conflict for the mind, the conscience, the will, the spirit, the very selfhood of contemporary man. Not since the apostolic age has the Christian vanguard faced so formidable a foe in its claims for the created rationality and morality of mankind.[61]

It was in this setting of warning that Henry revisit *The Uneasy Conscience.* His concern at the time was still a prevailing concern, and in light of the events of the ensuing decades, one that was more pessimistic than when he first wrote in 1947. Ray S. Anderson provides an outline of *The Uneasy Conscience*: "Here he called for a renewed conern for social issues, serious interactions with sciene and culture, and above all, a renewed commitment to biblical theism as the the basis of an apologetic which focused on the theological essentials on which evangelicals coud unite, not on secondary issues on which they tended to divide."[62]

The Uneasy Conscience was not an angry diatribe on fundamentalism. Rather it was a call to action and re-dedication. In Henry's words it "was a conscience troubled by the failure of American Christianity to relate Biblical verities to crucial contemporary events."[63] Even forty years after the call to action in *The Uneasy Conscience,* evangelicalism seemed not have heard the call to action, much less did it proactively seize the moment:

> Unless evangelical Christians break out of their cultural isolation, unless we find new momentum in the modern world, we may just find ourselves so much on the margin of the mainstream movements of modern history that soon ours will be virtually a Dead Sea Caves community. Our supposed

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[61]Ibid., 27.

[62] Anderson, "Carl F. H. Henry" *The Modern Theologians*, 490.

[63] Henry, *The Twilight of a Great Civilization*, 164.

spiritual vitalities will be known only to ourselves, and publicly we will be laughed at as a quaint but obsolescent remnant from the past.[64]

Here was the startling situation that "Biblical Christianity, which had been historically the taproot of legitimate public concerns, was now often seen to be undevoted to human well-being. Christianity ought to be in the front of social reform by challenging social injustice, political humanism, and evils such as racial intolerance and the liquor traffic. We must oppose all more evils, societal and personal, and point a better way."[65] It had to be disappointing to Henry, for he had labored faithfully and vigorously calling evangelicals to social engagement. And yet for all his labor, by any standard, by the time he died, the evangelical engagement with societal ills was paltry by comparison to the cultural engagement of the nineteenth century.[66] Another aspect of this call that was misinterpreted by many in the fundamentalist camp was that Henry was in no way endorsing the modernist agenda. In point of fact, Henry was calling for a rejection of the obscurantist position of the fundamentalist and return in cultural engagement that is based on the revealed word of God:

> I had no inclination whatever to commend the modernist agenda, for its soft and sentimental theology could not sustain its "millennial fanaticism." Discarding historic doctrinal convictions and moving in the direction of liberalism would not revitalize evangelicalism. Fundamentalism had a realistic view of man and an awareness of the dread of the cancer of sin. Only

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[64] Ibid., 19.

[65] Ibid., 165.

[66] Carl F. H. Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); *Evangelicals At The Brink of Crisis* (Waco, TX: Word, 1967); *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971); *The Christian Vision: Man In Society* (Hillsdale, MI: Hillsdale College Press, 1984); *Christian Counter Moves In A Decadent Culture* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1986); *Toward A Recovery of Christian Belief* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1990).

supernatural regeneration, I insisted, was adequate to cope with human wickedness.[67]

In 1957 Henry published *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology* which cited the weaknesses of fundamentalism that he had touched on earlier in *The Uneasy Conscience*. He commended the fundamentalist defense of supernaturalistic Christianity in contradistinction to liberalism and its naturalistic and evolutionary based development of Christianity. But he pointed out the "inherent perils of fundamentalism."[68] Those inherent perils include (1) concentration on the fundamentals to detriment of doctrinal responsibilities of the Church; (2) fundamentalism tended to narrow the "whole counsel of God" and felt little obligation to exhibit Christianity as a comprehensive world and life view; (3) it lacked theological and historical perspective; (4) fundamentalism neglected the production of great exegetical and theological literature; (5) fundamentalism veered at times to anti-denominationalism rather than to interdenominationalism; (6) Fundamentalism neglected the doctrine of the Church, except in defining separation as a special are of concern; (7) Many fundamentalist rigidly identified Christianity with premillennial dispensationalism.[69]

The aforementioned "perils" would account for serious foundational problems on their own; however, these were not according to Henry, the cause of the real bankruptcy of fundamentalism. He states, "The real bankruptcy of fundamentalism has resulted not so much from a reactionary spirit-lamentable as this was-as from a

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[67] Henry, *Twilight of a Great Civilization*, 165.

[68] Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology*, 32.

[69] Ibid., 32–36.

harsh temperament, a spirit of lovelessness and strife contributed by much of its leadership in the recent past."[70] In light of the theological shortcoming and the temperament problem that plagued fundamentalism, Henry would make the following conclusion:

> It is this character of fundamentalism as a temperament, and not primarily as a theology, which has brought the movement into contemporary discredit. Doubtless it is unfair to impute this mood of rancor and negation to the entire fundamentalist movement. Historically, fundamentalism was a theological position; only gradually did the movement come to signify a mood and disposition as well. Its early leadership reflected balance and ballast, and less of bombast and battle. Only later did a divisive disposition show itself, plunging the evangelical movement into internal conflict.[71]

Further cultural irrelevance of fundamentalism was displayed in the dissonance of personal and social ethics. Fundamentalism emphasized a list of do's and don'ts (e.g., don't smoke, don't drink, don't gamble, don't patronize Hollywood films, etc). Instead of promoting a negative ethical system, evangelicals were challenged to confront and engage the culture with the redemptive message of the Gospel. In doing so, evangelicals also needed to have an eschatological system that motivated its adherents to social engagement instead of cultural isolationism. Henry called for "a new evangelical world-mind whose political, economic, sociological, and educational affirmations reflect the Christian world-life view. . . . [This] plea for 'divinely empowered Christian community' would turn the 'uneasy conscience of

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[70] Ibid., 43.

[71] Ibid., 44.

modern evangelicalism in a new reformation,' as I put it (p.88ff,), seemed almost prophetic."[72] In a sense it was prophetic. The Graham crusades would accelerate the advance of evangelicalism into a world–wide movement. Thirty years later in the United States alone there would be fifty million Americans who would classify themselves as born again. While there were areas that were not addressed in full as a consequence of the call of *The Uneasy Conscience*, there were also unexpected surprises of evangelical impact and growth that could not have been forecasted in 1948.

However in a very honest appraisal, Henry inventories some of the more prominent features of *The Uneasy Conscience*:

> I have never considered *Uneasy Conscience* to be a divinely dictated blueprint for evangelical utopia. But I remain troubled that even at a distance of forty years and more some of its challenges remain unheeded. One these is the plea for evangelical unity. Evangelical cooperation still lags both outside, inside and even between the divergent ecumenical and/or nonecumenical alignments. . . . The fact is that in 1900 there were under two thousand denominations and only one mutlidenominational council, namely the World Evangelical Alliance. Since the twentieth-century pursuit of an ecumenical world church is faced by forty-five world confessional councils, three international councils of churches, and more than twenty thousand denominations. . . . Another major call in *Uneasy Conscience* was for evangelical academic and literary engagement. . . . Uneasy Conscience pleaded for quality literature from elementary through university levels. The remarkable gains in this area during my generation have been gratifying. . . . Secular humanism nonetheless remains the masked metaphysics of Western university learning. Its disbelief in supernatural realities undermines the creedal affirmations that evangelical orthodoxy trumpets to the world. . . . High schools and elementary schools are increasingly being sucked into this secular tailwind. Text book controversies are often settled by an openness to all religious faiths and the delegation of theistic belief to myth . . . classrooms today avoid descriptive references to religion and suspend moral standards. . . .Meanwhile, secular humanism is drawn into irresistible concessions to uncompromising naturalism. Evangelical theists on the right and thoroughgoing naturalists on the left both declare the social imperatives of humanism to be powerless since it denies the

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[72] Henry, *Twilight of a Great Civilization*, 166.

personality and truth and morality are ultimate and fixed. . . . The loss of divine-command morality has eroded the transcendent ethical foundations of behavior. As G.E.M. Anscombe warns, if obligation statements are to make, morality must be recoupled with a divine-law conception of ethics. . . . Evangelicals unfortunately never established a national Christian university in a great metropolitan center. That forfeited opportunity is even now only partially compensated for by countermoves on the edge of influential secular campuses. . . . In its largest dimensions, therefore, the conflict today between theistic and naturalistic learning is even more acute than forty years ago.[73]

Henry notes a couple more items that evangelicals have not answered in the affirmative in response to *The Uneasy Conscience*. Even when *Time* magazine declared that 1976 was the "Year of the Evangelical," there were already open fissures in the evangelical theological landscape. Instead of their being a unified evangelical theological front, the questions about evangelical identity had already begun to surface. Additionally, when entering the political arena, there was a noticeable lack of a comprehensive political philosophy which degenerated into confrontational and single-issue politics. Evangelicalism was also faced with a noticeable lack of personal piety, an increasing materialistic bent, and an alarming lack of prayerlessness. The culture in which evangelicalism now thrives is increasingly being penetrated by alien religious influences. The West once designated these influences as pagan but now openly embraces them in the name of tolerance. Evangelicalism also faces the devaluing of human life and the increasing encroachment on religious freedoms.[74] The irony of the current situation is not lost on Henry. It was to be in the twentieth century that evangelicals would win the world for Christ in a single generation. And yet, it is the legacy of this current generation of evangelicals that religious atheism has "swept millions into its ranks and political

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[73] Ibid., 168–71.

[74] Ibid., 171–76.

atheism now rules half the world's population and much of its landmass."[75] Henry

concludes his revisit to *The Uneasy Conscience* in another call to evangelical action:

> If evangelicals believe that the enduring corrective of modernity's badly-skewed ethical and epistemic compass is the self-disclosed God and His moral agenda, they had better say so and live so in this crucial turning-time in America. Otherwise they may soon find themselves aliens once in a once promised land. We may now live in the half-generation before hell breaks loose and, it its fury is contained, we will be remembered, if we are remembered at all, as those who used their hand and hearts and minds and very bodies to plug the dikes against the impending doom.[76]

3.7   The Failure of Fundamentalism—Revisited

Why had American Christianity failed to relate biblical verities to crucial

contemporary events? What were the events and positions that had resulted in failure

of which Henry wrote. It is to these events that a brief survey is offered.

As is the case in today's world, labels can be confusing. One has to be careful

and clearly articulate what one means by the use of the term. Even then there are

those that would claim that words are so culturally laden and captivated by time that

meaning is impossible, unless of course one happens to be reading them (e.g.,

Derrida, et al.). That being the case, fundamentalism has been and continues to be

defined in a number of ways.

3.7.1   Fundamentalist Foundations

The first person to coin the term was Curtis Lee Laws. He was the editor of

The Watchman Examiner, a Northern Baptist publication, who in 1920 wrote an

editorial in which he coined the term. There had already been a controversy raging in

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[75] Ibid., 176.

[76] Ibid., 181–82.

the Northern Baptist Convention and the Northern Presbyterian church. *The Fundamentals* had been circulated among millions of clergy and academics alike (more will be said of this work later). In a pre-convention conference entitled, "Fundamentals of Our Baptist Faith," the conferees assembled "to restate, reaffirm, and re-emphaize the fundamentals of our New Testament faith." At this conference sermons addressed the issues of the day. It would be William Bell Riley who would set the tone in a blistering sermon entitled "The Menace of Modernism," where he defined three cherished beliefs that were under attack: an inspired Bible, the deity of Jesus, and the fact of regeneration.[77] This conference and later in a post-convention editorial Curtis Lee Laws wrote the following statement that forever labeled a certain part of the conservative Protestant church in the United States:

> We here and now move that a new word be adopted to decribe the men among us who insist that the landmarks shall not be removed. "Conservatives" is too closely allied with reactionary forces in all walks of life. "Premillennialists" is to closely allied with a single doctrine and not sufficiently inclusive. "Landmarkers" has a historical disadvantage and connotes a particular group of radical conservatives. We suggests that those who still cling to the great fundamentals and who mean to do battle royal for the fundamentals shall be called "Fundamenatlists. By that name the editor of the *Watchman-Examiner* is willing to be called. It will be understood therefore when he uses the word it will be in compliment and not in disparagement."[78]

These two events now brought to a head a series of events that would now break out into open conflict the liberals and the "fundamentalists." It is a little more than ironic that offering the term fundamentalists as a term that was free of baggage how quickly fundamentalism became identified with reactionary forces, a single

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[77] C. Allyn Russell, "The Northern (American) Baptist Experience with Fundamentalist," *Review and Expositor*, 79, no.1 (Winter 1982): 47.

[78] John Fea, "Understanding the Changing Facade of Twentieth-Century American Protestant fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Definition," *Trinity Journal* 15, no. 2 (Fall 1994):187.

doctrine that was not sufficiently inclusive and a radical group. If Laws intended to

find a bridge term it turned out to be a short lived one, as in just five years in the

aftermath of the *Scopes Trial*, fundamentalism (according to popular understanding)

was totally discredited. McCune makes the argument that it is only recently that

defining fundamentalism has become difficult. He writes that "up until the 1970s

fundamentalism was self-assured about its identity and direction. Historical

fundamentalists rarely, if ever, quibbled over the boundary markers of their cause. . . .

The most clearly observable distinctives of the movement are militancy and

separation."[79] Additionally fundamentalists themselves argue that they have

remained true to the faith of historic Christianity. Beale writes that:

> Both friends and foes have regarded Fundamentalism as the lenthened shadow
> of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and the apostles, of Augustine and
> Calvin, of the English Separatists and Puritans, of Wesley and Whitefield, of
> the German Pietists and the English Brethern, of London's Spurgeon and
> Princeton's Warfield-and of all who continue loyal to its principles and
> genius.[80]

Beale along with McCune also marshal noted liberal Kirsopp Lake in supporting their

contention that fundamentalism is nothing more than historic Christianity:

> Kirsopp Lake, a liberal, wrote with historical honesty in 1925 when he said,
> "It is a mistake, often made by educated persons who happen to have but little
> knowledge of historical theology, to suppose that Fundamentalism is a new
> and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the kind: it is the . . . survival of a
> theology which was once universally held by all Christians. . . . The
> Fundamentalist may be wrong: I think that he is. But it is we who have
> departed from the tradition, not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who
> tries to argue with a Fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and
> the *coprus theologicum* of the Church is on the Fundamentalist side" (*The*

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[79] Rolland D. McCune, "The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal 1* (Spring 1996): 10.

[80] David O. Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1986), 3.

Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow [Boston: Houghton Miflin, 1925], pp. 61–62).[81]

The attention that fundamentalism has received over the years continues to increase. The examinations have taken different methodological approaches in seeking to uncover the foundations of fundamentalism. Hisotrians have looked at fundamentalism from social, cultural and intellectual aspects.[82]

3.7.2   Competing Definitions of Fundamentalism

Stewart Cole wrote the first serious history of fundamentalism in 1931. His book was entitled *The History of Fundamentalism.* The next major work would not come until 1954, *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931* written by Norman Furniss. These two early works took the approach that Fundamentalism was mainly a reactionary movement. Cole wrote on the heels of the 1920, a very turbulent time in the history of the United States, and established what would be a common blueprint for researchers that followed him. Cole and Furniss examined fundamentalism as a reaction to modernity. Neither author was sympathetic to fundamentalism and consequently leaned toward caricature.[83] The traditional view of fundamentalism follows Cole and Furniss in describing it as "an obsurantist and bellicose reaction to

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[81] McCune, "The Self Identity of Fundamentalism," 12. Cf. Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, 3–4.

[82] John Fea, "Fundamentalism, Neo-Evangelicalism, and the American Dispensationalist Establishment in the 1950's," *Michigan Theological Journal,* 4, no.2 (Fall 1993): 115. Fea cites the following works as evidence of the rising interest in fundamentalism: These studies include Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*; Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Theological Seminary and the New Evangelicalism;* Joel Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929–1942," *Church History* 49 (March 1980): 62–76; and Carpenter, "The Fundamentalist Leaven and the Rise of an Evangelical United Front," in *The Evangelical Tradition in America,* ed. Leonard I. Sweet (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984).

[83] Bill J. Leonard, "The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism," *Review and Expositor* 79, no.1 (Winter 1982): 5.

modernity."[84] Leonard observes that neither Coler nor Furniss did much to uncover the concrete evidence of the roots of the fundamentalist movement in American religious history.[85]

Ernest Sandeen in his *Roots of Fundamentalism* set a new standard in researching fundamentalism according to Leonard. Sandeen uncovered what could be descirbed as the misinterpretation of the fundamentalists dogma made by Cole and Furniss. Sandeen argued that millenariansim/dispensationalism and Princeton Theology gave shape to fundamentalism in the early twentieth century.[86] Sandeen's position was that the issue of inerrancy served to unite Princeton theologians and dispensational premillennialists, thereby providing a coalition for what became American fundamentalism.[87] Leonard observes that Sandeen "suggests that Fundamentalism was comprised of an alliance of between two newly-formulated nineteeth century theologies, dispensationalism and the Princeton Theology which, though not wholly compatible, managed to maintain a united front against Modernism until about 1918."[88]

Sandeen's thesis generated more than a little interest and LeRoy Moore was one of the first to answer the "Sandeen thesis." LeRoy Moore differed with Sandeen

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[84] McCune, "The Self Identity of Fundamenatlism," 11. McCune believes that the approach of Cole and Furniss has been disproved (cf. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism*; and Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy*).

[85] Leonard, "The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism," 6.

[86] Ibid., 6. Both these aspects of fundamentalism will receive greater treatment later in this chapter.

[87] Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 130–31.

[88] Leonard, "The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism," 8. LeRoy Moore, "Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen," 196.

in his estimation of the roots of Fundamentalism. Moore wrote that Sandeen overlooked "a complex range of historical issues. He contiuned by saying, "If Cole and Furniss failed to inform us of the true nature or fundamentalism because they discarded background, Sandeen is liable to failure for neglecting foreground. His linear study requires to be reinforced by horizontal studies."[89] Moore focused on "doctrinaire fundamentalism," Sandeen's position and fundamentalism as a party movement-represented by an interdominational coalition aimed at stopping the rise of liberalism.[90]

C. Allyn Russell answers the "Sandeen thesis" in his *Voices of American Fundamentalism*. He highlights the influence of charismatic personalities that led to the spread of the movement. Given the strength of the personalities that Russell chronicles, early descriptions of theological unity may have been over stated. Russell tempers Sandeen's position in that he argued for a greater theological unity than may have been the case due to dispensationalism and Princeton theology.[91]

While not directly focusing on fundemantalists, Richard Quebedeaux in *The Young Evangelicals*, describes four types of fundamentalists: (1) Separatist Fundamentalists; (2) Open Fundamentalists; (3) Establishment Evangelicalism; (4) The New Evangelicals.[92] Quebedeaux charts the gradual break with fundamentalism in this section, even though initially the Establishment Evangelicals (Ockenga, Carl

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[89] Ibid., 8.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., 8–9. C. Allyn Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism*.

[92] Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1974), 19–41.

Henry, et al.) had no intention of leaving fundamentalism but rather reforming it. It has already been discussed, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism,* and as Mark Noll writes Harold Ockenga and others like him were not creating what would become known as evangelicalism from scratch. They belived they were getting orthodox Protestantism back on the right track. "Drawing on their nineteeth century evangelical heritage they sought to resurrect its temperament and vision."[93]

Following Moore, George Marsden responds to Sandeen. His initial response prompted further discussion between Marsden and Sandeen.[94] Marsden argued that Sandeed subordinated fundamentalism to millenarianism. Marsden's point was that there was more to the story than just millenarianism as the "only root" which led to fundamentalism. Marsden defined fundamentalism as a multifaced movement which at its most basic level was "organized opposition to modernism."[95] Marsden has contributed several major works in analyzing fundamentalism.[96] In *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, Marsden expounds on his thesis that fundamentalism was a reaction and shaped by various forces in the American experience. Marsden goes beyond Sandeen in exploring the wider dimensions of fundamentalism both before and after the controversy of the 1920s. He also moves beyond Russell in looking at a

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[93] Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 2.

[94] George Marsden, "Defining Fundamentalism," *Christian Scholar's Review* I (Winter, 1971): 142–43. Also see Ernest R. Sandeen, "Defining Fundamentalism: A Reply to Professor Marsden," *Christian Scholar's Review* I (Spring, 1971): 227–33.

[95] Leonard, "The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism," 9.

[96] George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1980) and the second edition came out in 2006. See also Marsden's, *Reforming Fundamentalism* and *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism.*

broader collection of fundamenatlist than just the "empire-builders" of Russell's analysis.[97]

Marsden describes fundamentalism as a "primarily a religious movement,"[98] when he states, "Fundamentalists were evangelical Christians, close to the traditions of the dominant American revivalist establishment of the nineteenth century, who in the twentieth century militantly opposed both modernism in theology and the cultural changes that modernism endorsed."[99] Leonard provides a rather insightful analysis of Marsden's thesis:

> First, Marsden believes that revivalism, its evangelical dynamic, its sense of urgency, and its prominence in American Protestantism, gave Fundamentalism breath. The campaigns of the revivalists for souls, morality, and the preservation of American values provided a framework for the fundamentalist crusade against a modernism which would undermine that pious heritage. This crusade, personified early on in the great revivalist, D. L. Moody, a premillennialist and eloquent proponent of biblical infallibility, was taken up by a later generation less fearful of theological controversy than the Chicago evangelist. A post-Moody generation of revivalists, R. A. Torrey and others, united Moody's themes with a system for confronting controversy. Second, premillennialism was linked with the system of dispensationalism through the work of John Nelson Darby and C. I. Scofield. The need for a scientific, intellectual formula was found in what Marsden calls the "Baconian Idealism" of Scottish Common Sense Realism. This was a method of rational analysis which began with the teachings of scripture and then sought to discover "some general law upon which these facts can be arranged." An inerrant Bible provided the facts, which, like some sacred puzzle, needed only to be classified.
> Third, Marsden notes that certain personal, spiritual influences on Fundamentalism came from the holiness movement of nineteenth century America and Britain. The Keswick meetings, so much a part of the British holiness scene, were particularly influential on dispensationalists moving toward Fundamentalism. In an insightful analysis he concludes that Keswick promoted a personal religious experience which helped validate the more

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[97] Leonard, "The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism," 9-10.

[98] Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 3.

[99] Ibid., 4.

objective, rational elements of evangelical faith. It also provided the promise of victory for individual lives in a world on the way to ruin and the millennium.

Fourth, the rise of modernism created a climate which united these forces in defense, not only of biblical faith, but of moral life and traditional Christian (and American) values. After tracing the coalescence of these forces Marsden tells the story of Fundamentalism as it appeared in the 1920s in conflict with religious modernism, political liberalism, and what today would no doubt be labelled "secular humanism." He concludes with four interpretations for relating Fundamentalism to American culture. Was it a social, political, intellectual, or peculiarly American phenomenon, he asks. Marsden's work is invaluable in establishing the broad heritage of Fundamentalism beyond Sandeen's earlier focus.[100]

Other historians of note including Marsden are Joel Carpenter, Nathan Hatch, Mark Noll, Harry Stout, and Grant Wacker. In an article by Leonard Sweet, these historians are described as setting the agenda for the interpretation of evangelicalism. The approach they are taking, according to Sweet, is that of observer/participant. Their method of doing history is "nonphilosophical, cultural historicism, that is, events as well as beliefs are perceived as socially, culturally, and philosophically conditioned. A more subtle assumption is that a proper description of a malady suggests its remedy."[101]

James Barr a vocal critic of fundamentalism describes it as movement which places emphasis on biblical inerrancy, is hostile to toward modern methods of biblical and theological interpretation and concerned that those who reject fundamentalist doctrines are not "true Christians."[102] Harriet Harris, a student of Barr's, in

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[100] Ibid., 10. James Barr provides a critique of fundamentalism in two of his books *Fundamentalism* (Philadephia: Westminster,1978); and *Beyond Fundamentalism* (Philadephia: Westminster, 1984).

[101] John D. Hannah, "Article Review: "Wise as Serpents, Innocents as Doves: The New Evangelical Historiography," Leonard I. Sweet, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 56 (Fall 1988): 397–416," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 146, no. 584 (October 1989): 453–454.

[102] Barr, *Fundamentalism*, 1.

Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism surveys the field and broadly follows Barr's view of fundamentalism. The influence that Harris cites is most prominent in fundamentalism is ideological and sociological. She takes a view opposite Marsden, Noll and Carpenter and rejects militancy, as the heart of fundamentalism and identifies its essence "as a particular, unnecessarily constraining and alien view of Scripture. . . . This realistic, rationalistic hermeneutic has four main components: (1) 'a commitment to *a priori* reasoning that Scripture cannot contain any error because it is inspired by God,' (2) 'an almost contrary commitment to demonstrating empirically that Scripture is indeed inspired because it contains no error,' (3) 'a feeling that in moving away from either is making concessions to modern scholarship,' (4) 'and a hesitancy to make such concessions lest they detract from the authority of the Bible and so threaten the very foundation of the Christian faith.'"[103]

Donald Dayton provides an analysis that portrays fundamentalism/evangelicalism (before 1947) as a departue from the nineteenth century evangelicalism. Dayton's thesis in *Discovering An Evangelical Heritage* is that sociological, theological and historical currents preceeding and following the controversy produced a movement that was in many ways the polar opposite of evangelicals of a previous generation. He writes, "What had begun as a Christian egalitarianism was transformed into a type of Christian elitism. Revivalistic currents

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[103] Bernie A. Van De Walle, "Book Review: Fundamentalism and Evangelicals," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 2 (June 2001): 358.

that had once been bent to the liberation of the slave now allied themselves with

wealth and power against the civil rights movement."[104]

Henry, in an interview that was reported in *Coversations With Carl Henry*,

made this comment with respect to Dayton, et al. and the historiographical research

into fundamentalism:

> It has been argued by Dayton and others, that there is a discontinuity between the evangelicalism of the nineteeth century and the dominnat evangelicalism of the twentieth century. The divisons in the present situation go right back to those old days in the last century where the Princeton school of theology took clear stands against the abolitionist activities of the revivalist evangelicals. On questions of race, women, and economics, the Princeton school was on the side of the status quo, so much so that Hodge's writings were used by pro-slavery apologists in the South to support slavery. Evangelicalism, as Dayton points out, is now dominated by those who root themselves in the line of that runs through the Princeton school.[105]

Joel Carpenter describes fundamentalism in this way:

> . . . evangelicalism was not a monolithic fundamentalism but rather a broad mosaic comprised of clusters of denominations and institutions with different ethnic and doctrinal heritages. One of this mosaic's most visible segments is rightly called fundamentalism, a movement of conservative, millenarian evangelicals who came mostly from Presbyterian, Baptist and independent denominations, such as the Evangelical Free Church. Other segments include the Holiness Wesleyans, such as the Church of the Nazarene; the pentecostals, including the Assemblies of God; the immigrant confessional churches, such as the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod and the Christian Reformed Church; southern-based conservatives, notably the Southern Baptists and the Churches of Christ; peace churches of Anabaptist, Quaker or pietist backgrounds; and black evangelicals of Methodist, Baptist, Holiness and pentecostal denominations. As the twentieth century progressed, the evangelicals cut a progressively wider swath through the ranks of the American churches. By 1960 they comprised an estimated half of the nation's sixty million Protestants. When the term fundamentalist is used to designate any or all of these churches, it becomes an ambiguous and derogatory term. But by precise

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[104] Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering An Evangelical Heritage* (Peabody, MA : Hendrickson, 1976), 134.

[105] Henry, *Conversations with Carl Henry*, 9. Henry alludes to Dayton's *Discovering An Evangelical Heritage* (1976).

and historical definition, fundamentalism is a distinct religious movement which arose in the early twentieth century to defend traditional evangelical orthodoxy and to extend its evangelistic thrust. The movement combined a biblicist, generally Calvinist orthodoxy, an evangelistic spirit, an emphasis on the higher Christian (Holy Spirit directed) life and a millenarian eschatology.[106]

John Fea in analyzing the approach to historical inquiry into fundamentalism describes four phases of fundamentalism. In this approach Fea incorporates earlier approaches by other historians when studying fundamentalism. The first phase is Irenic Fundamentalism (1893-1919); Phase Two: Miltant Fundamentalism (1919-1940); Phase Three: Divisive Fundamentalism (1941-1960); Phase Four: Separatist Fundamentalism (1960-Present).[107] Fundamentalism had generally been described as a reaction to the social changes that confronted them. The rise of modernism, Darwinism, German biblical higher criticism, and the Social Gospel forced conservative Protestants into a reactionary position.[108]

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[106] Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism 1929–1912," 63–64. Carpenter is aware of the problems of definition and cites other works that give greater attention to the problem of definition: "The problem of defining fundamentalism is discussed in Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism", 66–83; Moore, "Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen," 195–202; Marsden, "Defining Fundamentalism." 141-151; Sandeen, "Defining Fundamentalism: A Reply to Professor Marsden," 227–33; Sandeen, "The Fundamentals: The Last Flowering of the Millenarian-Conservative Alliance,"*Journal of Presbyterian History* 47 (March 1969):55–73, 64.

[107] John Fea, "Understanding the Changing Facade of Twentieth-Century American Protestant Fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Definition," 184–94.

[108] Ibid., 184. In a footnote Fea lists the following authors to substantiate his contention: "See W. R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Marsden, *Fundamentalism;* Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism;* M. Szasz, *The Divided Mind of American Protestantism, 1880–1930* (Montgomery: University of Alabama Press, 1982)."

Martin Marty looks at fundamentalism as a social phenomenon.[109] Nancy

Ammerman continues that particular approach to the study of fundamentalism when

she writes, ". . . fundamentalisms are self-proclaimed restorationist movements in

conscious, organized opposition to a previously dominant traditional orthodoxy."[110]

Two scholars who are themselves fundamentalist deserve mention as this

examination of historiography comes to a close. David Beale locates the beginnings

of fundamentalism in the great urban revivals in the United States in the mid-

nineteenth century.[111] George W. Dollar, a professor at Bob Jones University, has

written extensively on fundamentalism. In his *A History of Fundamentalism in*

America, Dollar approaches the study of fundamentalism by providing a catalog of

facts (dates, places and events) and the strength of his approach is "supplying dozens

of thumbnail sketches of the past great leaders, preachers in particular, and most

helpful of all, tracing into the present day of the most important of the great

movements and churches of the 20s and 30s."[112]

3.7.3   Fundamentalism Reacts

The study up to this point has given a description of the various approaches to

the study of fundamentalism, now it turns to a look at its derivation. It can be fairly

stated that fundamentalism was a reaction against 1) the doctrine of divine

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[109] Martin Marty, "Fundamentalism as a Social Phenomenon," *Review and Expositor* 79, no.1 (Winter 1992): 19-29.

[110] Nancy T. Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 1–65.

[111] Beale, *The Pursuit of Purity*, chapter 2.

[112] D. Clair Davis, "Review of George W. Dollar: A History of Fundamentalism in America (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1973)," *Westminster Theological Journal* 36, no.3 (Spring 1974): 397.

immanence; 2) evolutionary theory (Darwinism); and 3) Higher Criticism. Henry

described this theology in his *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*:

> The theology which captured the seminaries and universities, which seized the initiative in the publication of religious literature and the presentation of its viewpoint in the scholarly societies and journals, which came increasingly to control the machinery of the large denominations, and which was projected by many of the most active enthusiasts for world church unity, was rooted in the philosophies both of immanence and evolutionism, and rejected the objective authority of the Scriptures, the necessity of and possibility of miraculous revelation, and with these the biblical pattern of sin and redemption. Walter Marshall is surely right when singles out the period from 1849 to 1919 as "the great age of liberalism."[113]

Thorne writes, "Liberalism is a term used to describe a religious tradition in America

distinguished by its opposition to regnant orthodoxies in the name of intellectual

integrity."[114] Thorne gives a brief synopsis of the major issues at play:

> Originating with the critical rationalism of the Boston Unitarians and influenced by the American transcendentalists, liberalism became a powerful force in the Evangelical denominations toward the end of the nineteeth century, through the seminal work of men like Newman Smyth (1902), William Newton Clark (1898), Henry Churchill King (1901), and William Adams Brown (1902, 1906). Proponents of a new reconstructed, or progressive theology, these self-described "Modernists" were convinced that the old orthodoxies needed to be modified to incorporate modern insights. Generally speaking, they imbibed the optimistic views of evolutionary progress current within post-Darwinian culture and applied them to theology. God was viewed as immanent, and his activities were often identified with the progress of nature and culture. Protestant Orthodoxy's doctrine of revelation came under severe criticism, and Scripture was often interpreted as an historically conditioned report of religious experience.[115]

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[113] Carl F. H. Henry, *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology* (Boston, W.A. Wilde Company, 1950), 30-31.

[114] Phillip R. Thorne, *Evangelicalism and Karl Barth* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1995), 6.

[115] Ibid. cf. Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology 1805-1900*; Dorrien's, *The Making of American Liberal Theology 1900–1950;* Steven Mark Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Bruce Kuklich, *Churchmen and Philosophers from Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press,

Henry cites evidence of the inroads of liberalism as early as an address by Augustus

H. Strong in 1899 entitled "Fifty Years of Theology" as a prime example of the new

theology:

> Strong hailed as a remarkable achievement of contemporary theologians "the rediscovery of the immanent God," by which he meant an immanence so much more concentrated than that of traditional Biblical theism that he now referred to the latter as 'deism." The theological gains from 1850-1900, Strong held were (1) heightened divine immanence, which annulled the distinction between nature and the supernatural, (2) the evolutionary development of God's method and (3) the higher critical view of the Scriptures.[116]

In spite of the growing excitement and confidence that the new theology

(Liberalism) could answer modern man's questions about his environment while

keeping intact traditional orthodox doctrines, there were signs of caution. J. Vyrnwy

Morgan was the editor of *Theology at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*. In that

volume he wrote that, "The entire ediface of traditional religious conception has

undergone a most remarkable transformation."[117] As Morgan saw it, the belief in the

Immanent Divine Will, coupled with the belief in the hypothesis of evolution, had so

drastically altered the traditional understanding of man's origin, destiny and God's

method in creation and redemption, that it was barely recognizable in relation to its

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1984); Martin Marty, *The Modern Schism*: *The Three Paths to the Secular* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

[116] Ibid., 23. As Henry notes Strong still held onto the belief in the ontological Trinity and a concept of the atonement that even with modifications still posited substitutionary expiation and eternal punishment of the lost. Henry chronicled the change in Strong's thought, principally the accommodation in Strong's theology of the liberal influence, in his Ph.D. dissertation *The Influence of Personalistic Idealism on the Theology of Augustus Hopkins Strong*. Strong believed that in adopting the liberal paradigm that he found a workable solution to the problem of reconciling the Bible to science.

[117] Ibid., 24.

orthodox antecedent.[118] The other leg of the stool of liberalism was Higher Criticism. The effect this approach had toward Scripture emphasized the human element over against the Divine aspect of inspiration. Consequently, there was no one creed that was authoritative. God was viewed as indwelling all human life and society.

By 1900 liberalism was a single movement that had was manifested in many different expressions. Henry wrote:

> In Germany, on the British Isles, in the United States, and elsewhere as well, it busied itself along identical lines; evangelical theology was proclaimed to be obscurantist and outmoded; liberalism had the scholarship and genius to restate Christianity definitively in modern categories. Biblical theology was being "remade" in terms of the modern mind. The determinative principles, inherited from the nineteeth century, were those of immanental and evolutionary philosophy, with their rejection of special revelation, miracle, the unique deity of Christ, and a divinely ordered redemption, or in a summary word, the trustworthiness of the Bible.[119]

This is where Henry's keen insight developed under the tutelage of Gordon Clark begins to surface. Henry is able to cogently and perceptively dissect where the "modern mind" left its sure moorings based on the revelation of God, the Holy Scriptures, and charted for itseslf and uncertain course based on man's emipircism most clearly manifested in the Englightment.[120]

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[118] Ibid. Henry quotes Morgan in n. 10, "What exact place this doctrine is likely to occupy in the religious thought of the twentieth century, it would be difficult to forecast, both on account of the different views which at present exists concerning it, and the fact that the doctrine is, as yet, in its infancy. This much, however, can be safely said: It has come to be the central doctrine around which all thought, religious and secular, is at present revolving."

[119] Ibid., 32–33.

[120] See Ronald H. Nash, *The Word of God and The Mind of Man* (Phiilipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1982) for a concise description of the philosophical developments that impacted the theology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

3.7.4   Shifting Paradigms

In chapter 5 the epistemological challenge that Henry offers to the "modern mind" will be examined more thoroughly. At this juncture, a brief excursus into the beginnings of liberalism will provide a basis for a more detailed understanding of the fundamentalists reaction that resulted in the publication of *The Fundamentals* and the rise of the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy. For this brief excursion into the foundations of liberalism a return in part to the three of Henry's foundational books is necessary. Those foundational books are *Remaking the Modern Mind*, *The Protestant Dilemma*, and *The Drift of Western Thought*. *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* was a call to action, for a re-engagement with the culture following the example of the eighteenth and nineteeth century evangelicals—evangelicals like Whitfield, Wesley, Edwards, Wilberforce, Chalmers, Finney, Moody and Spurgeon who engaged their culture and did not separate from it.[121] The three early theological works of Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind*, *The Protestant Dilemma*, and *The Drift of Western Thought* set the theological and philosophical basis for a re-engagement with the culture. Henry in these three works not only identifies the breakdown (his view) in man's philosophical thinking but also provides a corrective that will find fuller expression in *God, Revelation and Authority* (to be examined in chapter 5).

The "durable divides" of mankind are ideological and not geographical. The divides can be seen in the division of mankind's history: ancient, medieval, and modern. Henry writes, "Each epoch is distinguished from the others by a diverse way

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[121] See Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*; Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*; Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism*.

of discerning facts and of accessing their importance."[122] Henry noted that that mid-twentieth century was a time of confusion that may have been unparralled in the history of mankind as it related to contrast of ideologies and their offerings for answering the major questions of life—the meaning of life and man's destiny. Henry offers a solution that was to be found in a sastisfying rationale. However in doing so, Henry notes that there "are *kinds of rationale* each based in different ways on the assumption that reality is somehow intelligible and interpretable in terms of mind" that distinguish the ancient, medieval and modern mind.[123]

The ancient mind was idealistic. Logical priority was given to the supernatural realm. Man was qualitatively superior to the animals because of his rational link to the supernatural. Moral distinctions are objective and eternal, not merely relative and arbitrary.[124]

The medieval mind was shaped by the appearance of the founder of Christianity. The line of demarcation that results in the tripartite division of history is seen as a consequence of the marked difference or contrast between the ancient and modern world views. The medieval mind refuses any self-reduction to the anceint or modern minds. The medieval mind embraced Hebrew-Christian to special revelation. The view expressed that

> one eternal and sovereign God created the world and all things by divine fiat; that man was created in the divine image, and hence possessed a distinctive dignity, being made for personal fellowship with Deity; that man by voluntary revolt, fell from original righteousness into a state of moral and spiritual

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[122] Henry, *The Drift of Western Thought*, 11.

[123] Ibid., 13–14.

[124] Ibid., 14.

revolt; that salvation is impossible of attainment by human effort but is a provision of the God of holy love, who through His prophets promised a vicarious mediation from the divine side; that the provision of salvation is to be realized within history itself by the God who in a special way reveals Himself to His chosen people–what are these but affirmations that stand at the core of the Old Testament, no less than of Biblical Christianity?[125]

The Hebrew-Christian view formally aligned itself with Greek idealism as over against naturalism, but at the same time it opposed the classic emphasis on rational competence in the "realm of metaphysics, of the natural man in his state; to the dualistic reduction of evil from a moral to a metaphysical problem; the failure to identify the moral realm with the will of God; to the emptying of history or redemptive singificance. Christianity was opposed to naturalism as it embraced the revelational view of men and things which also countered idealism."[126] The essence of the Christian view involved elements from the biblical outlook which emphaized its uniqueness as opposed to the naturalistic position.

> The medieval genius worked itself out in a constructive spirit which, in contrast with modern cultural disunity, creates constantly in subsequent centuries a longing for its reincarnatio, even if in a purified form freed of the perversions of Roman ecclesiasticism. That synthesis was, in intent, theological rather than philosophical; it centered in the conviction that the self-revealing God had rescued mankind from both hell and pagan savergy. The medieval spirit was dominated throughout, as expressed by one scholar, whose sympathies were not with the past, by the conception of a supreme harmony subordinating the natural to the supernatural order, a harmony in which all the activities of the soul, religion, philosophy, art, science, and conduct were united in the realization of the ideal of the City of God. The Christian thus had, in the last analysis, little need for a philosophy-the questions which really interested him and the problems which were of supreme importance for his destiny were all answered, and his needs all satisfied, by his theology and its concrete manifestation in his personal religious life. Nothing can be clearer that the medieval mind related to Christ, at least in intention, not only theology and worship, philosophy, government,

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[125] Ibid., 25–26.

[126] Ibid., 27–28.

art music and literature. "It did so not in the name of speculation, but in the name of revelation; not in terms of human initiative, but of divine disclosure; not in the spirit of groping for God's forgiveness, but rather of expressing its gratitude for the divinely provided gift of salvation, and of an awaiting of the complete vinidication of Gods's promises."[127]

In transitioning to the modern mind, the medieval mind unwittingly paved the way. The modern mind denied the supernatural whether on speculative or revelational grounds. Henry notes that it was the great Thomastic synthesis of the thirteenth century that provided the bridge over which modernism would obscure the inner genius of Christianity—the revelational view of the world. The Reformation was in part a reaction to this unsatisfactory way of presenting Christianity to the modern world to the Thomastic synthesis of reason and faith.[128]

Henry makes the note that phrases like "the modern culture" and the "scientific era" stand for "an inner spirit which has forced Christianity to fight for its very life."[129] This inner spirit arose as a result of emphases which appeared sporadically in the ancient world became a foundation upon which modern thinkers attempted to erect culture. The turn to naturalism as this foundation stands in stark contrast with the ancient and medieval views.[130]

Henry goes on to say, "The central postulate of the modern mind, in its final expression, has been the ultimacy of nature."[131] In declaring this central postulate, the modern mind stands against the ancient and medieval minds. The modern mind

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[127] Ibid., 33–34.

[128] Ibid., 35.

[129] Ibid., 35–36.

[130] Ibid., 37–38.

[131] Ibid., 41.

denies the reality of the supernatural and with respect to the biblical view, it denies

speical revelation.[132]

> In its final mood, the modern mind, sometime implicitly, sometime explicitly, declared against the reality of the supernatural. That the world of nature is the prime reality, that the solution of all crucial problems will come by making the space-time universe, inclusive of man, the legitimate center of speculative interest, that it is the natural order above all with which a modern man must be familiar-what are these but characteristically modern notions, which came by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to serves as the unexpressed ultimates presuppossed in the educative centers of western culture . . .[133]

Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, launched the new era "with a

species of theism that was far removed from biblical Christianity. While in Henry's

view the rupture with biblical Christianity that began with medieval scholasticism,

modern philosophy retained notions of biblical theism, its speculative nature would

chose a course that move further and further away from biblical elements.[134] This

rejection of supernaturalism would serve as the defining characteristic of the modern

mind. In making this denial of the supernatural its cardinal tenet, the modern mind

reached back to the suppressed naturalism of the Greco-Roman. In response and in

distinction from biblical theism, idealism was presented as a viable alternative:

> No scholarly survey of the modern period can afford to slight the distinction between an idealism unable to sustain itself, and a direct attack upon the priority of the mind; the former may descend finally to naturalism, but that surely is not its original intention. And modern philosophy, from its beginnings in Descartes, can hardly be regarded as intentional naturalism. Even if the early rationalistic systems passed from their source in Cartesian

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[132] Ibid. Henry distinguishes between the biblical view and the medieval view at this point with respect to special revelation. Henry interprets the Thomastic synthesis of the Aristotelian cosmology as an undermining of special revelation. Due to this synthesis the existence of God was arrived at philosophically in such a way as to conceal entirely the point of special revelation. This particular view will be examined further in chapter 5.

[133] Ibid., 42.

[134] Ibid., 45–46.

theism through Spinozistic pantheism, to Leibnitzian monadism, and even if Lockean empiricism passed by the way of Berkleyan idealism to Humean agnosticism, the Kantian synthesis retained a salute —however grounded—to supernaturalism, and the philosophies of Fichte and Hegel and their idealistic successors have for two centuries stood out as the avowed enemy of naturalism. This must at least be said about much about the intention of the modern idealisms.[135]

While idealism may have been a rival of naturalism even as biblical theism is, idealism was no ally of supernaturalism. Naturalism attacked Christianity from the side of naturalistic monism, idealism attacked from the side of spiritual monism. The effect of both philosophies was that man was moved from his biblical status at the center of the world of nature and spirit. It was at this juncture of nature and spirit that man found himself as a creature of sin, but with the hope of redemption. The effect of this period of philosophical history is that man found himself deprived of personality and freedom.

3.7.5 Philosophical Shadows

It is at this point that Henry takes particular note of the importance of two German idealists that not only affected philosophy in general but also affected for the purposes of this study their effect, in particular, on Protestant theology. The names of Immanuel Kant and George Hegel are watershed names in the history of philosophy. It would be the influence of their writings that would drastically affect and influence Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Troeltsch. Men following Schleiermacher, the father of liberalism, would then chart a course that an ocean away would eventually lead to the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy.

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[135] Ibid., 47–48. Henry gives an insightful study into pre-Christian and post-Christian idealism on page 49ff.

Before taking up Kant and Hegel, a brief digression into the writings and influence of David Hume are in order. Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* are monumental in the development of liberalism.[136] Hume's *Dialogues* was so controversial that his friends persuaded him to release it after his death. Hume has been misunderstood for centuries and for a summary of these conceptions and his contributions to philosophy and his impact on theology the reader can consult Ronald H. Nash's *The Word of God and The Mind of Man*.[137] The import of Hume for this study is Kant's attribution to the role that Hume played in this thinking: "I openly confess my recollection of David Hume as the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy a quite new direction."[138] Hume in his writings was attacking the supremacy of human reason, a cardinal tenet of the Enlightment. Hume was able to show the limits of reason and it was when man went beyond the limits of reason that he became "involved in absurdities and contradictions and become prone to the disease of scepticism."[139] Hume's point was that most of the things in which man believes are not arrived at on the basis of reasoning. These beliefs are not supported by experience. These are experiential beliefs, pivotal beliefs, and are derived from something other than reason and experience. His position was that these pivotal beliefs are based on instinct, habit

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[136] David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Nelson Pike (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970); *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Eric Steinberg 2d ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993).

[137] Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man*, 17–24.

[138] Ibid., 25.

[139] Ibid., 19.

and custom. A non-rational force compels an individual to accept these pivotal

beliefs. As Hume applied this concept to ethics, metaphysics and religion he believed

that man's moral judgments are not based on reason but on non-rational human

nature. In essence Hume's position was that man cannot know the transcendent.[140]

Skepticism is generally attributed to Hume. But Hume was not a skeptic in the

sense that he doubted the existence of the world. Hume thought that kind of

skepticism was absurd because it contradicted common sense, nature and man's

instinct. He believed that investigation should be limited to areas where knowledge is

possible (i.e, mathematics). Speculative inquiry into metaphysics, theology and ethics

should be avoided and accepted by faith, not knowledge.[141] As related to the

knowledge of God, man cannot know God. But faith in God is entirely natural. In

fact, the same compelling that man has with pivotal beliefs leads man to believe in the

existence of God.[142] Theological claims are to be dismissed when they go beyond the

limits of human knowledge. Hume argued that a reasoned argument for the existence

of God, supported by the miraculous must be rejected because it exceeds the limits of

human knowledge. The legacy of Hume's position is the rejection of the possibility of

a rational knowledge of God and objective religious truth. Belief in God was

grounded in man's non-rational nature. It was a matter of faith. Faith was divorced

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[140] Ibid., 20.

[141] Ibid. According to Nash, Hume was not an atheist. He believed in the existence of a divine mind that in some unknown way was responsible for the order of the universe. Hume was not a Christian in the New Testament sense of the word. As for his famous attack on miracles, Hume's position was the assertion that no one could ever reasonably believe that a miracle had occurred.

[142] Ibid., 21.

from reason. And this divorce is one that Henry will address and will be examined in depth in chapter 5.

Kant will take the work of Hume and develop it and in so doing become the watershed philosopher of the modern era. It is to Immanuel Kant that the inquiry into liberalism will now turn.

Henry writes, "The two illustrious names in German idealistic philosophy at the beginning of the nineteeth century were Kant and Hegel. By the end of that century, their thought had left its mark, along with the later evolutionary philosophy, upon Protestant theology on the both sides of the Atlantic."[143] But what was it about Kant's and Hegel's thought that so left its mark on both sides of the Atlantic? In answering this question Henry in his early works commented on the effect of Kant and Hegel's work but would wait until the publication of *God, Revelation and Authority* to treat the issue in more detail. At this point, the study will sketch the outlines of Kant and Hegel's thought, leaving the more thorough treatment until chapter 5.

Following Nash, "Kant sought to go beyond both rationalism and empiricism by making human knowledge a composite of to factors, form and content."[144] The content would be supplied sense experience and form supplied by the mind. Kant stressed that all human knowledge begins with sense experience, but it does not follow that it arises from experience. Kant would express his assertion this way:

> Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects.
> But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something

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[143] Carl F. H. Henry, *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, 15.

[144] Nash, *The Word of God and The Mind of Man*, 26.

in regard to them a priori, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge.[145]

What Kant means is that sense experience is necessary for human knowledge but is not a sufficient condition for knowledge. Something else must be added to the content added by the senses. That something else is the form or categories of the mind. The effect of his position is that Kant has erected a wall. Unless the content is mediated by the forms of the mind man cannot know anything. Man does not know the world as it really is but rather as it appears. Nash continues his explanation of Kant, "according to Kant, human knowledge never brings us into contact with the real world, what he called the noumenal world. All we ever know is the phenomenal world, the world as it appears to us after it has been modified by the categories of our understanding. Since our knowledge is always perceptually modified by the a priori categories of the mind, the real world (noumena) is not only unknown, but unknowable."[146]

Now is not the time for a full treatment of the epistemological ramifications of Kant's position, it is appropriate to see Henry's critique as it leads into the development of American Protestant Liberalism. Henry would write in *God, Revelation and Authority* that:

> Kant forcefully contended that Humean sensationalism leads to skepticism. An empirical basis of knowledge, Kant stressed, not only sacrifices all norms, but universally valid reason as well, and it cannot rationally vindicate its own position. His influential Critical Philosophy defended intuition of a special kind-senous intuition rather than intellecutal intuition. Human knowledge

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[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid., 27.

does not included innate truths, he contended, but it does presuppose innate categories of thought and forms of perception, which confer on sensually given objects the status of cognitive knowledge.[147]

It is worth noting at this point that while writing to contend for aprioric affirmations in *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, Henry points out the inconsistency in Kant's epistemological system: "Kant, for example, did not derive his transcendental forms of thought through his epistemic theory, which identified all knowledge as a joint product of sens content and a priori forms. Since the a priori forms were not sense perceptible, Kant must have postulated them independently of the theory.[148]

As for Hume, Kant had a role for God. Belief in God was a matter of faith. There is no cognitive content to this belief in God. Its main emphasis is one of pragmatism. Belief in God should be based not on theoretical but moral and practical considerations.

In Henry's estimation the major contribution of Kant's theory of knowledge is that it gave the "palm of victory" to Empiricism. If Kant gave the victor's wreath to the empiricists, Hegel, according to Henry, would give it to the pantheists. Hegel's

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[147] Henry, *GRA*, 1:75.

[148] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief,* 46. This declaration followed on the heels of a discussion of the legitimacy of assuming without proof a philosophical axiom or postulational principle as in initial basis of reasoning. Henry cites Democritus as having never demonstrated from sensory data that all substance consists of indivisible and imperceptibly small particles. Likewise Plato never demonstrated from sensory data the independent existence of the invisible world of Eternal Ideas. "No rational basis exists for limiting credible propositions to only those that involve evidence of the kind that specifically impresses physicists or anthropologists" (45). Later in the chapter entitled "The Axioms of Biblical Theism" Henry artfully shows the inconsistency not in Kant's epistemic theory but also that of Logical Positivism: "Empiricism cannot empirically justify its governing premise. From sense experience. to which he professed to limit the content of all knowledge, Kant could not derive information about the innate forms of thought. Since Logical Positivism cannot sensually verify its own verificatory thesis, it cannot exempt itself from meaninglessness" (65).

major fault was that man and the universe are parts of deity.[149] Hegel attempted to

overcome the metaphysical limitations of Kant's view. However, in doing so and in

part due to his profoundly unbliblical exaggeration of equating the reason of man into

the very mind of God, he failed to offer a system that would stand. Hegel's theory

insisted that man immediately intuits concepts rather than truths. Human reasoning

then combines these concepts into propositions and mediates knowledge. Truth is

then expressed only in a system, for knowledge is conceptually systematic:

> But, by equating the Absolute with the reflective self-consciousness of human
> minds, Hegel obscured any real created existence. For mankind in the image
> of God he substituted God externalized as the universe, so that the destruction
> of man and the world would obliterate divine being and life. Hegel made God
> an inescapable reality by divinizing man, and thereby he caricatured both.[150]

Hegel asserted that only the Absolute is real. The effect on man is that his

personality is but a moment in time in the infinite life. Henry summarizes the effect of

Hegel's thought, "The Spirit who is the subject of history is no longer human, and

only ambiguously personal. Human freedom and moral responsibility were

minimized, since whatever took place was somehow what the Absolute was

doing."[151] The influence of Hegel on theologians was that Biblical once-for-all

revelation was obscured. For them, the unviersal movement of history provided the

most significant of the Absolute.[152] The influence of the two monumental

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[149] Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma*, 35.

[150] Henry, *GRA*, 1:76.

[151] Henry, *The Drift of Western Thought*, 53.

[152] Henry, *Fifty Years of Protestant Thought*, 16.

philosophers was immense, especially in theology as theologians applied Kant's and Hegel's views to their understanding of religion in a myraid of ways.

As Henry had noted in *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, theology was being "remade" in terms of the modern mind, and Friedrich Schleiermacher took the lead in remaking theology in light of the modern mind. The major contribution of Schleiermacher, in developing what would become Protestant Liberalism, was his insistence that essence of religion is man's feeling of dependence. Henry makes note of Schleiermacher's import: "The most influential neo-Protestant theologian of nineteeth century; Friedrich Schleiermacher, readily based Christian commitments wholly upon religious experience rather than upon revelation."[153] Scheleiermacher's approach to theology was nothing less than revolutionary. Instead of starting with God, as had been done traditionally with a metaphysical definition of God and a demonstration using proofs of his reality, Schleiermacher started with human experience of whatever religious significance to people and then defines theological concepts only tentatively in view of these considerations.[154]

Schleiermacher thought he had found an answer to Hume's skepticism. He identified that the empirical method was an adequate way to deal with religious concerns. His changed the locus of religious experience from cognition to feeling. In doing so, Schleiermacher believed he was rescuing Christianity from irrelevance and mere dogmaticism. He rejected the historical evangelical emphasis that the truth of revelation rests on an authority higher than science. He also broke with the

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[153] Henry, *GRA*, 1:79

[154] Ibid., 180.

supernatural miraculous claims of Christianity, asserting that all events must adhere to empricially verifiable laws of nature. He shifted the center of Christianity, God as a metaphysical object to a correlation of God with inner spiritual experience.[155] Following Hume and Kant, Schleiermacher's God is unknowable by the human mind but can only be felt by the unique experience of absolute dependence.[156]

The next major influence is Albrecht Ritschl. In protesting against Schleiermacher's subjectivism—the essence of religion is religious experience— Ritschl sought to establish Christianity on more sure footing. Ritschl turned to history to provide this sure foundation for Christianity. However, Ritschl was heavily influenced by Kant, and it was reflected in two of his controlling presuppositions. As Henry noted that "God is for Kant only a transcendental postulate: he conceived metaphysical relationships in terms of ethical ideals for fully experiencing selfhood."[157]

In following Kant, Ritschl excluded metaphysics from theology. God was not knowable as he was part of the noumena—the unknowable world. Conequently, the Jesus that Ritschl found in history was like a liberal of Ritschl's time. Questions regarding the ontic significance of the cardinal doctrines concerning the life of Jesus Christ (e.g., deity of Jesus, relationship between human and divine natures, and his relationship to the Father) were of no concern to Ritschl.[158]

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[155] Ibid., 80.

[156] Ibid., 82. Henry writes that Schleiermacher insisted that God is originally experienced in feeling, and never directly apprehended, but is always mediated by some finite element of the world, so that we have no strictly objective cognitive knowledge of him.

[157] Ibid., *G.R.A.,* 3: 278.

[158] Nash, *The Word of God and The Mind of Man*, 32.

The second effect that Kant had on Ritschl was that what ultimately mattered in religion was ethics. Religion should be concerned with moral, value judgments and not theoretical concerns. Ritschl made a distinction between two kinds of judgments: value and theoretical. Theoretical judgments are objective and analyzable, while value judgments are not. Ritschl wrote that to "strive after a purely theoretical or 'disinterested' knowledge of God as an indispensable preliminary to the knowledge of faith. To be sure, people say that we must first know the nature of God and Christ ere we can ascertain their value of us. But Luther's insight perceived the incorrectness of such a view. The truth rather is that we know the nature of God and Christ only in their value for us."[159]

One last name deserves a brief mention before turning to the American Protestant Liberal scene and then the fundamentalist reaction: the great German church historian Adolf Harnack. Harnack was a prolific author.[160] Henry observes that for Harnack the essence of the Christian faith is not faith in God in his revelation. The proper object of faith is "man believing himself as divine."[161] As will become more important in later chapters, Karl Barth was a student of Harnack. Barth reacted

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[159] Ibid., 33. Peter Toon writes of Ritschl in *The End of Liberal Theology*, "Ritschl in his major work restating the Protestant doctrine was *The Christian Doctrine of Justification of Reconciliation* (published in three volumes between 1870–1874). The first volume was a historical survey of Christian doctrines, the second volume was an exposition of biblical material and the third volume attempted a reconstruction of the doctrines in terms of Christian experience and the grace of God. Christian's do not know God as God; they only know his blessings and the benefits his presence brings. The purpose of the Christian religion is not to enjoy a mystical communion with God (who is unknowable) but rather to overcome by divine grace and with moral virtue the contradictions that run through human existence" (51–52).

[160] Adolf Harnack, *The History of Dogma* 7 vols. trans. Neil Buchanan (London: Williams and Norgate, 1896-9); *What is Christianity?* trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

[161] Henry, *GRA*, 2:120.

strongly against Harnack's intepretation of Christianity, so strongly in fact that he broke with it and launched what would be known as the "theology of crisis" or neo-orthodoxy. One of the major things that Barth reacted to, as would fundamentalists, was the deprecation of the Scriptures. Harnack employed the "so-called objective historical-scientific criticism of Scripture with philosophical idealism and insisted that a primitive nonsupernatural Jesus had priority over the supernatural Pauline Christ."[162]

Henry provides a concise and descriptive anaylsis of the reaction to Harnack and liberalism by Barth, and with certain qualifications one could begin to see the differences that fundamentalists would have with liberalism as well.[163] In a section that addressed hermeneutical presuppositions Henry makes the following observations that say well what fundamentalists would say to Harnack even if coming from the pen Barth:

> [He] assailed this popular critical view and launched a strikingly different approach to biblical interpretation and New Testament exegesis. While Barth agreed with Harnack's insistence that as a corpus of historical records the Bible should be open to critical investigation, he emphasized that historical criticism had not in fact achieved consensus on a single authentic portratit of Jesus of Nazareth. Barth labeled Harnack's supposedly neutral historical exegesis and nonsupernatural Jesus as in acutality a reflection of Harnack's personal theological prejudices; liberal theology, observed Barth, neglected the primary theme of revelation by its one-sided historical interest that eclipses revelatory relationships between God and man.[164]

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[162] Henry, *GRA*, 4:297.

[163] The author equates the differences with liberalism by Barth and fundamentalist with great hesitation and an inordinate amount of qualification and clarification.

[164] Ibid., 297.

3.7.6 The Great Age of Liberalism

In a summary statement on this period Henry writing in *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology* said that the theology which captured the seminaries and the universities from 1849 to 1914, known as "the great age of liberalism," was rooted in "immanentism and evolutionism, rejected the objective authority of the Scriptures, the necessity of the miraculous revelation, and with these the Biblical pattern of sin and redemption."[165] In a footnote on page 31 of the *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, Henry's observation of the changing of the theological tide is of interest:

> The Evangelical Revival, dating from 1858 in the United States and 1859 in Great Britain, began a movement that provided leaders for fifty years of evangelical expansion; men like Dwighty L. Moody, William Booth and Hudson Taylor were a part of it, as were activities in home missions, faith missions, rescue missions, and the Keswick movement (J. Edwin Orr, The *Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain* [London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1949]). Orr points out that Darwin's Origin of the Species, written in 1859, began a counter movement. World War I punctuated the vital memories of the revival, for those who had remembered it were now gone, whereas the enthusiasm for evolution was at its peak. It is a significant fact that when among the intelligentsia evloution had its greatest fillip, and liberalism was making its triumph, figures like General Booth (1829-1912) of the Salvation Army and Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) were weilding a mighty influence for evangelicalism upon the masses.[166]

By 1900 Liberalism had become a single movement and had as its biggest foe orthodoxy. Whether in German, Great Britain, or the United States, evangelical theology was declared to be obscurantist and outmoded. Liberalism had the scholarship with the genius to restate historic Christianity in modern terms:

> Biblical theology was being re-made in terms of the modern mind. The determinative principles, inherited from the nineteeth century, where those of immanental and evolutionary philosophy, with their rejection of special revelation, miracle, the unique deity of Christ, and a divinely provided

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[165] Henry, *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, 30.

[166] Ibid., 31.

redemption, or, in a summary word, the trustworthiness of the Bible. The pattern of liberalist expansion was largely the same, whether on the Continent, in Britain, or in America.[167]

The United States, just as the theological landscape across the Atlantic Ocean, was drastically affected as well. At the beginning of the twentieth century idealistic immanentism was the reigning philosophy. Whether it was the influence of Hegelian absolute idealism at Harvard (represented Josiah Royce), or Lotzean personalism at Boston University (taught by Borden P. Bowne), the familarity with Continental speculative philosophies had increased due to more Americans studying in Germany. What became a charateristic feature of this period was the marginalization of conservative theology to the periphery of academic life, while being regarded as unspiritual, mechanical and legalistic. Another key feature was that of "continuity." The biblical separations between God, man and nature were dimmed.[168]

Idealistic philosophy did not carry the day long. Pragmatist such as James and Dewey led the charge and led the way that influenced the American religious scene. The University of Chicago was particularly influential. The influential chairs of Philosophy and Religion were held by humanists such as Shailer, Matthews, Edward Scribner Ames, Gerald Birney Smith, Eustace Hayden, Shirley Case Jackson and Henry Nelson Wieman, were major voices on the religious landscape in America.[169]

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[167] Ibid., 32–33.

[168] Ibid., 60–61. Henry cites as supportive evidence the works of Walter G. Muelder and Frank Hugh Foster. Walter G. Muelder and Laurence Sears, *The Development of American Religious Philosophy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940); and Frank Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907).

[169] Ibid., 61. Cf. Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American of Liberal Theology 1805-1900*; and *The Making of American of Liberal Theology 1900-1950*; and Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism.*

While they perferred to be called empirical theologians, Henry notes that "they never rose beyond the requirement of a nauturalistic philosophy and were preoccupied with impersonal cosmic process rather than with a personal God."[170]

In *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture* written in 1957, Henry observes that at its best liberalism reflected the invasion of the secular spirit; "It exaggerated God's immanence, minimized man's sinfulness, concealed Christ's superenaturalness and the centrality of his redemptive work; attached utopian expectations to history, ignored the task of evangelism."[171]

Edward John Carnell, describes the foundational premises of liberalism in his work *The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr*:

> Modernism boasts of no Summa, no Institutes of the Christian Religion. Its coordinating genuis lies in its method. Modernism is an attitude toward life. It is a mode of free thinking. Modernists are unified by their approach to theology, not by their theological conclusions. Modernism is not a philosophy but a group of philosophies reflecting no single controlling principle, whether metaphysical, methodological or ethical.[172]

As the scientific method carried the day during the rise of the Englightment, men abandoned a priori logic in favor of the empirical method. Carnell notes that modernists disdain authority. They cast off authority, whether ecclesiastical or revelational. In its desire to follow the empirical method come what may, modernism courts as a cardinal tenet, criticism. Quoting Shailer Matthews, Carnell shows the extent that this spirit of criticism has permeated the mind of the modernists:

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[170] Ibid.

[171] Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, 29.

[172] Edward John Carnell, *The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 13.

"Modernists are Christians who accept the results of scientific research as data with which to think religiously."[173]

Rejection of authority and a spirit of criticism, modernists rejected the views of the world handed down from the past. Traditional ideas began to fall one after another on the "assured results of scientific inquiry." A view totally foreign to study of the Scriptures, destructive higher criticism, was quickly accepted. This view approached Scripture with the presupposition that "the Bible is essentially a record of man's past religious experience, reflecting at each stage the fallibilities and limitations of his outlook as well as his dominant loyalties, ideals, and needs."[174] J. I. Packer underscores this point in *Fundamentalism and The Word of God*:

> The proper study of theologians after all is man. The Bible is a record of human action and reflection within which is embedded an experience of God, and out task is to dig that experience out. Scripture must be viewed, not as a divinely given record of a divinely given revelation, but as a by-product of the religious experience of the Hebrews; a record not so much of what God has said and done as of what some men thought He had said and done. The Bible is thus a memorial of the discovery of God by a nation with a flair for religion-that and no more.[175]

Coupled with this new view of Scripture was the unknowablity of God as already discussed under the influence of Kant. Modernism had eliminated the possbility of knowing God, had placed the Bible on the same level with other books of antiquity, and now it "refurbished the Ancient Greek concept that God, like the Logos of Heraclitus, is an immanent principle that runs through the changing process

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[173] Ibid., 14.

[174] Ibid., 16.

[175] J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 148.

of history, but which itself somehow remains unchanged through time."[176] Hegel

then provided the added element of the inevitability of human progress. Added to

Hegel's positive view of the progressive role of man, Darwin's hypothesis of

evolution, provided all the needed elements for the full blown doctrine of divine

immanence to be brought together.[177] The combing convergence of the

aforementioned factors brought liberalism as a new theological force that resulted in

two different reactions: the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy and Neo-

Orthodoxy (Neo-Orthodoxy will be discussed later in this work).

3.8   Fundamentalism—Movement and Mentality

In writing of fundamentalism Edward John Carnell gives some sage advice:

"When we speak of fundamentalism, however, we must distinguish between the

movement and the mentality."[178] Carnell goes on to give a short synopsis of the rise

of fundamentalism:

> The fundamentalist movement was organized shorty after the turn of the
> twentieth century. When the tidal wave of German higher criticism engulfted
> the church, a large company of orthodox scholars rose to the occasion. They
> sought to prove that modernism and Biblical Christianity were incompatible.
> In this way the fundamentalist movement preserved the faith once for all
> delivered to the saints. Its "rugged bursts of individualism"were among the
> finest fruits of the Reformation. But the fundamentalist movement made at
> least one captial mistake, and that is why it converted from a movement to a

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[176] Carnell, *The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr*, 16.

[177] Ibid., 17. Carnell discusses in concise fashion the rise of the doctrine of divine immanence. Liberalism was that theological synthesis between Christian dogmatic tradition and the philosophical idea of immanence dissolved the Christian concept of divine revelation. This synthesis combined with evolutionary theory lead to a view of the world that accepted the all pervading presence of the divine being. Consequently, with God everywhere, the liberal saw no difference between the supernatural and the natural. Following Schleiermacher, the liberal saw every day functions as miraculous, emanating from the view of divine immanence, miracles as presented in the Bible were explained away (17–19).

[178] Edward John Carnell, *The Case for Orthodox Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), 113.

mentality. Unlike the Continental Reformers and the English Dissenters, the fundamentalist failed to connect their convictions with the classical creeds of the church.[179]

Henry has one of the classic summaries on fundamentalism in chapter 2, "The Fundamentalist Reduction," of his *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*. Henry's analysis is as follows, "Liberalism has been called a perversion of Christiainity."[180] On the other side, fundamentalism has been labeled a Christian heresy. Henry then poses the question: Can historic Christianity be identified with either liberalism or fundamentalism? In answering this question Henry, in chapter 1, "The Modernist Revision," of his book *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culutre* in relation to liberalism answered in the negative. His final assesment is thus stated; "Evangelical theology on the grounds of Scripture, logic, history, and experience must repudiate it [Liberalism] as a perversion of essential Christianity . . ."[181] In answering the question with regard to fundamentalism Henry gives a thoughtful and thorough response, one which the major themes of the

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[179] Ibid. In addition to the many texts that have been mentioned in this chapter relating to fundamentalism its identity and distinctives, the following is a list of journal articles that contribute to the discussion: Morris Ashcraft, "The Theology of Fundamentalism," *Review and Expositor* 79, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 31–43; George W. Dollar, "The Early Days of American Fundamentalism," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 123, no. 490 (April 1966): 115–23; John Fea, "Understanding the Changing Façade of Twentieth-Century American Protestant fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Definition," 181–99; Bill Leonard, "The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism," 5–15, Rolland D. McCune, "The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism," 9-34: "A Call to Separation and Unity: D. Martyn-Lloyd Jones and 'Evangelical Unity," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 3 (Fall 1998); 3–62; "The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings," 109–50; Gerald L. Priest, "A.C. Dixon, Chicago, Liberals, and The Fundamentals," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Spring 1996); 113–34, C. Allyn Russell, "The Northern (American) Baptist Experience with Fundamentalism," 45–59.

[180] Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture,* 32. On this see J. Gresham Machen *Christianity and Liberalism*, 2–7; and Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of the Word of God, Vol 1, Part 1* (New York: Scribner's, 1936), 36ff both agree!

[181] Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, 31.

Fundamentalist/Modernist controveresy are highlighted and the role that *The Fundamentals* played in that controversy.

As has been mentioned before certain basic biblical essentials had come under attack during the development of modernism (in this case Henry uses as synonymous for liberalism). Those essential doctrines were: the authority of Scripture, the deity of Christ, his virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection and literal return. Fundamentalist used these doctrines a test of belief or unbelief. The modernist tendency to use evasive declarationis bout the Bible and the supernaturalness of Jesus Christ, were tried and tested in light of the declaration of basic doctrine.[182]

Unfortunately there was a negative consequence as Henry saw it by concentrating solely on the essentials of the faith. He writes, "These fundamentalist features–neglect of the organic interrelations of theology, of the bearing of the Christian revelation upon culture, and social life, and of the broader outlines of the doctrine of the Church-exacted a costly historical toll."[183] In reacting against modernism, fundamentalism became a distinctly twentieth-century expression of Christianity that lost its bearings in light of the shadow of historic Christianity. Fundamentalism's mood, temperment and theological emphasis were reactionary and corrective. Fundamentalism held onto the biblical mandate for evangelism and mission, but narrowed "the whole counsel of God," and felt little or no obligation to express Christianity as a comprehensive world and life view.[184]

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[182] Ibid., 32.

[183] Ibid., 33-36.

[184] Ibid., 33.

Following a stream of Pietistic influence there was a belittling of the intellect. The Christian experience was mainly expressed through emotional and volitional aspects of life. Fundamentalism lacked historical and theological perspective. It neglected the production of great exegetical and theological literature. And at times, fundamentalism emphasized anti-denominationalism rather than interdenominationalism. Neglect of the doctrine of the Church, except in defining separation as a key characteristic of fundamentalism was a key tenet of the movement as well as a rigid identification of Christianity with premillennial dispensationalism.[185]

Henry marks the historical point, not with a little bit of irony, that at one time in its history, fundamentalism showed a depth and breath of theological acumen and scholarship that was no longer present of the movement after World War I. The twelve volume set entitled, *The Fundamentals*, that was published by the Stewart brothers over a five year period beginning in 1910 and ending in 1915, was just that fundamentalist expression and cultural engagment for which Henry had argued for in *The Uneasy Conscience*.

The Fundamentals was the brainchild of Milton Stewart. Fifteen years before the first publication in 1910, Stewart had attended the 1894 Niagara Bible Conference. At this conference, Stewart heard some of the most well known early fundamentalist preachers of the day. In particular he heard James H. Brookes, editor

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[185] Ibid., 36. Henry observes in this context that "doubtless" the premillennial spirit was already in evidence at the beginning of the movement when the Niagara Bible Conference (1895) first proposed the five–fold test to determine attitudes toward the fundamentals. The five fold test consisted of correct belief in the following: (1) the inerrancy of the original manuscripts of Scripture, (2) the virgin birth, (3) the vicarious atonement of Christ, (4) the bodily resurrection of Christ, (5) the reality of biblical miracles (cf. McCune, "The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism," 22).

of *The Truth*, a highly influential fundamentalist magazine. He read the magazine and realized how valuable it was as a teaching tool in making known the dangers of liberalism. Fifteen years later, Stewart hears A. C. Dixon indict the liberal views of George Foster, who taught at the University of Chicago and had published *The Finality of the Christian Religion* (1906). In this book Foster described Christianity not as a supernatural religion but as a naturalistic religion. In Foster's view, Christianity was based on ideals rather than divine revelation. At this point, Stewart shared with Dixon his idea of producing a series of bookslets that would set forth the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. Stewart wanted to send copies to ministers, evangelists, missionaries, theological professors and students, Sunday school superintendents, YMCA and YWCA in the English speaking world, if their addresses could be obtained. By the end of the project in 1915 and after approximately $200,000, three–million volumes have been sent out in an effort to combat liberalism on its very foundation–a historical critical examination of Scripture.[186]

Sixty-four authors wrote ninety articles covering topics that ranged from higher criticism of the Bible to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Henry would write of the period of early fundamentalism in the following manner: "At one time fundamentalism displayed a breadth and concept of theological and philosophical perspective and devotion to scholarly enterprise not characteristic of the present movement."[187] Henry cited *The Fundamentals* as an example of the type of engagment for which he called in *The Uneasy Conscience*. Another shinning example of which Henry wrote was the inclusion of various types and stripes of scholars that

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[186] Priest, "A. C. Dixon, Chicago Liberals, and The Fundamentals," 126–27.

[187] Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, 37.

worked on the project. Inerrancy had long been considered a non-negotiable tenet of fundamentalism (it will be addressed in later chapters), but included in the roster of scholars who were contributors to *The Fundamentals*, were men who did not insist on inerrancy. James Orr is the chief example of this type of inclusion that Henry called for in the renascence of conservative orthodox doctrine, but he would model this type of inclusion as well in his role as the founding editor of *Christinaity Today* and the numerous books where he served as editor. In writing of Orr's contribution as well as that of B. B. Warfield, Henry remarks that many American fundamentalists certainly preferred Warfield's position with respect to the inspriation as opposed to Orr's "yet none doubted the positive evangelical principle of Orr's theological approach."[188]

While Henry affirms inerrancy, as will be seen later, the pairing of Orr and Warfield, et al. was for Henry a sign that the fundamentalist response to liberalism did not have to insist on separatism (from other evangelicals) when matters of second or third tier doctrines were discussed. Again writing of the approach and value of *The Fundamentals*:

> The contributors to *The Fundamentals*, in their mutual dedicatioin to supernatural Christianity, retained creative liberty to expound the witness of Scripture to its own inspiration. Morever, this attached no legal constraint to conform evrery detail of these formulations to the conclusions of each other. . . . The message of The Fundamentals centers in the great affirmations of the creation narratives. Its support for Christian supernaturalness is wary of whatever threatens biblical theism, and it is certainly not pro-evolutionary. At the same time the writers are neither suspcious nor disctrustful of science. They are open to the facts but unconvinced that all the facts have been introduced."[189]

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[188] Ibid. Cf. B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948). Later in this paper the influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism and its impact on Princeton Theology will be examined. Also see James Orr, *Revelation and Inspiration* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1910).

[189] Ibid., 38, 41.

J. Gresham Machen, when he published *Chrsitianity and Liberalism* in 1923, followed in *The Fundamentals* line of theologically astute and scholarly critique of evaluating the opposing views. In light of the growing effect of reactionary tendencies within fundamentalism, Machen and others preferred to be called evangelicals and not fundamentalists due to the rising negative connnontations of being associated with the word fundamentalist.[190]

Rolland McCune sets the context for this period succinctly and insightfully in his article, "The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part One): Historical and Theological Antecedents." In this article he quotes a writer for the *Christian Century* who understands just what was at stake during the controversy:

> The differences between fundamentalism and modernism are not mere surface differences, which can be amiably waved aside or discarded, but . . . they are foundational differences, structural differences, amounting in their radical dissimilarity almost to the differences between two distinct religions. Christianity according to fundamentalism is one religion. Christianity according to modernism is another religion. [The antithesis implies] that the differences which characterize fundamentalism and modernism are so broad and deep and significant that, if each group holds its respective views consistently and acts upon them with conscientious rigor, they find an alienating gulf between them. . . . There exist in present-day Christianity two structurally distinct religions, irreconcilable not alone on the side of apologetics but of churchly function and ideal and of missionary propagation. Two worlds have crashed the world of tradition and the world of modernism. The God of the fundamentalist is one God; the God of the modernist is another. The Christ of the fundamentalist is one Christ; the Christ of modernism is another. The Bible of the fundamentalist is one Bible; the Bible of modernism is another. The church, the kingdom, the salvation, the consummation of all things—these are one thing to the fundamentalists and another thing to modernists. But that the issue is clear and that the inherent

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[190] Ibid., 43.

incompatibility of the two worlds has passed the stage of mutual tolerance is a fact concerning which there hardly seems room for any one to doubt.[191]

Fundamentalists predictably responded. For a time fundamentalists waged the battle on the scholarly front. But after the Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tennessee, where the fundamentalist side was excoriated and caricatured in the press as obscurantist and of a back woods mentality, the fundamentalist mood changed and became militant and then separatist.[192] Again Henry insightfully writes of this period of fundamentalism:

> The real bankruptcy of fundamentalism has resulted not so much from a reactionary spirit-lamentable as this was-as from a harsh temperament, a spirit of lovelessness and strife contributed by much of its leadership in the recent past. One of the ironies of contemporary church history is that the more fundamentalist stressed separation from apostasy as a theme in their churches, the more a spirit of lovelessness seemed to prevail. The theological conflict with liberalism deteriorated into an attack upon organizations and personalities. This condemnation, in turn, grew to include conservative churchmen and churches not ready to align with stipulated separatist movements. . . . It is this character of fundamentalism as a temperament, and not primarily fundamentalism as a theology, which has brought the movement its contemporary discredit.[193]

As Henry so characteristically does, he not only diagnoses the problem but also he provides a prescription for the remedy of the problem. So if modernism stands discredited as a perversion of the scriptural theology, [and] fundamentalism in this contemporary expression stands discredited as a perversion of the biblical spirit; what is the answer as how to engage the contemporary culture with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Henry answers this question and in doing do rejects the neo-orthodox answer

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[191]McCune, "The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part One): Historical And Theological Antecedents," 23.

[192] Ibid., 20-34.

[193] Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, 43–44.

to the question of how to re-engage the culture.[194] His answer calls for the

reclamation of the Augustinian-Calvinistic conception of the relation of revelation

and reason.[195]

Henry as one of the major drafters of the contours of neo-evangelicalism lays

out the broad parameters in the remaining chapter in *Evangelical Responsibility in*

Contemporary Culture. The first step in re-engaging culture with the Gospel of Jesus

Christ is to return to biblical theology. Evangelical theology must make central again

a passionate concern for the reality of special divine revelation. Second, evangelicals

must move beyond a simple delineation of external negations. Concern for the whole

of life must be reasserted. A third step must be a hearty and robust Christological

proclamation that conforms to the biblical witness. No Christological reduction can

be sustained if evangelicals are once again to herald the *Evangel*. A fourth step of

action must be the willful and joyful obedience to loving one's neighbor as oneself. A

passionate obedience to the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37-40) must once again

become synonymous with Christianity. A more developed view of this step is a

holistic concern for the individual. Every sphere of the believer's life must come

under the sway of the biblical record. To merely reduce the biblical mandate to a

specified number of do's and don'ts is a caricature of the Christian life. A fifth step

prescribed by Henry is that evangelicals develop a more fully developed doctrine of

the church. Combating the principle of separation insisted upon by fundamentalists,

necessitates a deeply reflective interaction with Scripture and culture to overcome the

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[194] Ibid., 48–63.

[195] Ibid., 64–65. This topic will receive greater treatment in chapter 5.

needlessly restrictive and rigid formulations of the recent past. Sixth, Evangelical

Christianity must identify, with precision, the term evangelical. Too often it is limited

to a restricted number of those who have identified with a number of existing

movements. Evangelicals must answer, "What does it mean to be an evangelical?"[196]

This question served as a basic outline for the direction that neo-evangelicals would

take in the immediate years following 1947. It is to the development and growth of

the evangelical movement that this study now moves.

3.9   Conclusion

Chapter 3 provides a more extensive and in-depth look into *The Uneasy*

Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism. Henry had written three very important

books around the time the 1940s were coming to an end. On either side of *The*

Uneasy Conscience, Henry wrote books that employed the apagogic method of his

mentor Gordon Clark. Clark in this methodology relies extensively on the law of non-

contradiction to show the inferiority of competing claims to the historic, orthodox

position of the Church. Henry follows Clark in *Remaking the Modern Mind* and *The*

Protestant Dilemma in the use of the apagogic method to show that liberalism and the

surging neo-orthodoxy were inferior in their attempt to claim the throne as legitimate

expressions of Christianity. From these two works, Henry would expand and

expound basic themes that would receive their most complete treatment in his

magnum opus, *God, Revelation and Authority.*

The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism has been called the,

"manifesto of neo-evangelicalism." This small little book, only 89 pages in length,

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[196] Ibid., 67–86.

served to call fundamentalists from their cultural retreat to a fully engaged and robust

expression of Great Commission Christianity. Henry identifies the weaknesses and

inconsistencies of fundamentalism and then challenges his brethren to right the wrong

that had been, up to that point, the contemporary expression of fundamentalism.

Henry identified temperament as one of the wrongs of fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism's pessimism (due to dispensational pre-millennialism), its

commitment to separation (as a means of keeping doctrinal purity), and its exclusive

focus on the individual to the neglect of the larger society (as a reaction against the

"Social Gospel") were wrongs that Henry found incompatible with the biblical

mandate. Henry writes eight short chapters that level the charge at fundamentalism

and then prescribing a remedy to correct the wrong direction that fundamentalism had

taken. Henry wrote *The Uneasy Conscience* as a call to arms. He believed that those

who held to the fundamentals of the faith had the only corrective for contemporary

problems, but they had withdrawn from cultural engagement. In Henry's estimation,

now was the time for re-engagement:

> Those who read with competence will know that the "uneasy conscience" of
> which I write is not one troubled about the great biblical verities, which I
> consider the only outlook capable of resolving our problems, but rather one
> distressed by the frequent failure to apply them effectively to crucial problems
> confronting the modern mind. It is an application of, not a revolt against,
> fundamentals of the faith, for which I plead.[197]

The benefit of looking back into history is that one can see what events did or

did not come to pass. Henry writes in 1957, *Evangelical Responsibility in*

Contemporary Theology. In this work, Henry examines the decade that had just

passed since writing *The Uneasy Conscience*. He concludes that while

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[197] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, preface.

fundamentalism has defended supernaturalistic Christianity against the attack of liberalism and withstood the existential orientation of neo-orthodoxy, it still was weakened by its "inherent perils." As serious as those weaknesses are with respect to fundamentalism, the greatest problem that fundamentalism face was its "harsh temperament, a spirit of lovelessness and strife."[198] Picking up on this fundamental tenet of fundamentalism, as identified by Henry, the remainder of the chapter gives a brief survey of the rise of fundamentalism in the United States of America. At its core, fundamentalists sought to maintain fidelity to the Bible and the epistemology and metaphysics that the Scriptures expressed. Liberals, as viewed by the fundamentalists, incorporated alien epistemologies (Kantain) with their variations that undermined the authority of God's Word. Fundamentalism became the expression of some of those who held fast to direction set by the Apostolic Church and the Reformers. Henry wanted to affirm and build on that foundation, and so-keeping articulated what he believed to be the faithful cultural expression of those that held to the "Fundamentals."

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[198] Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology*, 43.

CHAPTER 4   EVANGELICAL DEFINITION

4.1   Evangelical: What does it Mean?

Attempting to offer a definition of what constitutes evangelicalism is difficult.

Donald Dayton says that the term "evangelical" is a disputed term. It can be defined in a

narrow sense where the term refers to:

> that group of conservative of Protestants in the Anglo-American world who made
> a conscious attempt, beginning in the 1940s, to dissociate themselves from the
> more obnoxious aspects of fundamentalist hyperconservatism without abandoning
> its basic theological convictions, the doctrine of biblical inerrancy being the
> identifying mark of their orthodoxy. This movement, while it has fairly distinct
> institutional center approachable theologically because of the inability of
> Evangelicalism and the Fundamentalism from which it arose to identify its
> common doctrinal bond with any degree of precision, despite the importance of
> inerrancy as the emblem of the movement. . . . Precisely what beliefs bind its
> Evangelicals together, however, is a more difficult—and fairly delicate —
> question. There is a sense, moreover, in which the term applies to charismatics,
> and twentieth century representatives of nineteenth century holiness revivals,
> along with numerous strains of millenarian. While one must grant the title to any
> Christian who applies for it, there is a vocal, visible, and self-aware part of the
> movement which tends to be regarded as "Evangelicalism as usually define" and
> therefore willy-nilly draws the rest in its train, at leas as far as general perceptions
> are concerned. Its prominent institutions include Christianity Today, the
> Evangelical Theological Society, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association,
> Wheaton College, the original Fuller Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical
> Divinity School, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and individuals such as
> Billy Graham—who is probably the single most important Evangelical and in a
> sense the icon of the movement—Carl F. H. Henry, the late Harold John Ockenga
> and Edward John Carnell. These men and institutions represent a dominating and
> hence party within Evangelicalism.[1]

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[1] Steven Mark Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma: A comparative study of the thought of Karl Barth and Carl F. H. Henry" (Th.D. diss., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1989), 1. If the title of evangelical can be claimed by anyone who applies for it, then the term becomes meaningless. Billy Graham, especially after the spectacular results and media coverage of his Los Angeles Crusade in 1949, became the person that most in the United States would identify as an Evangelical. As Ralph C. Wood says in article for *First Things*, "What Wittgenstein said about the aroma of coffee can also be said of evangelicalism: everyone knows it exists, but no one can precisely describe it.

Hutchens also notes the concerns and issues raised by Dayton and Martin E. Marty in defining evangelicalism. Dayton objects to the reduction in definition in limiting the term to "neo-fundamentalist heirs of a culturally dominant Princeton theology in intellectual ascendancy."[2] Furthermore, Dayton objects to limiting the definition of evangelical to what was, in his estimation, an essentially "popular religious movement with a holiness-pietist-Arminian character with an imperious Calvinist orthodoxy regarded itself as the center of the evangelical faith."[3]

Marty concedes to the term as the preferred self-designation, but only reluctantly in commenting on the Neo-evangelical offspring of fundamentalism:

> Many participants in and observers of church life, I among them, have only grudgingly yielded [the Evangelicals] their chosen designation, having long preferred [with Dayton] the earlier term Neo-Evangelical. This attitude was based not on a theological judgment that they were in no way locked in validly to so many histories of so many churches and movements that are not part of their outlook. Eventually, however, one gives in to sociological necessity; the term has won acceptance as a handy if still confusing and not always appropriate name.[4]

Wags have declared that an evangelical is anyone who likes Billy Graham." Ralph C. Wood, "American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction," *First Things* http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=2233, [accessed April 21, 2008].

[2] Ibid., 2.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid. In attempting to define evangelicalism, the designation of evangelicalism being a movement has surfaced. There has been one notable objection to attributing the status of movement to evangelicalism. Richard F. Wells writes that evangelicalism is not a movement: ". . . the effects of modernization are evident in what has incorrectly been identified as the evangelical movement. I say *incorrectly* because, however evangelical it may once have been it never managed to become a movement. Movements must exhibit three characteristics: (1) there must be a commonly owned direction, (2) there must be a common basis on which that direction is owned, and (3) there must be an *esprit* that informs and motivates those who are thus joined in their common cause. What has been missing most obviously from evangelicalism is the direction, despite the best efforts by such leaders as Carl Henry in the earlier years of its current growth to provide one (see issues of *Christianity Today* from the late 1950s through the early 1970s). To be sure, there was the semblance of common direction every time churches were rallied to the call of world evangelization, but that focus always proved too narrow to provide a lasting sense of common direction in a culture now adrift from its moorings. Unity must be built on more than a shared desire to evangelize; it has to grow out of a broad cultural strategy, the implementation of a broad biblically worked-

4.2   Henry and the Problem of Evangelical Definition[5]

Henry rendered his verdict on liberalism and fundamentalism. One was a perversion of scriptural theology and the other a perversion of the biblical spirit.[6] In order to combat these perversions, Henry and others decided it was time to "perform surgery" on fundamentalism and call it back to the cultural consciousness squandered by fundamentalists during their reaction to the threat of modernism:[7]

> A new generation of earnest intellectuals is appearing within the ranks of avowedly fundamentalist groups and educational instructions. . . . A strand of irenicism runs through their thought. They are able to view other kinds of theology more objectively and appreciatively than their predecessors did in the 1920s and to deal responsibly with these theologies from the standpoint of their own presuppositions.[8]

Mohler comments on Henry's writings, "In a very real sense, almost everything Carl Henry has written relates implicitly to the issue of evangelical identity and definition. More than any other evangelical of the modern period, Henry has written with the self-conscious intention of defining the evangelical movement and its theological character."[9] Even a summary look at the work of Henry will show the problematic nature of evangelical definition: *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*, *Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis*, *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration*, and *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* are books that Henry has written to address the

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out view of the world. And that was never there." *No Place for Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 8–9.

[5] This heading is borrowed from R. Albert Mohler Ph.D. dissertation, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 110.

[6] Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology*, 47.

[7] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, preface.

[8] Arnold Hearn, "Fundamentalist Renascence," *The Christian Century* (April 30, 1958): 528.

[9] Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 110.

problem of evangelical definition.[10] Henry would define that the new evangelicalism

would be fully orthodox and engage both society and the academy. In his article in *The*

New International Dictionary of the Christian Church Henry defines evangelicalism in

the following way:

> Evangelical Christians are thus marked by their definition to the sure Word of
> the Bible; they are committed to the inspired Scriptures as the divine rule of faith
> and practice. They affirm the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, including the
> incarnation and virgin birth of Christ, His sinless life, substitutionary atonement,
> and bodily resurrection as the ground of God's forgiveness of sinners, justification
> by faith alone, and the spiritual regeneration of all who trust in the redemptive
> work of Jesus Christ.[11]

Additionally, in Henry's vision, evangelicalism would consist of five

programmatic emphases: (1) the new evangelicalism aims to clarify the philosophical

implications of Biblical theism, (2) relates Christianity to the pressing social issues of the

day, as well as to individual salvation, (3) reacts against the division of evangelicals over

secondary and tertiary points of prophetic detail, (4) is alert to the possibility of a Biblical

ecumenicity, and (5) is finding its way back from systematic theology to Biblical

theology.[12] With the perceived collapse of liberalism, and the inadequacy of neo-

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[10] Carl F. H. Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*; *Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis* (Waco: TX: Word, 1967); *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971); *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco, TX: Word, 1976). In addition to the many books by Henry, his role as the founding editor of *Christianity Today* uniquely enabled Henry to shape and speak for the developing movement. A representative sampling of some of the editorials from Henry's tenure at *Christianity Today* highlight his role: "American Evangelicals and Theological Dialogue," *Christianity Today* (January 15, 1965): 27–29; "Agenda for Evangelical Advance," *Christianity Today* (November 5, 1976): 38; "Evangelical Profits and Losses," *Christianity Today* (January 25, 1978): 69–70; "Evangelical Summertime?," *Christianity Today* (April 1, 1977): 38–40; "Evangelicals and Fundamentals," *Christianity Today* (September 16, 1957): 20–21; "Evangelicals: Out of the Closet but Going Nowhere?," *Christianity Today* (January 4, 1980): 16–22.

[11] Carl F. H. Henry, "Evangelical," in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (ed. J. D. Douglas; Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1974), 358–59.

[12] Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 114.

orthodoxy, evangelicals sensed an opportunity to stand in the gap and reclaim their

Reformational heritage that fundamentalism had thrown away when given to the excesses

of militant separatism.

Henry's vision for evangelicalism was nothing less than earth shattering for the

religious landscape in America. Writing in *Evangelicals in Search of an Identity* (1976),

Henry chronicles the early development of evangelicalism in the 1940s:

> Twenty-five years ago there were signs that the long-caged lion would break its chains and roar upon the American scene with unsuspected power. The evangelical movement's mounting vitality baffled a secular press, beguiled by ecumenical spokesman for liberal pluralism into regarding conservative Christianity as s fossil-cult destined to early extinction. While modernist disbelief and neo-orthodox universalism scotched the indispensability of conversion, the Graham evangelistic crusades demonstrated anew the gospel's regenerating power. Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947 brought a higher dimension to most evangelical divinity learning. The Evangelical Theological Society at mid-century canopied hundreds of scholars committed to scriptural inerrancy and hoped to shape a theological renaissance. Evangelical books of philosophical and theological power were on the increase: G. C, Berkouwer, J. Oliver Buswell, Gordon Clark, Cornelius Van Til, E.J. Carnell, Bernard Ramm and other paced the way as J. Gresham Machen had done a half century earlier. Vigorous symposium and commentary series appeared. The National Association of Evangelicals, founded in 1942, rallied a service constituency of 10 million American evangelicals. Christianity Today united scattered evangelical contributors from all denominations in a common theological evangelistic and social witness. Garnering an impressive paid circulation of 175,000, the magazine enlisted the loyalties of many disenchanted with fundamentalist far right and liberal left . . .[13]

As Henry stated in *The Uneasy Conscience*, his call was not to abandon the

fundamentals of the faith, but to abandon the militant separatism that had come to

characterize fundamentalism:

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[13] Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of an Identity*, 19–20. In writing this book, Henry is trying to awaken and bring together what he senses is a fraying of the unity of the evangelical world. He comments on (p. 24) after having listed the accomplishments of evangelicalism, he now worries about the direction that movement that he helped foster will take: "Having burst his cage in a time of theological default, the lion of evangelicalism now seems unsure which road to take."

Those who read with competence will know that the "uneasy conscience" of which I write is not one troubled about the great biblical verities, which I consider the only outlook capable of resolving our problems, but rather one distressed by the frequent failure to apply them effectively to crucial problems confronting the modern mind. It is an application of, not a revolt against, fundamentals of the faith, for which I plead.[14]

It is this application of the fundamentals that is now under examination.

4.3   Evangelical Institutional Development

In the 1940s and 1950s there were several key institutional changes that facilitated the application of the vision of fundamentalism correctly applied as Henry had written. The founding of the National Association of Evangelicals (1942), the founding of Fuller Seminary (1947), the founding of the Evangelical Theological Society (1949), and the founding and launching of *Christianity Today* (1956) were instrumental in the rapid rise of evangelicalism. Significantly, Carl F. H. Henry played a pivotal role in each.

In an editorial in 1942 in *Bibliotheca Sacra* the editorial board made the following comment:

Long indeed have political chiefs known the indisputable fact that an organized minority can wield more influence and achieve their ends far better than an unorganized majority. Sectarian politics, which too often dominates the machinery of church gatherings, is constantly demonstrating that a very few well-intrenched and organized, designing men are able to deprive a very large majority of any expression of their convictions. With these patent conditions in mind, there is genuine ground for encouragement in the nationwide movement which has been styled the *National Association of Evangelicals for United Action*, which has as its objective the uniting of the vast evangelical forces in America for the fair and reasonable expression of their convictions.[15]

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[14] Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience*, preface.

[15] Lewis Sperry Chafer, "Editorial," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 99 (October 1942): 385.

4.3.1 The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)

The NAE was founded to provide a centrist or *via media* platform between fundamentalism on the one side and liberalism on the other.[16] Like the other two institutions mentioned, Fuller Seminary, and *Christianity Today*, Harold Ockenga was either a co-founder, or president. Historians have determined that the founding of the NAE was in fact the beginning of neo-evangelicalism, even though the term would not be coined until five years later by Ockenga. It was at this time and as would later be brought out at the founding of Fuller and *Christianity Today* that there are differences between fundamentalism and evangelicalism. A major impetus in the founding of the NAE was the reaction by the more "irenic" fundamentalists who were dissatisfied with the issue of the separation from corrupt denominations.[17] The more irenic fundamentalists were loyal to the rudiments of the fundamentalists. Additionally, they wanted to find a *via media* between the liberals and fundamentalists. Included in that search for a middle ground was the distinction between the orthodox and the neo-orthodox (this issue will be taken up in chapter 6).[18] Harold Ockenga wrote the following in 1948 regarding the NAE:

> This may be a more hopeful movement on the horizon. In it are thirty-two
> evangelical Christian denominations, hundreds of independent churches, and
> thousands of individual Christians. This movement is positive, co-operative,
> orthodox, and evangelical. Interestingly enough, an unpublished report from the
> International Sunday School Association on the National Association of
> Evangelicals and subsidiary organizations circulated privately said: "N.A.E. will

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[16] Amos Young, "The Word and the Spirit or the Spirit and the Word: Exploring the Boundaries of Evangelicalism in Relationship to Modern Pentecostalism," *Trinity Journal* 23 (Fall 2002): 237.

[17] For definition of irenic fundamentalists see John Fea, "Understanding the Changing Façade of Twentieth-Century American Protestant fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Definition," 184–86.

[18] McCune, "The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings," 110.

have its significance in furnishing a framework in which most of the other groups named above may find some co-ordination and relationship."[19]

The cooperative effort was a hallmark of the early days of the NAE.

To J. Elwin Wright goes the honor of having and then communicating the vision of a unified and cooperative evangelical voice. Wright, the leader since 1929 of a group of evangelicals called The New England Fellowship, had been touring the country from 1939 to 1941 issuing the call for a new coalition of evangelicals that held to the historic doctrinal positions of the Church, but at the same time would not be committed to militant separatism. Writing of this period Ellingsen gives the following description of the unity/separation issue: "In many ways this desire to present the old fundamentals of the faith in a positive, not merely defensive way was to set the agenda and rationale for the emergence of evangelicalism out of its original fundamentalist heritage."[20] Harold Ockenga gave in his address "The Unvoiced Multitudes" the rationale for the formation of a new body. In that founding meeting Ockenga identified the three main enemies facing America in his estimation: Roman Catholicism, liberal/modernism, and secularism (generally in the form of Franklin D. Roosevelt's political liberalism and international communism).[21] Ockenga's formula for meeting these enemies were "first, unity; fundamentalism faced a 'terrible indictment' for its 'failures, divisions, and controversies.' Rugged individualism was a 'millstone' that must be repudiated. Second,

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[19] Harold J. Okenga, "The New Reformation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 105, no.417 (January 1948): 97.

[20] McCune, "The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings," 110.

[21] Ibid., 111.

doctrinal purity an emphasis on the cardinal evangelical doctrines of Christianity. And third, 'consecrated love.'"[22]

As would be expected, the NAE was criticized from the right and the left. The fundamentalists criticized it for allowing membership in the NAE of those who did not share the concern for the doctrinal purity of the church. Criticism on the left came in the way of demagoguery when the editor of the liberal *Christian Century* wrote: ". . . the atomistic sectarianism which has long been a scandal of Protestant Christianity appears to be receiving a new lease on life."[23]

Irrespective of the criticisms that marked its birth, the forming of the NAE was a watershed event in the development of evangelicalism. Those "irenic fundamentalists" believed that the fundamentalism of the 1920s and 1930s was incompatible with the new generation of evangelicals and the direction that they believed they should go. In contradistinction to the separatism of the previous generation of fundamentalist—evangelicals, this new generation sought cultural engagement much like their forebears of the Reformation and the evangelicals of the seventieth and eighteenth centuries. A fissure was now exposed in the bedrock of conservative Protestant Christianity in the United States of America. With the rise of Fuller Seminary, the Evangelical Theological Society, and *Christianity Today* that small crack would become a chasm that would not soon be spanned.[24]

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[22] Ibid., 112.

[23] Ibid. In point of fact it was with the goal of inclusion that the NAE was founded. One can read their mission statement, statement of faith and core values and see that the NAE desires to foster cooperation around their statement of faith irregardless of denominational affiliation. Cf. NAE webpage http://www.nae.net/index.cfm?FUSEACTION=nae.mission, (accessed April 19, 2008).

4.3.2 The Fuller Experiment

Another break with fundamentalism that had seismic repercussions across the conservative Protestant Christian landscape was the founding and rise of Fuller Theological Seminary. Henry's role in the founding and shaping of Fuller has already been discussed in chapter 2 of this work, but one remark bears repeating:

> The prodigious pen of Carl F. H. Henry in the 1940s and 50s did the most to raise the issue of fundamentalism's intellectual want and tried to elevate the standard of evangelical/fundamentalist scholarship and the intellectualism of the day. And it was Henry who did as much or more early on to set the scholastic tone and academic standards of the new evangelicalism's flagship of learning-Fuller Theological Seminary.[25]

Part of Henry's call for cultural engagement as contained in *The Uneasy Conscience* and the explicit implications, of the *Remaking the Modern Mind* and *The Protestant Dilemma,* were the creation of a first rate evangelical school of higher education. As Dorrien noted in *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* it was Henry along with Edward J. Carnell, "who set out to rehabilitate the intellectual foundations of evangelical fundamentalism and make it worthy of respect."[26] Marsden points out that in

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[24] Ibid., 113–16. McCune disagrees with the assessment of George Marsden that in the formation of the NAE "almost no one seems to have regarded the NAE as a sign that 'evangelicals' were now breaking from fundamentalism over the principle of separatism (*Reforming Fundamentalism*, p.48)." McCune writes, "This may have been the understanding of the liberals. It is true that the terms fundamentalist and evangelical had not yet developed all of their peculiar connotations and innuendos; and it is also true that some separatist fundamentalists thought they could work inside and thus direct the new group. And to be sure W. B. Riley was about the only fundamentalist leader in outspoken, public opposition to the new body (some would say this was due to his vested interest in the World Christian Fundamentalist Association). But given the background, statements, and actions of its organizers of the time, it should have seemed clear where the NAE's toes were pointed despite which way its face was turned." Cf. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 155.

[25] McCune, "The Formation of The New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings", 123–24. For an excellent treatment on the history of Fuller Theological Seminary, see George Marsden's *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (1987). *Reforming Fundamentalism* also serves as a sequel and companion to his *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (1980).

[26] Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*, 7.

addition to the need for academic respect there were other factors at play from the very

beginning at Fuller:

> Those who founded Fuller Seminary were consciously bound by allegiances to three major religious movements, although they did not usually see the three as distinct. They were loyal to a version of classical Protestant Christianity, they were loyal to the American evangelical heritage, and they were loyal to fundamentalism. These religious traditions are crucial for understanding both Fuller Seminary and the people who shaped it.[27]

These allegiances to these different traditions would manifest themselves in the

struggles that Fuller would go through at a relatively early point in its existence.[28]

Mentioned earlier was a book review by John F. Walvoord on *The Uneasy Conscience of*

Modern Fundamentalism. After commending the book Walvoord makes the following

statement indicating the leading role that Henry played in the early days of Fuller, "Of

interest to seminarians is that this book with its introduction by President Harold John

Ockenga of Fuller Theological Seminary and Dr. Henry, one of Fuller Seminary's

professors, gives a key to the principles guiding this new and promising institution.[29]

Fuller was intended to be the flagship of a revitalized and intellectually

respectable fundamentalism. As was typical of the time Fuller, like the NAE, was

criticized by both the right and the left. Hard line fundamentalists attacked Fuller's desire

to seek academic respectability. This faction viewed that desire as a form of idolatry. The

left, principally local religious establishments (particularly the local United

Presbyterians), criticized Fuller because they "obviously felt threatened by having a

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[27] Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 3.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Walvoord, "Review of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*," 364.

fundamentalist seminary in their back yard."[30] Fuller has experienced radical changes in

its philosophy since its inception. If in keeping the standard of the founders is a

measurement of the success of Fuller, then one would have to conclude that Fuller did not

succeed in gaining academic respectability as a fundamentalist institution.[31]

4.3.3   The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS)

Another major development in establishing the identity of Evangelicalism was the

founding of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) in 1949. The establishment of the

ETS was a seminal move in evangelicalism's distancing itself from fundamentalism. At

this pivotal time in the development of evangelicalism there arose a sense among the

rising evangelical scholars of the need for an association of scholars who shared

"evangelical presuppositions, to meet and work together to promote conservative

theological literature. Acting upon this need, a faculty committee of Gordon Divinity

School in Boston organized a meeting of evangelical scholars for the purpose of

establishing such an association."[32]

A historical background of the ETS contained in the historical archives of the

Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College contains the following:

> In the first decades of the twentieth century, there was a reaction to the modernist
> movement among some conservative Protestants. They issued a call to return to
> the "fundamentals" to restore the emphasis on inerrant and authoritative teachings
> of the Bible to its former wide acceptance. A number of factors following World
> War I resulted in a general public reaction in the 1930s against the
> "Fundamentalists," as they came to be called, and subsequent withdrawal of
> conservative believers into a closed circle of independent congregations, para-

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[30] Steven Mark Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma," 66.

[31] Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 245ff.

[32] John A. Wiseman, "Evangelicalism 1949–79: As Traced in the Evangelical Theological
Society" (M.A. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1989), 54.

church, and professional groups with increasingly less contact and interaction with mainline Christian denominations. Post-World Was II years produced a rising concern among conservative scholars of the necessity to counteract this withdrawal of conservatives from the wider world of scholarly activity. While many Fundamentalists tended to be anti-intellectual, some conservatives, calling themselves Evangelicals, began to challenge liberal solutions.

The Evangelical Theological Society arose out of a long-standing and keenly perceived need for interaction and wider dissemination of conservative research on biblical and theological issues. Conservative, Evangelical scholars were equally concerned that the Bible was no longer being supported as authoritative in many schools and seminaries, among leaders of mainline denominations, or in published research. By providing an Evangelical arena of intellectual interchange and disseminating the results to a larger public, it was hoped that exposition and defense of Evangelical positions could be added to existing scholarly theological literature that was more liberal in content.

As a result of many informal conferences in schools and seminaries, faculty members of Gordon Divinity School, Boston, Massachusetts, decided to take the first step toward organization of a group of like-minded scholars into a society having as its purpose publication of such research and the provision of a forum for discussion and support between its members. A series of twenty-four letters to individual professors of approximately twenty conservative colleges and seminaries was sent out early in 1949 to gauge interest. Responses from these encouraged the committee, under the chairmanship of Edward R. Dalglish of Gordon, to proceed with further arrangements. A list of those originally contacted can be found on a separate page of this guide. Consensus of meeting time and place resulted in the first gathering of the Society in Cincinnati, on December 27 and 28, 1949. Meetings were held in the YMCA and were attended by sixty scholars, representing at least twenty different denominations. The group elected R. Clarence Bouma (Calvin Seminary) as President and appointed an Executive Committee to carry on the continuing business. Membership, Editorial, and a Standing Committee were established, the latter for program arrangements. A complete list of original officers and committees will be found on another page of this guide. A list of papers read at this meeting is also given.

The decision was made to form a society composed of independent individuals of conservative, Evangelical conviction with one common denominator: scholarship based on the concept of biblical inerrancy. These individuals were not required to be affiliated with schools and seminaries and were not to be limited to specific denominational or theological traditions. For these reasons, the creedal statement was limited to one sentence: "The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety is the word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs." It was also

decided that papers should not be limited to biblical and exegesis studies but were to range the entire field of theological disciplines.[33]

Aside from the previously stated motives for the founding of the association, there were two other issues at play. One was to distance themselves from modernist/liberals. The other was to separate as well from the fundamentalists.[34]

Clarence Bouma gave the keynote address and voiced the common assertion that a new association was needed. There was a need for a distinctively evangelical society:

> The deepest and ultimate reason for this need, as I see it, is found in the radical divergence between the basis, presuppositions, and consequent methodologies of a sound evangelical theology on the one hand, and that of the prevailing type of theology (which may with a general term be designated as modernist) on the other. . . . The ultimate source and authority for Theology is no longer sought in the objective divine revelation of Scripture, but in the religious consciousness of man. Theology thus becomes anthropocentric instead of theo-centric. . . . This divergence between the historic Christian Theology and the current prevailing modernist Theology—of whatever shape or hue—is so great that the organization of separate scholarly societies for the evangelical theologian is so desirable. Here I do not wish to be misunderstood as condemning membership in all societies for biblical and theological study except those which are avowedly evangelical.[35]

In regard to the second motive, distancing themselves from the militant fundamentalist, Walvoord, writing from a fundamentalist perspective, echoed Henry's critique of fundamentalism:

> It is clear, however, that most evangelicals do not want to be considered fundamentalist. Many evangelicals today are glad to be done with the old, controversial type of fundamentalism. . . . It (evangelicalism) does not require

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[33] "Records of the Evangelical Theological Society Collection 243," Billy Graham Center Archives. http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/243.htm#3 (April 21, 2008).

[34] The irony of this motive is not lost on the author. One of the criticisms that Henry and others had against the more strident fundamentalist was their doctrine of militant separatism. And yet, here was a group, many coming from within fundamentalism, that were separating themselves from fundamentalism for, in part, their insistence on separating themselves from those that did not agree with them.

[35] Ibid., 55.

separation from denominational organizations which no longer require belief in the famous five fundamentals.[36]

In *Christian Life* magazine in 1956 an editorial article made this description of the difference between fundamentalism and evangelicalism

> . . . they thought there was more to Christianity than being on the defensive all the time. They wanted to build on the contributions of older leaders a positive, not reactionary movement. . . . It's still as concerned over preserving the Christian essentials as were the early fundamentalists. But it is something more: a positive witness for God's redemptive love, wisdom and power as revealed in Jesus Christ. In short, fundamentalism has become evangelicalism.[37]

Since the initial meeting of the ETS in 1949, gains in influence would come relatively quickly. So much so that some liberal scholars began to take notice. Arnold W. Hearn, a reputable liberal scholar wrote:

> It is no longer proper, if it ever was, to view fundamentalism exclusively in terms of the stereotypes which emerged during the period of bitterest controversy following World War I; nor can it be dealt with by the conditioned responses which grew out of that era. A new generation of earnest intellectuals is appearing within the ranks of the avowedly fundamentalist groups and educational institutions.[38]

Hearn would list the writing of Bernard Ramm, Henry, E. J. Carnell, and the publications of the ETS as representative of the new group of conservative scholars. Hearn would go on to comment that this new evangelical strand of fundamentalism "may just possibly be moving toward a place of much greater influence . . . in American Protestantism."[39] Hearn's prophesy would prove to be more accurate than he could have possibly imagined. By the time he made this observation the last major institutional

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[36] Ibid., 67.

[37] Ibid., 65–66.

[38] Ibid., 44.

[39] Ibid.

development of new evangelicalism had already been in existence two years. As is usual for this period of evangelicalism, Carl Henry was at the epicenter of the developments. In looking back to the ETS, Henry did more than just come up with its name he was a major influence as seen from its temperament and its commitment to excellence in scholarship.[40] The founding of *Christianity Today*, with Henry as the founding editor, would become in the next twelve years a major factor in shaping and influencing evangelicalism in the next twelve years.

4.3.4   The Flagship Journal of Evangelicalism (*Christianity Today-CT*)

In *Confessions of a Theologian*, Henry recounts that in 1955 he was asked if he might be interested in editing an evangelical magazine that would give the liberally oriented *Christian Century* a conservative counterpart At that time Henry, recalls a spring day in 1938 while he was at Wheaton, when he along with two other seniors at Wheaton where asked to identify Christianity's greatest present day need. The other two students mentioned worthwhile missionary endeavors. Henry recalls that he "mentioned evangelical Christianity's need for a counterpart to *Christian Century*, although neither the vision nor the resources for such a venture was then in view."[41]

The vision for what would become *Christianity Today* was Billy Graham's. It was on Christmas Day 1954 in the home of his father-in-law that Graham articulated his perceived need for an evangelical magazine that would be the rival of the liberal *Christian Century* magazine. The two men talked about this venture and in the ensuing days their excitement and expectation of it becoming a reality took shape as Bell made

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[40] Ibid., 56.

[41] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 144.

contact with "almost a thousand" evangelical leaders. One significant contact who at first was only marginally interested was J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil. Pew would become a major factor in the launching of *Christianity Today*.[42]

Christianity Today was a part of a "broader effort of a group who called themselves the "new evangelicals to reassert a conservative Protestantism as a cultural force."[43] With the success of Fuller Seminary, NAE and ETS, Graham's vision of an evangelical magazine that would rival the *Christian Century*, became a key component of the effort of impacting the broader culture.

As Henry recounts the events that led up to his becoming the founding editor of *CT*, a friend and colleague played an instrumental role. Wilbur Smith was first approached about taking the editorship of this new venture. Smith was then on the faculty of Fuller and a colleague of Henry's. Smith eventually declined the offer and then discussions about possible editors included Henry. While looking for a founding editor Graham and Bell went to meet with Pew. Pew offered $150,000 for two years to get the magazine going.[44]

Henry was eventually approached by Harold Lindsell, apparently as an emissary from Bell or Graham, about his possible interest as an associate editorship. Henry had earlier been asked about being a contributor editor. In that earlier conversation Henry noted that if the venture was not "theologically compromised the magazine could prove to be a boon to the evangelical cause. If the magazine would be (a) transcontinental, (b)

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[42] Ibid., 145.

[43] Eric J. Miller, "Carl F. H. Henry and Christianity Today: Responding to the 'Crisis of the West,' 1956-1968" (M.A. thesis. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1994), 144.

[44] Ibid., 145.

interdenominational, (3) theologically affirmative, (d) socially aggressive, and (e) irenic"
it would be exactly what was needed for the hour of the day.[45]

Things progressed throughout 1955 with discussion leading to the forming of a
board of directors. Graham was the leading force during this time. In April of 1955,
Graham was conducting a crusade in Scotland. After meeting with Scottish clergy and
hearing of their widespread disenchantment with liberal theology and of their renewed
interest in biblical theology, Graham stressed the need for this new magazine to be
intellectually competent and evangelical. The name *Christianity Today* had been on
Bell's letterhead was now being used as a permanent title in all discussions and official
correspondence from Bell.

Graham wrote Henry from Europe in July of 1955 inquiring about his possible
interest as the editor. Henry responded and said that upon his return, he would discuss the
matter with Graham. On Labor Day of that year Henry met with Graham and others in
New York. Aside from Henry and Graham, other prominent businessman and potential
board members were at the meeting as well. It was during this meeting that Henry was
elected as the founding editor by the board of directors, (which that earlier that day had
been constituted). The first publication date was set for October 1, 1956. The initial
objective was to reach 200,000 clergy in American and the English speaking world.[46]

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 146–49. From the very beginning the seeds of discontent were planted. Henry wanted total
editorial control. The differences that Henry and Bell had over editorial responsibility would continue
during the entirety of Henry's tenure. Additionally, J. Howard Pew, whose generous contributions enabled
the venture to go forward was insistent that the magazine be a vocal advocate of capitalism as the only
representative economic model that a Christian could recognize as biblically faithful. Furthermore, Pew
wanted to be involved in determining editorial policy. From the very beginning, Henry was equally as
insistent on editorial freedom. For a more succinct summary see Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the
context of the fundamentalist dilemma," 68–69; Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 161–63. Here Henry

Henry was a man of vision. His ability to diagnose the problem and then chart a remedy was a key character trait of his. Henry had consistently shown his ability to be at the epicenter of evangelical developments in the 1940s and 1950s. His early theological works detailed a critique of modern thought and culture. In this critique Henry also brought his discerning eye to his own theological tradition. Having shown where fundamentalism went wrong, Henry had charted a course correction in two significant works, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* and *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Culture*. He also had been actively involved in evangelical institutional developments (i.e., NAE, ETS, Fuller Theological Seminary). However his most significant activity to date would be his editorship of *Christianity Today. CT* was a bold venture filled with great expectations and problems as well. But even after a difficult first year at *CT*, and considering a potential return to Fuller after a one-year sabbatical by 1958 Henry became convinced that he had been called by the Lord to Washington and *Christianity Today*. Consequently, by the third year of its publication, *CT* had more than doubled the circulation of its liberal rival the *Christian Century*.[47]

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speaks of the editorial interference initiated by Pew. In protest of the interference from Pew and others on the Board of Directors, Henry and the editorial staff sent the following letter to the Board of Directors:

> To The Board:
> In submitting this copy for Board approval, the Editors feel that their sense of professional dignity is lowered to half mast. Men who bear in the sight of the public the responsibility for the published content cannot long be deprived of a commensurate authority without either deterioration of spirit or a departure to other work. In coming to Christianity Today, the Editors did not regard themselves salaried propagandists under censorship but as principled men under divine constraint. In championing the freedoms which Christianity bears to men, they can only protest against the compromise (here involved) of the liberties which inhere in a free evangelical press.

This letter was sent to the Board of Directors even before the first copy came off the press. This letter and the explicit threat that Henry would resign if advance notice of editorials had to be cleared by select members of the Board, set off a flurry of activity. Billy Graham and several other Board members supported the Editors' position and opposed Pew. For the moment the issue of editorial freedom was settled.

[47] Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma,"69–70. "The first year at the magazine was fraught with disagreements over editorial freedom, format, readership and finances" (p. 69).

In February of 1954 Wilbur Smith wrote Billy Graham a letter bemoaning the fact

that there was no vehicle for conservatives to carry their message to the larger culture:

> There is no prophetic voice for the conservatives in our country today, and no
> agency binding them together, which is a tragedy. Such a paper as you have in
> mind would do it, and someone ought to undertake this at once, one who has the
> confidence of the conservative force of our land.[48]

Graham et al. would under take that challenge. Smith had been offered and refused the

editorship of the magazine that would become *Christianity Today*. Within two years, in

October of 1956, the first issue of *Christianity Today* rolled off the press. For the next

twelve years, Carl Henry would sit in the editor-in-chief's chair. From that vantage point

Henry would enter into a stage of his career that would see him began to propagate his

vision of evangelicalism.[49] These twelve years would consist of innumerable articles,

lectures and talks, one significant theological volume (*Christian Personal Ethics*, 1957)

and many memorable events, chief of which was the Berlin Congress on Evangelism.

> Henry's work at Christianity Today represented a bold experiment in theology
> that cost him a great deal of personal time and energy. Because of his own sense
> of responsibility, however, he made the effort for twelve years. What was he
> trying to accomplish? Though it is unsigned, the first editorial in the magazine's
> history expressed Henry's goals and those of the other original editors. Without
> question, they were very lofty goals. The editorial states that the magazine "has its
> origin in a deep-felt desire to express historical Christianity to the present
> generation." Believing that liberalism had failed to meet the needs of modern men
> and women, the editors wrote: *Christianity Today* is confident that the answer to
> the theological confusion existing in the world is found in Christ and the

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[48]Miller, "Carl F. H. Henry and Christianity Today: Responding to the "Crisis of the West," 1956–1968," 27.

[49] House, "Remaking the Modern Mind: Revisiting Carl Henry's Theological Vision," 13. "To summarize this era in Henry's life, I offer the following four observations. First, by this time Henry had formed a coherent philosophical vision that took reason and human sinfulness into account. Second, he had crystallized his doctrine of full biblical authority and defended it as the most complete answer to the human dilemma. Third, he had outlined what he considered evangelicalism's ethical and theological responsibilities. Fourth, he had committed himself to disseminating evangelical theology as widely as possible, for he considered Christian theology *the* expression of God's plan for the human race. This last point is crucial for understanding Henry's next career move."

Scriptures. There is evidence that more and more people are rediscovering the Word of God as their source of authority and power. Many of these searchers for the truth are unaware of the existence of an increasing group of evangelical scholars throughout the world. Through the pages of *Christianity Today* these men will expound and defend the basic truths of the Christian faith in terms of reverent scholarship and of practical application to the needs of the present generation.

Further, the editors promised that the "doctrinal content of historic Christianity will be presented and defended." They pledged to "apply the biblical revelation to the contemporary social crisis by presenting the implications of the total gospel message for every area of life." They hoped to "supplement seminary training with sermonic helps, pastoral advice, and book reviews by leading ministers and scholars," and they desired to counteract the "dissolving effect of modern scientific theory" by setting forth "the unity of the divine revelation in nature and Scripture." Finally, they endeavored to do all this while upholding and stating constructively "the complete reliability and authority of the written Word of God." In other words, Henry hoped to take academic theology to the masses. He wished to have a literate and informed clergy. He also desired to have one journal that would unite evangelicalism around theology and practice. In fact, he saw this magazine as part of a grand scheme for evangelical penetration. Besides the magazine, he thought that the movement required continued evangelistic breakthroughs like those represented by the Billy Graham Crusades, sufficient textbook literature to challenge liberal thought, a breakthrough in Christian social action, and a community of Christian scholars thinking and working together on significant projects. Such ministries would in turn benefit the local church (see *CT*, 205).[50]

Henry's reputation even by those that were across the theological aisle was "one who represented a sophisticated and irenic theological conservatism."[51] His standing as a first rate scholar would enable him to enlist a broad range of evangelical scholars who would serve as contributing editors.[52] Henry's vision for the new magazine would be to further the evangelical agenda and respond to "the crisis of the west." This vision can be encapsulated in three broad aims: to win the liberals, to unify and mobilize evangelicals,

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[50] Ibid., 13–14.

[51] Miller, "Carl F. H. Henry and Christianity Today: Responding to the "Crisis of the West," 1956–1968," 30.

[52] Ibid., 30. A sampling of these scholars included Frank E. Gaebelein, Roger Nicole, Bernard Ramm, and Gordon H. Clark.

and to transform culture.[53] These three objectives embodied the precise goal that was stated in the 1954 Labor Day meeting: "to articulate historic Christianity and its contemporary relevance primarily for the clergy and incidentally also for the thoughtful lay leaders."[54]

4.4   Evangelical Success

The 1940s and 1950s saw the foundation being laid for evangelical advancement. The 1960s and 1970s saw the house being erected and the occupants moving inside. 1976 was designated as the "Year of the Evangelical." A Gallup Poll was conducted in August of 1976. Based on the findings of that survey, Gallup discovered that "one person in three (34 percent) has been born again— that is, has had a turning point in his or her life marked by a commitment to Jesus Christ. This figure works out to nearly 50 million American adults."[55] Bearing witness to the Gallup findings of the success of the evangelicals one could see their growing churches, expanding church campuses and vibrant youth ministries. Evangelicals also showed phenomenal success in publishing and other media ventures. Evangelicals even have their version of pop culture celebrities, born again celebrities such as Charles Colson, Johnny Cash, Anita Bryant, and Jimmy Carter.[56]

Gallup maintained that in 1976, according to his data, the United States was the most religious country in the world among advanced nations. This claim of "most

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[53] Ibid., 31.

[54] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 148.

[55] Richard Quebedeaux, *The Worldly Evangelicals* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1976), 3.

[56] Ibid., 3.

religious country" is a nuanced one. Gallup cites in addition to large numbers of people who claim to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, attend church and in general find that a relationship with God through his son Jesus Christ is a vital part of their everyday experience, the United States as a whole is only superficially religious. Factors that contribute to the superficiality of the United States are criminal victimizations, consumer fraud, political corruption, tax cheating, bribery and other evils.[57] Even with that qualification, Quebedeaux makes the following comment about evangelicals in the mid 1970s:

> Evangelicals decided to enter the world to change it–a world that could no longer take the message and lifestyle of fundamentalism seriously, if it ever did in the past. They began to affirm the Christ who *transforms* culture. The evangelicals knew that to influence the world for Christ they would have to gain its attention in a positive way. In a word, they would have to become *respectable* by the world's standards. And in this effort the evangelicals have been the most successful.[58]

4.5   Henry and The Reformed Approach to Christianity and Culture

As stated before Henry was a man who thought and acted strategically. Henry was driven by the Biblical mandate of cultural engagement. In *Personal Christian Ethics* Henry quoted Archibald Alexander:

> Our view of God and of the world, our fundamental *Welt-Anschauung*, cannot but determine our view of man and his moral life. In every philosophical system from Plato to Hegel, in which the universe is regarded as having a rational meaning and ultimate end, the good of human beings is conceived as identical with or at least as included in the universal good.[59]

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[57] Ibid., 4–5.

[58] Ibid., 13. In the remainder of the book Quebedeaux goes on to expound what he means by successful according to the world's standards. Given the complexity of the evangelical makeup it is not a given that many who call themselves evangelicals would find comfort in the fact that they have succeeded according to the world's standards.

[59] Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics*, 188.

In this passage and throughout the whole book, Henry echoes the influence of James Orr.

Henry recounted the influence of Orr in his classes at Wheaton: "It was James Orr's great

work, *The Christian View of God and the World*, used as a senior text in theism, that did

the most to give me a cogently comprehensive view of reality and life in a Christian

context."[60] Henry followed what is generally referred to as a "Reformed approach to

Christianity and culture, which stresses the unity of truth and the Christian's

responsibility to confront all spheres of human endeavor with that truth and its

subsequent application."[61] A quick note of clarification is warranted at this point:

> It must be made clear that Henry's adapting of Reformed thought was not made
> wholesale. Henry possessed an expansive understanding of the history of
> philosophy and theology from which he drew to formulate his conception of
> Christianity and evangelical strategy. His 'evangelicalism' also bore the
> unmistakable imprint of nineteenth century American revivalism.[62]

 In *Evangelical Affirmations*, a book on which Henry served as the editor, Harold

O. J. Brown writes of the sixteenth century Reformers insistence on the need for a

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[60] Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*, 75. In the following quote Orr summarizes his book *A Christian View of God and the World (*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, *1954*): "He who with his whole heart believe in Jesus as the Son of God is thereby committed to much else besides. He is committed to a view of God, to a view of man, to a view of sin, to a view of Redemption, to a view of the purpose of God in creation and history, to a view of human destiny, found only in Christianity. This forms a 'Wletanschauung,' or 'Christian view of the world,' from which stands in marked contrast with theories wrought out from a purely philosophical or scientific standpoint" (p. 4).

[61] Miller, "Carl F. H. Henry and Christianity Today: Responding to the "Crisis of the West," 1956-1968," 119–29. Miller notes three streams of Reformed influence: (1) American Presbyterians as influenced by Princeton Theological Seminary under the leadership of Archibald Alexander. One of the impacts of Princeton Theology was the idea that Christianity has wide-spread cultural implications and that the Christian has a responsibility to become engaged culturally according to his abilities and calling, (2) Through the Wm B. Erdmanns Publishing Company the works of twentieth century British evangelicals were made available to an American audience. Even though James Orr was Scottish, his influence on Henry was unmistakable as already noted, (3) The third stream was Dutch Reformed thought as particularly articulated by Abraham Kuyper. Personal influences on Henry were Cornelius Van Til and Henry Jellema. In addition to a "heritage of serious academic work and philosophical reasoning . . . they took for granted full Christian participation in artistic and cultural life" (p. 122).

[62] Ibid., 125. Henry was deeply influenced by Reformed thought and this influence could be seen in his selections of essays and arguments as they articulated the Christian mandate for cultural engagement.

Christian society. Luther, Calvin and the other leaders of the Reformation made valiant

efforts to foster consistent Christian living. Calvin was not alone in his use of civil and

church discipline to create a pattern of community life that was consistent with

Scripture.[63] As Henry would say in *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration*, "an authentic

Christian social ethic begins with surety of the self-revealing God as creator, redeemer

and judge of all, and of the soul as a *sensorium* of the eternal supernatural world in

contrast to merely world-affirming secular ethics which shrivels the realm of reality."[64]

Henry would go on to flesh out this authentic evangelical ethic in terms of personal

conformity to the likeness of Jesus Christ, personal inclusion in the regenerate body of

Christ, and understanding that the church as the redeemed remnant of mankind whose

calling is first and foremost the obedient worship of the Crucified and Risen Lord, the

One Who by the Spirit indwells and renews his followers.[65]

Henry's cultural engagement follows naturally as outgrowth of thoroughgoing

biblicism. Much as Luther said his conscience was held captive by the Word of God at

the Diet of Worms, albeit in a different context, so too was Henry's conscience held

captive by the Word of God. "Luther's theological thinking presupposes the authority of

Scripture. His theology is nothing more than an attempt to interpret the Scripture."[66]

Likewise Calvin was driven in his work by the self-revealing God of Holy Scripture.

Timothy George would write of Calvin's approach to theology. We can express these in

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[63] Harold O. J. Brown, "Evangelicals and Social Ethics," in *Evangelical Affirmations* (ed. Carl F. H. Henry and Kenneth S. Kantzer; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 260–62.

[64] Henry, *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration*, 48.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (trans. by Robert C. Schultz; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 3.

terms of a positive and negative admonition. Positively, true theology is reverent reflection on the revelation of God in the Bible, which is absolutely sufficient (i.e. normative, for belief and conduct). Negatively, theology must not wander into 'vain speculations' but stick closely to those things we may legitimately know, namely the data of revelation in the Scriptures."[67] Henry would become a modern champion of the authority and trustworthiness of the Word of God standing in the stead of Luther and Calvin. Henry may be best remembered for his unwavering defense of the authority of the Word of God and the self-revealing God.

It is upon this self-revealing God that next two chapters will focus upon. Chapter Five will look at the *magnum opus* of Carl Henry's *God, Revelation and Authority*. Henry's theological method of revelational epistemology will be examined as well as constituent elements of propositional revelation and inerrancy. Chapter 6 will highlight Henry's critique of non-rational views of revelation, principally Karl Barth and Neo-orthodoxy.

4.6   Conclusion

Chapter 4 examines the problem of evangelical definition and the role that new forms of evangelical institutions played in that developing definition. Henry, as one of the primary architects of evangelicalism, was concerned from the outset about defining proper boundaries of belief and practice. As one commentator wrote, in one way or another, everything that Henry wrote was in some way related to defining evangelicalism. Henry ensured, through his many volumes and innumerable articles for *CT*, that evangelicalism would be orthodox, engage the culture and the academy.

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[67] Timothy George, *The Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 193–194.

Henry envisioned that evangelicalism would be comprised of five programmatic emphases: (1) the new evangelicalism aims to clarify the philosophical implications of Biblical theism, (2) relates Christianity to the pressing social issues of the day, as well as to individual salvation, (3) reacts against the division of evangelicals over secondary and tertiary points of prophetic detail, (4) is alert to the possibility of a Biblical ecumenicity, and (5) is finding its way back from systematic theology to Biblical theology.[68]

The institutional development of Henry's et al. vision was seen in the birthing of several new entities: NAE, Fuller Theological Seminary, ETS and *CT*. In a most remarkable way, Henry was strategically involved in each of these pivotal institutions. Henry was present at the charter meeting for the NAE. The NAE was criticized at the outset from the right and left. The NAE was a landmark development in that it was a concerted effort of the "irenic fundamentalists" to widen the net in order to engage the culture in a biblically faithful way.

Henry was a founding faculty member of Fuller. Fuller was intended to be the flagship seminary of a revitalized and intellectually respectable fundamentalist commitment to scholarship. Fuller sought out those conservative scholars that had earned doctorates from highly respected academic institutions. Henry was a leading figure of this cadre of young academics, and provided leadership both in administration, the classroom and in publishing respected academic works.

In addition to providing the name for the ETS, Henry was instrumental in setting the tone for its temperament and commitment to excellence in scholarship. The establishment of the ETS was a seminal move in evangelicalism's distancing itself from fundamentalism. At this pivotal time in the development of evangelicalism there arose a

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[68] Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 114.

sense among the rising evangelical scholars of the need for an association of scholars who shared evangelical presuppositions, to meet and work together to promote conservative theological literature. In a bit of irony, two related issues were at play in the founding of the ETS: (1) distancing from modernist/liberals; (2) separation from the fundamentalists. In separating from the fundamentalists, the neo-evangelicals had criticized the fundamentalists for their separatistic proclivities, and now they, were themselves, separating from the fundamentalists.

The launching of *CT* with Henry as the founding editor, was as influential, if not more so, than the other institutional innovations. Henry had made some early notations on the essentials of a magazine of this type: if the venture was not "theologically compromised the magazine could prove to be a boon to the evangelical cause. If the magazine would be (a) transcontinental, (b) interdenominational, (3) theologically affirmative, (d) socially aggressive, and (e) irenic" it would be exactly what was needed for the hour of the day."[69]

CT was more successful than anyone had imagined. By the third year, the circulation of *CT* had more than doubled the circulation of its liberal rival, the *Christian Century*. During Henry's years at *CT,* the magazine, evangelicalism, and Henry's reputation all grew exponentially. Henry's writings and the guest editorials from a diverse group of academically respected scholars enabled Henry's vision of a robust, academically credible magazine to come to fruition.

During Henry's years at *CT*, he articulated a modified Reformed view of engaging society with the goal of emulating the sixteenth century Reformers insistence

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[69] Miller, "Carl F. H. Henry and Christianity Today: Responding to the 'Crisis of the West,' 1956-1968," 145.

on the need for a Christian society. In defending this view, as opposed to the cultural

withdrawal and inherent pessimism demonstrated by the fundamentalists, Henry would

become a modern champion of the authority and trustworthiness of the Word of God

standing in the stead of Luther and Calvin. Henry may be best remembered for his

unwavering defense of the authority of the Word of God and the self-revealing God. It

would be the publication of *GRA*, that Henry would leave as the capstone to his

theological legacy.

CHAPTER 5   REVELATIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY

The contributions of Carl Henry have been noted and the debt the evangelical world owes Henry is probably no greater, or certainly just as great, in the area pertaining to the defense of divine revelation. Henry's articulate defense of the historic conservative Protestant view of divine revelation is the basis of *God, Revelation and Authority*. It is here that Henry leaves a lasting testament to those who follow him about the vital importance of Biblical authority. Henry answers the challenge of the day, "the crisis of the west," that has become a "crisis of the truth and the word." In Ronald Nash's book, *Evangelicals in America*, he notes the contribution of Henry in writing *GRA*:

> According to Henry, the time has come to be done with nebulous views of the Christian God and with skepticism about either human-kinds ability to attain knowledge about God or God's ability to communicate truth. In Henry's view, the entire enterprise of Christian theology must be grounded on God's self-revelation . . . Revealed religion is possible because God has made humankind in his image and has given him a rational ability to perceive the truth that God has revealed.[1]

This chapter will examine the issues that Nash raised in his commentary on Henry's contributions to evangelical theology. In examining Henry's revelational epistemology,[2] this chapter will address Henry's views on epistemology and its relationship to divine revelation. Related subsidiary issues such as rational

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[1] Ronald H. Nash, *Evangelicals in America* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 90.

[2] Revelational epistemology is defined as "the epistemological foundation for the Christian faith is divine revelation." Henry goes on to say that the ontological foundation of the Christian faith is the one, living God. "On these basic axioms depend all the core beliefs of Biblical theism, including divine creation, sin and the Fall, the promise and provision of redemption, the Incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth, the regenerate Church as a new society, and a comprehensive eschatology." Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 49.

communication by God to man (conceptual verbal communication), the Logos, the *imago Dei*, propositional revelation, inspiration and inerrancy, are all addressed by Henry in *GRA*.

5.1   *GRA*—A Landmark Project

GRA was a fifteen–year long project that Henry completed in 1983. *GRA* provides the most complete introduction to systematic theology in the evangelical world. In *GRA*, Henry lays out his apologetic method of Reformed presuppositional apologetics.[3] As Henry develops his conception of knowledge he combines presuppositionalism with rational inquiry, as another writer labeled it "apologetic presuppositionalism."[4] Another element of Henry's theological method is the use of the apagogic method. Henry learned this from his mentor Gordon Clark. This method calls for the establishing of Christianity on epistemological and ontological foundations. After establishing the foundations of Christianity, Christianity is then shown to be logically consistent and other belief systems are shown to be inconsistent. This strategy reveals that Christianity is far superior to alternative systems of belief.[5] As Carl R. Trueman writes, "Henry's entire work—of which *GRA* is the greatest single example—must be understood as an attempt to restate conservative Protestant theology in a manner which takes seriously the epistemological

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[3] Richard Wade, "Rationalistic Presuppositionalism: An Exposition and Analysis of Carl F. H. Henry's Apologetics" (M.A. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1990), preface.

[4] Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 123.

[5] Wade, "Rationalistic Presuppositionalism: An Exposition and Analysis of Carl F. H. Henry's Apologetics," iv. Wade makes the evaluation that as a result of his analysis of Henry's method that it "is an excellent tool for the advance of the Christian truth. In addition to answering objections, he forces the unbeliever to analyze more closely his or her own beliefs. His goal is not simply to show that Christians are not unreasonable in their beliefs, but also to persuade the unbeliever to abandon his false beliefs and accept truth."

concerns of the Enlightenment without surrendering the content and truth claims of orthodox Christianity."[6]

5.1.1   Responding to the Crisis

Henry makes this dramatic statement in *GRA* volume 1, "No fact of contemporary Western life is more evident than it growing distrust of final truth and its implacable questioning of any sure word."[7] With this statement, Henry begins his quest to "contend for the faith once delivered to all the saints." Henry starts with this statement that questions the reality of truth and whether there is an authoritative to be heard. He will write over three thousand pages in six volumes giving the historic Christian response to the question of whether God has spoken. And if He has, what has He said?

Henry's definition of what in this paper is called revelational epistemology is as follows:

> In a sense, all knowledge may be viewed as revelational, since meaning is not imposed upon things by the human knower alone, but rather is made possible because mankind and the universe are the work of a rational Deity, who fashioned an intelligible creation. Human knowledge is not a source of knowledge to be contrasted with revelation, but is a means of comprehending revelation. . . . Thus God, by him immanence, sustains the human knower, even in his moral and cognitive revolt, and without that divine preservation, ironically enough, man could not even rebel again God, for he would not exist. Augustine, early in the Christian centuries, detected what was implied in this conviction that human reason is not the creator of it own object; neither the external world of sensation nor the internal world of ideas is rooted subjectivistic factors alone.[8]

In 1968 Henry wrote of this essential core in *GRA*, when he wrote:

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[6] Trueman, "Admiring the Sistine Chapel: Reflections on Carl F. H. Henry's God, Revelation and Authority," 50.

[7] Henry, *GRA,* 1: 17.

[8] Henry, *The Drift of Western Thought*, 104. For an insightful analysis of Augustine's thought in this regard see Ronald H. Nash, *The Light of The Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge*; and *The Word of God and The Mind of Man*, 79–90. B. B. Warfield also provides an analysis of Augustine's theory of knowledge in *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1932, 2003), 135–228.

The time is right to recanvass evangelical rational theism with its emphasis on the revelation and manifestation of the Logos a the critical center of theological inquiry. A prospect for systematic theology is at hand, and a growing demand exists for a comprehensive world-view that does full justice to the real world of truth and life and experience in which man must make his decisions. In the Western world today only three major options survive. Sooner or later one these will carry off the spiritual fortunes of the twentieth-century world. Each of these views, significantly holds that man can know the ultimately real world. But each differs from the others in important ways about ultimate reality. One view is Communism, which dismisses the supernatural as myth. The other views, to which neo-Protestant agnosticism has forfeited the great modern debate over the faith of the Bible, are Roman Catholicism and evangelical Christianity. The really live option, in my opinion, is evangelical theism, a theology centered in the incarnation and inscripturation of the Word (a theology not of the distorted Word but of the disclosed Word). This, I feel, offers the one real possibility of filling the theological vacuum today.
Evangelical Christianity emphasizes:
The universal as well as once-for-all dimension of Divine disclosure.
Authentic ontological knowledge of God.
The intelligible and verbal character of God's revelation.
The universal validity of religious truth.[9]

In *The God Who Shows Himself*, Henry sounded the alarm over the problem of the truth of divine revelation; "In facing the modern world the prime problem of contemporary Christianity is not the unfortunate proliferation of denominations but the unbearable divergence over the truth of revelation perpetuated by the hydra-headed ecumenical colossus."[10] Henry would meet this challenge in way that would cement his legacy as "the dean of evangelical theologians."[11]

In an interview with *Sojuners Magazine* in 1976, Henry was being questioned on a variety of topics. One of those topics was the nature of evangelical identity. At the time Henry was writing a series of articles on this topic for *Christianity Today* (later these

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[9]Carl F. H. Henry, "Where is Modern Theology Going?" *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 11 (Winter 1968); 11.

[10] Carl F. H. Henry, *The God Who Shows Himself* (Waco, TX: Word, 1966), 22. This phrase would re-emerge in the subtitle of *GRA*, albeit slightly altered "God Who Speaks and Shows."

[11] Kenneth S. Kantzer, review of *God, Revelation and Authority* 6 vols., by Carl F. H. Henry, *Christianity Today* 20 (May 1983): 72.

individual articles were released as the book *Evangelicals in Search of Identity*). During

the questioning Henry was asked what would a comprehensive view of God's revelation

begin to look like? His response was most telling as it foreshadowed *GRA*:

> It would involve, certainly, the priority of the truth God declares. If revelation
> isn't intelligible, we're at a loss to say anything about God and his purposes for
> man. Secondly, it must include the righteousness that God demands, both public
> and private righteousness, personal holiness and social injustice. Thirdly, the
> grace God offers, the evangel, would be included. . . . The biblical emphasis falls
> first and foremost on the authority of Scripture. After that, the emphasis falls, it
> seems to me, on the inspiration of God's word. It is what God has spoken; that's
> why it is authoritative. The notion of an authoritative word that isn't God's word,
> or that isn't inspired, is out of view. Inerrancy seems to me be an inference from
> the inspiration the Bible teaches. If one denies inerrancy, and affirms errancy, he
> raises all sorts of questions about inspiration. The affirmation of the errancy of
> Scripture introduces a principle of instability into the authority of Scripture that
> leads to a lack of agreement as to what parts of Scripture are to be considered
> authoritative and what parts are not.[12]

In that same year, Henry sat down for another interview, this time with *Scribe*

magazine. Harold Lindsell's book *The Battle for the Bible* had been released (more will

be said in relation to this book when Henry's view on inerrancy is discussed). Henry was

asked to give his own position on the doctrine of inerrancy:

> "My position today is precisely what it has been through the years, I hold
> unequivocally to the authority, the inspiration, and the inerrancy of Scripture; and
> I think that any questioning of one or all of those emphases represents a departure
> from what the Bible teaches, explicitly or implicitly, a departure from the
> perspective of Jesus Christ and the apostles, and a departure from the historic
> Christian position."[13]

Henry went on to answer a question regarding inerrancy that will illuminate the

forthcoming discussion on the method of Henry's revelational epistemology. The

question was as follows: "As one of the founders of the modern evangelical movement,

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[12] Henry, *Conversations with Carl Henry: Christianity Today*, 7–8.

[13] Ibid., 23.

does the present situation in regards to inerrancy cause you great concern about the future

of the movement?" Henry's answer is illuminating in several aspects:

> "First, I disown that I am one of the founders of the movement, because I don't think its roots are modern, they are biblical. Nor do I think that inerrancy is a recent commitment of the Church, inspired by Hodge and Warfield, as some of the young socially active evangelicals seem to imply. It is implicit in the New Testament, it was the doctrine of the early Church, it was held by the Roman Catholicism at least until Vactican II, and the Protestant Reformers are on that side."[14]

A summary statement of Henry's position that will be detailed in the pages to follow

would be:

> Thus, according to Henry, God circumscribes and determines what can be known. Nonetheless, the world remains knowable because God himself is an intelligent deity. Contrary to the trajectory of rationalism, no autonomous standard for reason can be offered since reason itself loses meaning apart from the divine character. Since the divine discloses himself as person, revelation is personal in nature and can therefore speak to all of humanity. Consequently, revelation both coheres and corresponds to reality because God is one. It is not a truism to say therefore that divine revelation is communication that we can trust. Thus, as Henry declares, "Only the fact the one sovereign God, the Creator and Lord of all, stands at the center of divine disclosure, guarantees a unified divine revelation."[15]

5.1.2   Truth Is the Issue

Truth is of essential importance as Henry starts to answer "the crisis of truth and

word." Henry recognizes, as should all, that whether intentional or not, the media by in

large is indifferent to the truth of truth and have ignored and abandoned God given

morality over to the skeptics.[16] Why is truth of such importance to Henry? Henry

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[14] Ibid., 26.

[15] Gregory Alan Thornbury, "Prolegomena: Introduction to the Task of Theology," in *A Theology for the Church*, (ed. Daniel L. Akin; Nashville: B&H, 2007), 2–70.

[16] Henry, *GRA,* 1:18–19. Henry quotes Malcolm Muggeridge: "The media are not the cause, but the expression of contemporary vacuity," Malcolm Muggeridge, *Esquire* (Jan 1973), 52.

answers because of the skepticism that captivates the western mind about even the

possibility of knowing truth:

> For Henry the essential problem of the modern western mind is that in its escape from the controlling stringencies of medieval Christianity it has adopted a non-revelational world and life view, a declension which has been abetted by its theology. The result is a "crisis of truth and word" marked by 'growing distrust of final truth and . . . implacable questioning of any sure word."[17]

The modern temperament is characterized by skepticism, relativism and illogicity which

permeate the modern culture. A major contributor and purveyor of this modern

temperament is the media:

> Enhanced by color and cunning, television or radio or the printed page makes every last human soul a target of it propaganda. So astonishingly clever and successful have been these media in captivating the contemporary spirit—haunted as it is by moral vacillation and spiritual doubt—that Yahweh's ancient exhortation to beware of visual idols would seem doubly pertinent today . . . Whether they profess to tell the unadorned truth or to be necessarily indifferent to the truth of truth, the media seem in either case to abandon God and morality to the skeptics. Television has often been suspected of breeding violence and of carrying commercials that are misleading; it has seldom if ever been accused of breeding incisive theologians and ethicists. In many respects the crisis of truth and word shapes up as the conflict between the Logos of God as the medium of divine revelation and the modern mass media as caterers to the secular spirit.[18]

Mass media expresses the values of the modern age and with great impact. What

people consider to be the ideal image is a reflection of their God and ultimate values. The

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[17] Henry, *GRA*, 1:17. Mark Hutchens makes the following observation on this passage: "Henry sees this escape in two phases. The first was the attempt, beginning with Descartes, to construct an autonomous philosophy, freed not only from the strictures imposed by medieval Catholicism, but eventually from any demands which Christian revelation might attempt to make upon it. The second is that of the disarray which has resulted from the manifest failure of the first. In Henry's early writings there is some hope that the fall of modern philosophy will sober the western mind enough to turn its gaze to what is valuable at its roots in ancient and medieval western thought, to evaluate its own thinking accordingly, and make way for a new world mind more open to the claims of revelation. Near the end of his career, however, the confusion which he perceived at the beginning no longer looks like a phase, but a fixed condition in which the only real choice for modern man is between Christianity and nihilism. Cf. *Remaking the Modern Mind*, 20–27 and *GRA* 1:41." Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the context of fundamentalist dilemma," 84.

[18] Henry, *GRA*, 1:18–19.

globe spanning influences of mass media, while as of yet have not produced a new

humanity, has left an indelible mark on the modern mind as his mood, social customs and

even the modern man's morals have been impacted.[19] The consequences of which

direction man goes will affect not just human culture but human destiny as well. Will

human speculation carry the day and provide a meandering sense of supposed direction

or will the Word and Truth of God find expression in the contemporary setting? Henry

states,

> Few times in history has revealed religion been forced to contend with such
> serious problems of word and truth, and never in the past have the role of words
> and the nature of truth been as misty and undefined as now. Only if we recognize
> that the truth of truth—indeed, the meaning of meaning—is today in doubt, and
> that this uncertainty stifles the word as a carrier of God's truth and moral
> judgment, do we fathom the depth of the present crisis.[20]

Here then is the motive for writing *GRA*. From the very beginning of Henry's

theological work, he has been concerned about engaging culture where the battle was the

most intense. Christianity affirms and asserts that God has spoken to mankind in an

intelligible form of communication and in doing so has given man objective truth.[21]

Contrary to neo-orthodox interpretations of the day, and especially the Bultmannian use

of language, whereby "myth" becomes a functional device that alleviates the burden and

restrictions of the assertion of knowing the factual and literal truth about God, Henry

offers a corrective of this defective view of language. In Henry's view the mistake

emanated from the "epistemic pretenses" that started with Kant and ran through

Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Barth, and Bultmann that viewed truth that "is distinctively

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[19] Ibid., 1:22.

[20] Ibid., 1:24.

[21] Ibid., 1:213.

religious is to be regarded as (at most) paraverbal and parahistorical and who consequently resist and downgrade any interpretation of religious reality in which the objectively valid proposition is advanced as the elemental medium of a revealed truth based on factual, historical encounters of men with God."[22]

Historic Christianity is the antithesis of the aforementioned modern alternative. Its special merit is found in that it delivers man from speculative and mythical notions about God. Additionally, Christianity provides precise knowledge about religious reality. Historic Christianity distances itself from mythical statements about God. Instead it offers literal and factual knowledge about God, and in doing so is superior to all competing claims that reduce Christianity to symbolic imagery and representations of ultimate reality.[23]

5.2   Knowing that You Know: Revelation– The Basic Epistemological Axiom

Henry asserts that it is essential for Christianity to state its method of knowing and verification for knowing its objective truth claims so that men everywhere can be persuaded personally. In this way Christianity answers the non-Christian when he asks, "What persuasive reasons have you for believing?"[24] In answering this question Henry proposes an evangelical method between the fideism of the absolute presuppositionalist and the empirical evidentialism of the rationalists.[25] This *via media* finds its basis in

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[22] Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the context of fundamentalist dilemma," 88.

[23] Henry, *GRA*, 1:69.

[24] Ibid., 1:213.

[25] Mohler, "Evangelical theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 123. For another view of theological method from two contemporaries of Henry's, cf. Edward John Carnell, *An*

three long held ways of looking at the role of revelation and reason as sometimes designated at the way of Tertullian, Augustine, and Aquinas.[26]

The Tertullian way was never typical of Christians until recent times. Tertullian has an often quoted line, "What has Jerusalem with Athens?" The statement emphasizes the disjunction between faith and reason. In essence Tertullian's emphasis is that Christianity requires belief in what to the unregenerate mind seems absurd.[27]

> The so-called Tertullian view (based on some of Tertullian's comments) excludes rational tests as inappropriate to revelation; indeed, revelation, it is said, confronts human reason as an absurdity or paradox and must be accepted solely on its own intrinsic ground. According to this fideistic approach , to seek in any way to justify revelatory faith on the basis of reason is to misconceive its nature; divine revelation calls for sheer faith in what necessarily confronts human reason as a paradox. Christianity requires belief, so fideists claim, in what confronts the unregenerate mind as essentially absurd. In the fideist view, divine revelation cannot and must not be rationally tested for validity and truth. No preliminary validation is proper that admits or allows revelation only on rational or logical grounds.[28]

The second method that has traditionally found expression in Christianity is known as the Augustinian way. The method was followed broadly by Anselm, Luther, and Calvin and appeals to revelation in the interest of a more fully informed reason. The Augustinian way fuses both the priority of belief and its incompleteness without understanding or reason. Anselm's famous dictum *Credo ut intelligam* (I believe in order to understand) concisely summarizes the Augustinian method of combining faith and reason. Henry writes, "Believe in order to understand is the emphasis; without belief one

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Introduction to Christian Apologetics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 29–64; Ronald H. Nash, *Faith and Reason* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 69–104.

[26] *Henry, GRA*, 1:182.

[27] Ibid., 1:182–83.

[28] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 103. More will be said as Henry applies this method to the Neo-Orthodox and Karl Barth in chapter 6. Tertullian's formula *credo quia absurdum* (I believe what is absurd) is according to Henry, representative of the neo-orthodox method (p. 40).

will not understand. Reason still has its task, but on a new foundation and within a new climate. The revelation of the living God is the precondition and starting point for human understanding; it supplies the framework and corrective for natural reason. . . . The way to truth was found in the inspired Scripture and not philosophical speculation."[29]

The third method is known as the Thomistic way. The Thomistic way can be expressed as *Intelligo ut credam* (understand in order to believe). Aquinas approached the existence of God from the observations of ordinary experience and special revelation as the starting point. In doing so, Aquinas employed a natural type of knowledge, available to anyone, as the foundation for faith. As Henry points out, all the arguments that Thomas puts forth for the existence of God appeal to sense observation without reliance of divine revelation. Thomas taught that the Scriptures gave supplementary information about God and mankind. Through Scripture man could only learn information for such doctrines as the Incarnation, the Trinity and so forth. Henry explains, "But the truths for the existence of God and the existence of the immortality of the soul are not grounded on religious considerations but are considered inferences from sense observations, and philosophical reasoning is viewed as capable of supplying a demonstrative proof."[30]

> Rational presuppositionalism differs from fideism in that the former welcomes while the latter rejects the application to revelation of any tests of rational consistency and validity. It parts company with the emphasis often attributed to Tertullian—not always fairly—that divine revelation confronts human reason as paradoxical. Rational presuppositionalism, in contrast to fideism, does not sponsor a disjunction between faith and reason. It insists that all humanity can comprehend God's revelation and, moreover, can comprehend it prior to regeneration or special illumination by the Holy Spirit. Mankind in its present condition is capable of intellectually analyzing rational evidence for the truth value of assertions about God. Over against Thomistic espousal of natural

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[29] Henry, *GRA*, 1:183–84.

[30] Ibid., 1:184.

theology, both Augustinian rational presuppositionalism and Tertullian fideism insist that divine revelation is the only way to know transcendent religious reality. The Thomistic way, by contrast, is evidentialist. It affirms that speculative understanding should precede faith/revelation.[31]

The differences are stark. The way of Tertullian believes in irrationality. Thomism, in opposition to the irrationality, places too much confidence in the unaided reason of man. Man, based on his unaided empirical observation can arrive at transcendent reality. The Augustinian way, or rational presuppositionalism, opposes both such views. Given the construction of man (to be discussed later in this chapter), transcendent divine revelation (the source of truth) coupled with reason as a gift from the Creator, man has the capacity to recognize truth. "Revelational theism provides the cognitive information about God and the true nature of reality and it supplies categories of thought and definitions of reality."[32]

As has been mentioned before, chapter 2 and page 15, the Christian is within his rights, philosophically, to state his belief in God as his starting point and then proceed to quantify the means of verification. In what should be read as the introduction to *GRA*, in *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, Henry states in no uncertain terms his preference for presuppositionalism versus the empiricism: "If presuppositionalism implies that anyone who thinks has presuppositions, then I am unapologetically an evangelical presuppositionalist." Henry makes the case that everyone has presuppositions whether they admit them or not.[33]

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[31] Henry, *Toward A Recovery of Christian Belief*, 105–06.

[32] Henry, *GRA*, 1:201. For more discussion on presuppositionalism cf. Stanley N. Gundry and Steven B. Cowan eds. *Five Views on Apologetics*. For a more detailed examination of rational presuppositionalism as used by Carl Henry; cf. Wade, "Rationalistic Presuppositionalism: An Exposition and Analysis of Carl F. H. Henry's Apologetics."

[33] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 42.

5.2.1 The Validity of the Deductive Method

Another facet of Henry's theological method is his belief that deduction is the better method of making the theological case than induction. Evidentialism is bound to induction and attempts to make the case from particulars to universal explanatory principles. Henry believes this approach is hopeless flawed. In a telling expose on the limits of evidentialism, Henry notes that those who follow the evidentialist approach have left the historic method of deduction that was long in use in church history:

> It was Origen (A.D. 250) who, in his *peri archon* (Latin tr., *De principiis*), expounded the implications of divine intelligence and simplicity over against Neo-Platonism's projection of radical transcendence and who deduced theological knowledge of creation of and salvation. Ever since the beginning of the Christian era the operative methodology for systematic theology has been mainly deductive. Augustine and Anselm championed theological deduction. Not until Thomas Aquinas proposed an empirical alternative in the twelfth century was the deductive method seriously disputed in some respects it prevailed until the nineteenth century, when Schleiermacher decisively challenged it. The Protestant Reformers employed deduction, although evidentialist currently render this problematical by blending the Reformers' emphasis on general revelation into an empirical approach.[34]

With no qualification or hesitancy, Henry proffers the legitimacy of deductive theology. In the same breath he views the evidentialist method as an invalid alternative. There are two main reasons for this position. Evidentialism falls back to probabilities. Henry views the "so-called" theistic proofs as "providing no conclusive demonstration of the existence of the self-revealing God."[35] Furthermore, to maintain that the evidentialist is not reliant on presuppositions is contrary to reality. Henry says that to begin the "presentation of one's views with *a prioric* affirmations and an appeal to faith is no more irrational or intellectually disreputable in theology than in philosophy or in natural

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[34] Ibid., 37—38.

[35] Ibid., 40.

science."[36] Empirical science routinely takes for granted what it cannot prove. It has as its aproric affirmations the comprehensive unity, unity and intelligibility of the universe. It also postulates the casual continuity of nature and the necessity of honesty in experimentation in scientific research.[37]

To further bolster his claim of the validity of deduction Henry records those who have used the postulational principle or philosophical axiom as a base for reasoning:

> Democritus never demonstrated that all substance consists of indivisible and imperceptibly small particles; he postulated this premise and attempted to explain all existence consistently in terms of it. Plato never demonstrated the independent existence of the invisible world of Eternal Ideas; he argued that all lesser existence participates in or mirrors them. . . . Kant for example, did not derive his transcendental forms of thought through his epistemic theory, which identified all knowledge as a joint product of sense of content and a priori forms. Since the a priori forms were not sense perceptible. Kant must have postulated them independently of the theory. There is no way that the philosophical naturalist can "prove" the declared truth of his scientific worldview other than by relying on his theory's own assumptions.[38]

Henry writes of the long established practice employed in twentieth-century science of this method. It is common place for scientists to use postulational affirmations in experimentation. The objection may be offered that in science the standard is different given that science knows nothing of being final in its quest for knowledge. However, that being said, Henry counters that mathematical formulas reflect the statistical average and the question arises whether the reported mathematical connections have ever been observed and do they correspond to nature? Empirical scientists do not simply assume

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[36] Ibid., 43.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 45–46. Here and throughout the remainder of this section of this discussion the influence of Gordon Clark is clearly seen. Cf. Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952, 1981), 312–25; Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason, And Revelation*, 58–68; Gordon H. Clark, *An Introduction to Christian Philosophy* (Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 1968, 1993), 297–323.

metaphysical realities, but instead offers a postulate and then attempts to prove or disprove his hypothesis.[39]

After having established the basis for deduction or axiomatization, Henry states what he believe are the two foundational axioms of the Christian faith: the one living God and divine revelation.[40] The importance of these two axioms for Henry cannot be understated. One of Henry's motives is to engage culture, and the basis for ethical engagement and participation is founded upon philosophical and theological engagement. Historic Christianity has a consistent, coherent, applicable, and adequate answer for the questions of how to make sense of all reality and life.

Henry makes the unqualified assertion that theology based on the truth or falsity of its claims must be testable as to the method of knowing theological truth. Furthermore, it must clearly state the criteria for determining its theological claims. To restate it another way, the evangelical must insist on truth and then provide the method for how one can know truth. In taking this step, it will not prevent some from rejecting the message of Christianity, for those who do it will be a willful rejection of the Christian message. Rejection will not come as a result of a mistaken notion that Christianity is inherently irrational.

Is there truth to be known? And how does one recognize it? Henry answers in the following way:

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[39] Henry, *GRA*, 1:173.

[40] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 48-49. "The Christian's primary ontological axiom is the one living God, and his primary epistemological axiom is divine revelation. On these basic axioms depend all the core beliefs of Biblical theism, including divine creation, sin and the Fall, the promise and provision of redemption, the Incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth, the regenerate Church as a new society and comprehensive eschatology." An axiom is defined as "a general proposition or principle accepted as self-evident, either absolutely or within a particular sphere or thought." Richard W. Micou, *Basic Ideas in Religion or Apologetic Theism* (ed. Paul Micou; New York: Association Press, 1916), 393.

Divine revelation is the source of all truth, the truth of Christianity included; reason is the instrument for recognizing it; Scripture is its verifying principle; logical consistency is a negative test for truth and coherence a subordinate test. The task of Christian theology is to exhibit the content of biblical revelation as an orderly whole.[41]

These are preliminary discussions that will be later amplified in a much more thorough and extensive way in *GRA* Vols. 2-4.

5.3   The Starting Point: Revelation

The first point in stating his method is amplified in the following way: "1. God in his revelation is the first principle of Christian theology, from which all the truths of revealed religion are derived."[42] In the *Rutherford Lectures* (1989), Henry offers an abbreviated defense of presuppositions: "The Christian ought to systematize, deepen, and

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[41] Henry, *GRA*, 1:215. For the remainder of Vol. 1 of *GRA*, Henry expounds on his theological method. Volume 1 serves as the preamble for Vols. 2-6 in which Henry gives and then explains his fifteen theses of Divine Revelation: (1) Revelation is a divinely initiated activity, God's free communication by which he alone turns his personal privacy into a deliberate disclosure of his reality; (2) Divine revelation is given for human benefit, offering us privileged communion with our Creator in the kingdom of God; (3) Divine revelation does not completely erase God's transcendent mystery, inasmuch as God the Revealer transcends his own revelation; (4) The very fact of disclosure by the one living God assures the comprehensive unity of divine revelation; (5) Not only the occurrence of divine revelation, but also its very nature, content, and variety are exclusively God's determination; (6) God's revelation is uniquely personal both in content and form; (7) God reveals himself not only universally in the history of the cosmos and of the nations, but also redemptively within this external history in unique saving acts; (8) The climax of God's special revelation is Jesus of Nazareth, the personal incarnation of God in the flesh; in Jesus Christ the source and content of revelation converge and coincide; (9) The mediating agent in all divine revelation is the eternal Logos-preexistent, incarnate, and now glorified; (10) God's revelation is rational communication conveyed in intelligible ideas and meaningful words, that is in, in conceptual form; (11) The Bible is the reservoir and conduit of divine truth; (12) The Holy Spirit superintends the communication of divine revelation, first, by inspiring the prophetic-apostolic writings, and second, by, illuminating and interpreting the scripturally given Word of God; (13) As bestower of spiritual life the Holy Spirit enables individuals to appropriate God's revelation savingly, and thereby attests the redemptive power of the revealed truth of God in the personal experience of reborn sinners; (14) The church approximates the kingdom of God in miniature; as such she is the mirror to each successive generation the power and joy of the appropriated realities of divine revelation; (15) The self-manifesting God will unveil his glory in a crowing revelation of power and judgment; in this disclosure at the consummation of the ages, God will vindicate righteousness and justice, finally subdue and subordinate evil, and bring into being a new heaven and earth (*GRA*, 2:8-16).

[42] Ibid.

apply his pre-philosophical convictions in order to test them for explanatory power and logical consistency."[43] In posting divine revelation as the epistemological foundation Henry echoes Abraham Kuyper and B. B. Warfield. Kuyper wrote that Christianity has a "dependent character of theology." Its dependency is on God, for any and all information necessarily comes from Him to man. Warfield says, "The religion of the Bible presents itself as distinctly a revealed religion."[44] Henry's defense of axiomatization is noteworthy as he sets the ground for what follows in his exposition of his epistemic and ontological axioms:

> while the logical structure axiomatization seeks by deduction to expound implications of any proffered postulate or axiom, it wholly confuses the actual epistemic basics of the Christian first principle when champions of a revelation axiom are portrayed as having speculatively invented it. Only a self-refuting concept of divine revelation could have its basis merely in philosophical presuppositionalism. The Christian religion does not dangle midair on a postulational skyhook; it is anchored in God's self-revelation. The proponents of a revelation-axiom do not approach divine revelation as merely speculative first principle, but rather affirm it in view of the self-activity of God. The very fact of divine revelation constrains the Christian theist to honor is as the basic epistemological axiom of theology. Any clouding of this distinctive of the basic axiom of revealed religion only minimizes a striking difference between transcendent divine disclosure and human postulation and speculation.[45]

An important point that Henry makes in his argument at this point is the distinction between divine revelation as the basic axiom and the resurrection of Christ as the basic epistemic axiom of Christianity. In support of the resurrection–axiom, its supporters contend that the resurrection was the center piece of the Gospel proclamation. Additionally, its supporters tout the historical grounding of Christianity. Henry notes

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[43] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 67. In *GRA* 1:213–409, Henry provides a detailed defense and analysis of presuppositionalism.

[44] Henry, *GRA*, 1:213–14.

[45] Ibid., 1:219–20.

these two assertions and responds by saying for the latter claim "no where is there a disjunction between the two claims." In fact, Christianity as a historical religion is no less compatible with the primacy of revelation as the Christian epistemic axiom than is the centrality of the resurrection. More to the point is that apart from revelation, historical events are not in and of themselves self-explanatory, hence the need for divine revelation to ensure the proper interpretation of those historical events.[46]

Henry asserts the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ with no qualification. However, the facts in and of themselves, without the divine disclosure of their significance do not enable one to establish their meaning. Henry continues, "Apart from their revelationally vouchsafed interpretation, the divine acts are subject to wholesale misunderstanding."[47] Just as the presuppositionalists face objections in their appeal to divine revelation as their starting point, so too evidentialists face similar objections to their empirical claims for epistemic priority.[48]

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[46] Ibid., 1:220–21. "Once intelligible divine disclosure is forfeited, any prognosis of spiritual ultimates depends on mystical experience, rationalistic conjecture, or man's limited observations of history and the cosmos, all of which becomes substitutes for the intelligibility revealed Word of God" (p. 218).

[47] Ibid. "This writer's own conviction is that without the bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth the Gospels would not have been written and the Christian church would not have come into being."

[48] Ibid., 1:221. "The historical resurrection-claim must cope similarly with numerous understandings or misunderstandings of the Gospel-attested resurrection, whether in the manner of the Greek mystery religions, or of Barthian superhistory, or of Bultmannian existentialism. Moreover, in view of Troeltsh's 'laws' of universal historical interpretation, the resurrection claim still confronts the arbitrary notion that the morality of historical consciousness disallows accepting the factuality of past events for which present day history presents no analogy." Henry comments on Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923). Troeltsch was the major proponent of *Religonsgechichte*. Troeltsch's position can described as the universality of historical phenomena. This interpretation of historical inquiry denies any special method for understanding God. His commitment to universal relativity as a scientific faith barred any attainment of facts of an absolute nature-of course his own postulational absolute (a private revelation?) that historical development is all embracing." Troeltsch relativizes the divine revelation of God thereby rendering the reality of knowing God through divine revelation improbable and inconceivable. "Troeltsch nowhere proves-nor can he do so-that all religions arise within a uniform field of development. His all-embracing continuity of human history is speculatively asserted and rests upon a secret metaphysical premise that cannot be derived from experience, nor is it a logical requirement of human thought" (216). Henry in a

5.4 The Method for Recognizing Truth: Reason

Having stated his axiom, Henry now moves to a method of verification through human reason. Human reason is a gift from God to man, not for making truth but for recognizing it; "2. Human reason is a divinely fashioned instrument for recognizing truth; it is not a creative source for truth."[49]

Writing in 1964, Henry states the case and the essential necessity of this second postulate:

> "The vulnerable point of contemporary theology lies in its theory of knowledge, a theory which deprives reason of its proper place in religious experience and re-enforces an anti-intelligible view of divine revelation. So radical is the way in which God's epistemological transcendence is defined, that it excluded the very possibility of God's telling us anything about Himself. As a result, Christian theology loses the very capacity to define God's transcendent relationship to the world and to man."[50]

The answer to this lies in the fashioning of man's reason. "The Creator-Redeemer God of the Bible created man in his rational and spiritual image for intelligible relationships. The Christian faith emphasizes that one has nothing to gain and everything to lose by opposing or downgrading rationality."[51] Contrary to moderns who place limits on knowledge due to culture and time, Henry contends that due to the relationship with the Creator God, man is inherently able to know and know accurately and extensively. While not denying that in certain respects the reality of culture dependency, Henry in no way

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telling bit of analysis shows how Troeltsch employs presuppositionalism, albeit without stating his preuppositions: "Troeltsch's 'laws' (criticism, relatively, analogy) that govern all historical inquiry are clearly not principles distilled from his observations of all history, but rather are axiomatic limitations he imposes upon history as an interpretative framework; only within these limitations will he discuss historical data, although he inconsistently exempts his own views from them. If his theory is true, Troeltsch's own absolutes are indefensible, since no finality can be claimed for his views any more than any others" (217).

[49] Ibid., 1:225.

[50] Carl F. H. Henry, "The Nature of God," in *Christian Faith and Modern Theology*, (ed. Carl F. H. Henry; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 89–90.

[51] Henry, *GRA*, 1:225.

concedes that this dependency or conditioning rules out transcendent truth claims; Henry

states, "The categories of reason do not arise only from human consciousness, but rather

derive from God's intelligible attributes and from human existence in God's image.

Relationships between human thought and logic are grounded in the transcendent mind

and will of God."[52] In contrast to Kant, who argued (a priori) that the mind contributes to

experience reason's organizing conceptual elements, and in contrast to the pragmatist,

who argues that the mind knowingly creates the object of knowledge, and in opposition

to the radical empiricist who insist that knowledge arises out of our sense experience and

is the ultimate source and ground of knowledge, the Christian world view asserts "the

forms of human reason derive from human epistemic structures given on the basis of

creation."[53] This relationship between God's intelligible attributes and human existence

in the *imago Dei*, provides a conduit between the indispensability of logic and human

reason with a sovereign personal God, making the existence and the possibility of truth

an attainable reality.[54] Henry restates just what is at stake in this relationship:

> If the nature of God is rationally disclosed and rationally apprehended, the
> assertion of universally valid knowledge of God's nature (including His
> transcendent and immanent relations to the world of man) can be vindicated-as by
> historic Christian theology through its appeal to intelligible divine disclosure and
> to the inspired Scriptures. But if man's ideas and concepts of the divine are
> simply products of his own creative consciousness, and imply no claim to literal
> truth about the objective nature of God, is there any compelling reason to regard
> the moral transcendence of God any less than His metaphysical (or indeed His
> epistemological) transcendence as anything other or more than symbol or myth?
> The renunciation of rational divine disclosure can only lead to moral as well as
> theoretical agnosticism about God-in-Himself.[55]

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[52] Carl F. H. Henry, "Fortunes of the Christian World View," *Trinity Journal* 19, no.2 (Fall 1998): 173.

[53] Ibid., 174.

[54] Ibid., 175.

[55] Henry, "The Nature of God," *Christian Faith and Modern Theology*, 86–87.

5.5   The Principle of Verification: Scripture

The third point is, "3. The Bible is the Christian's principle of verification."[56] The

entire edifice of Henry's theological system is built on the premise that the Bible is the

inspired Word of God, and "therefore serves as the proximate and universally accessible

form of authoritative divine revelation."[57] This contention stands in opposition to those

religions that opt for their validity in personal and mystical experience. As Henry

contends, theological verification is not dependent upon personal faith or national or

cultural perspectives. Christianity retreats to no mystical or personal faith encounter for

validation and verification. In fact, "Christianity contends that revelational truth is

intelligible, expressible in valid propositions, and universally communicable."[58] One does

not have to be a Christian or have had a conversion experience to understand the claims

of Christianity. Scripture as the verifying principle about God is open and accessible to

all through the means of logic and reason.[59] Contrary to evidentialists who spuriously

argue that presuppositionalist are locked into their presuppositions, Henry argues that

presuppositionalists do not discount the empirical evidence that are made to support faith

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[56] Henry, *GRA*, 1:229.

[57] White, *What is Truth?*, 99.

[58] Henry, *GRA*, 1:229.

[59] Ibid. Henry makes the point that "the truth of revelation is intended for sinners, and the unbeliever can indeed examine the content of theology. If the truth of revelation cannot be known prior to commitment to Christ, then men cannot be culpable for its rejection; moreover, it would be a waste of time and energy to try to persuade them of its validity. An unbeliever can know the meaning of revelation and the meaning of life and history, if he will only heed what the Bible teaches." Gordon Clark advances this point of view in that God created man in his image. In fact man is the image of God. Consequently, as knowledge and rationality are inherent qualities of God so they are the basic constituents of God's image in man. Furthermore, Clark contends that the intelligibility of the Scriptures presupposes logic. He writes that "Scripture without logic would have no meaning." As will be addressed in the next point and later in this chapter, Clark contends that law of non-contradiction is ". . . God thinking." Gordon H. Clark, "An Introduction to Christian Philosophy," *The Works of Gordon Haddon Clark*, Vol. 4 (Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 1968, 1993, 2004), 302–05. Karl Barth opposes this view and his opposition will be addressed in Chapter 6.

claims anymore than faith is deemed hostile to reason. However, the presuppositionalist

argues that a more solid foundation is available as found in Scripture. The Christian faith

offers more than mere mathematical or speculative certainty as found in evidentialist or

fideistic approaches. Divine authority eliminates the rational gap between probability and

certainty.[60]

> Inspired Scripture is the divinely authorized attestation of God's speech and acts, and as such is normative in all matters of religion and ethics. . . . While revelation is the source of all truth, and reason the instrument for recognizing it, the Bible is the Christian verifying principle. "To the law and to the testimony," to what "Scripture says," to the prophetic word and the apostolic word, to the sacred writings as an inspired canon, the faithful Hebrew and Christian community unapologetically and tirelessly pointed when the issues at stake was the verification of legitimate beliefs.[61]

5.6   Logical Consistency and Coherence: The Test for Truth

Christianity asserts that there is truth and it can be known. Given the intelligibility

of the Scriptures man can receive the divine disclosure. But can he know it is the truth,

especially in light of all the rival claims for truth? Henry answers with a resounding, yes.

 Henry's next point is, "4. Logical consistency is a negative test of truth and

coherence a subordinate test."[62] In detailing these tests for truth, Henry disagrees with

those who say that testing for truth is impossible and with those that assert that the divine

revelation ought to be accepted without question. Why are tests necessary and

appropriate? Just as in the Old Testament, the people were required to distinguish the true

prophet from the false prophet, so modern man must distinguish between the true and

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[60] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 57–59.

[61] Henry, *GRA*, 1:232.

[62] Ibid.

false, given the cacophonous voices that compete for his allegiance. Henry writes, "Tests

of truth will not only serve to refute as spurious the natural man's objections, but also

show that the alternatives they propose do not hold up and lead rather to skepticism.

Rational tests will also exhibit the logical and psychological superiority of the Christian

revelation as a world view that best meets all human needs."[63]

The influence of Clark is seen again at this point. Henry brings to bear the force

of non-contradiction and logical consistency as the indispensable aids for knowledge.

Clark and Henry will be accused of being rationalists (issues to be addressed in chapter

7), but insist that they are just be rational. Rationality is the way God functions and is the

way that God has created man to function—rationally.

> Without non-contradiction and logical consistency, no knowledge whatever is possible. Christianity insists that verification answers the question, "How can I know that this claim is true?" And not the question of personal preference. To rational minds, the credibility of a religious claim, like any other, rests upon the availability of persuasive evidence and adequate criteria. The importance of intellectuality in theology, of cognitivity and concepts, of valid propositions, of logical system, therefore dare not be minimized. Some decry rational emphasis on logic and consistency in considerations of divine revelation . . . without appeal to sufficient reason, the mind of man has no basis for discriminating between mysteries, paradoxes and contradictions.[64]

Without the law of contradiction truth and error would be equivalent. Truth is

destroyed. Logical consistency as a negative test for truth enables one to make the

determination that whatever is logically contradictory cannot be true. It is by applying

these tests that Christianity shows itself to superior to all rival claims. Logical

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[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid. Clark defines the law of noncontradiction; "The principle is this: The same attribute cannot attach and not attach to the same thing in the same respect. Or, otherwise, contrary attributes cannot belong to the same subject at the same time. This principle, be it noted again, is stated not merely as a law of thought, but primarily of being. The ontological form is basic; the purely logical is derivative: It becomes a law of thought because it is first a law of being." Gordon H. Clark, *Thales to Dewey* (Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 1957, 2000), 88.

consistency alone cannot adjudicate whether any alternative is worthy of one's commitment. Even when scholars posit divergent starting points, logic should not be discarded in a misguided attempt to serve Christianity. Rather, by employing the tests of logic, non-biblical alternatives are shown to be inferior by their inconsistency and violation of the law of contradiction. Christianity holds to and proudly displays its internal consistency and conformity to the law of contradiction.[65]

5.7   Theology's Task: Exposition and Elucidation

The fifth point is, "5. The proper task of theology is to exposit and elucidate the content of Scripture in an orderly way."[66] Given the fact that Scripture is intelligible divine communication, theology has the task of expounding the truths contained in Holy Writ. In undertaking the task of exposition, Henry again follows the path laid down by Clark. In *Karl Barth's Theological Method*, Clark highlights the all–inclusive character of the truth of God. Axiomatization demonstrates better than any other method the logically consistency of a given system in that theorems flow the basic axioms. Just as secular belief systems impinge on the sciences, so there is a Christian impingement on the sciences, thereby refuting the modern notion of compartmentalization, especially when Christianity claims to science, history, et al. are considered by secular scholars.[67] Scripture does lend itself to an orderly and systematic exposition. When the theologian

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[65] Ibid., 1:233–34.

[66] Ibid., 1:238.

[67] Ibid., 1:238–39. Clark's influence is seen when Henry writes "In principle, Christianity implies the theologizing of chemistry, biology, history and all realms of truth. 'There is nothing more implausible in theologizing chemistry than in positivizing or hegelanizing it' (p. 97)."

follows this pattern he stands over against the a priori speculation on non-biblical alternatives.

5.8 Apologetic Confrontation

The sixth point is, "6. The theology of revelation requires the apologetic confrontation of speculative theories of reality and life."[68] The two–fold task of the Christian theologian is proclaiming the superiority of biblical revelation and the inferiority of speculative theories. The application of the laws of logic assists in this task. Logic exposes the internal inconsistency of speculative alternatives and at the same time reveals the internal consistency and conformity to the law of non-contradiction of biblical revelation. Henry sees the apologetic task as inherent in the discipline of theology: "But if theology rests on intelligible divine disclosure and seeks to present truth in systematic form, then it most surely contains a structured argument against competing views, and apologetics cannot be contrasted with it as something wholly different and distinct form theology."[69]

The virtue of this approach is readily seen in its ability to highlight the essential rational nature of Christianity as grounded in the rationality of the living God and his rational communication in divine revelation. When alternative theories disparage or exaggerate the nature of reason and language, rational divine revelation reasserts the intelligibility of the divine disclosure. When ambiguities abound as part of the modern *Zeitgeist* as to the certitude of an authoritative word from God, revelational epistemology proclaims that an authoritative word exists and provides for its determination. God's

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[68] Ibid., 1:241.

[69] Ibid., 1:244.

communication exists as contained in the Scriptures. This communication is intelligible

and contained in concepts, words and propositions and is indispensably important.[70]

5.9   Upon An A Priori

Henry's method employs a priorism. More to the point, every system employs a

prioris whether they are stated or unstated. Henry quotes Clark:

> What distinguishes Christian axioms from rival axioms is not that Christianity
> axioms are a priori; all axioms are. No one can consistently object, writes Gordon
> H. Clark, to Christianity's being based on a nondemonstrable axiom. If the
> secularists exercise their privilege of basing their theorems on axioms, then so can
> Christians. If the former refuse to accept our axioms, then they can have no
> logical objection to our rejecting theirs.[71]

The importance of this position is that transcendent religious a priorists insists that the

desire for a direct knowledge of God is a rational one, and that intuitive consciousness of

God is a fact of human experience.[72]

In Vol. 1 of *GRA* Henry addresses a priorism in detail under three main headings:

(1) the philosophical transcendent, (2) the theological transcendent, and (3) the

philosophical transcendental.[73] Henry chooses these representative approaches to

highlight the development and use of a priorism. He analyzes the a priori elements in the

approaches of Plato, Augustine, Anselm, Descartes, Kant, Ernst Troeltsch, J. K. Fries,

and Rudolf Otto. The three designations that Henry selects offer an insight into the core

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 65–66.

[72] Henry, *GRA*, 1:383.

[73] Ibid., 1:281. Henry qualifies his use of the terminology and his explanatory method, "This terminology is confessedly one of convenience. The reader should by now be well aware that the author rejects the assumption that philosophy and theology necessarily operate in different spheres." For a more detailed explanation of the a priorism (*GRA*, 1:280–409).

of the approaches of each representative group and the selected writers respectively. For example, Plato expounded a philosophical transcendent a priori because it is independent of special divine revelation while equipping (or so it was maintained) man with a trustworthy and comprehensive metaphysical knowledge. The group represented by the philosophical transcendental approach (i.e., Kant) posits a method that accounts for man's intrinsic limitations of reason while claiming only to be regulating and transcendental. Henry summarizes the first and third approaches: "The first and third types of a priori exclude transcendent divine revelation, the first on the ground of the sufficiency of general human experience, and the latter on the ground of human reason's disability in the realm of supernatural truth; in other words, one because of the essential competence, the other because of the essential incompetence of human intellection as such."[74] The second type of a priori (theological transcendent) recognizes the God-given capacity of man's reason to recognize truth, but due to the effects of the Fall, divine disclosure is needed to usher man into truth.

5.7.1   The Long Shadow of Immanuel Kant

Any discussion of a priorism has to include Immanuel Kant. Prior to Kant a prioristic views were concerned with the existence of the religious a priori, the value of religious experience and the objective reality of the religious "Object." After Kant, the religious a priori is concerned only with the validity of the religious experience as a universal and necessary phenomenon. In effect post-Kantian philosophers operating within the limits of the Critical Philosophy can only affirm that men are universally and

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[74] Ibid. Cf. Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation*, 58–63; and *Christian Philosophy: The Works of Gordon Haddon Clark*, Vol. 4, 36–42, 146–53.

necessarily religious because of a prioristic factors that regulate human life. The effect of this position has devastating consequences. It is impossible for those standing the succession of Kantian epistemology to settle the question of the value of religious experience, because this requires a determination of the ontic reality of the religious "Object" which the Critical Philosophy is unable to decide.[75]

Henry argues that given the reality of the prevalence of religion in humanity it is best explained by a priori considerations. In trying to account for this reality, attempts have been made that leave divine revelation out of any consideration and are consequently inadequate in their accounting for this religious reality. As Henry says ". . . religion is not therefore adequately explained only in terms of the consciousness-immanent structure of man. The transcendental religious a priori leaves in doubt the transcendent ontic reference of the a priori."[76] This leaves a question of extreme importance unanswerable, whether or not the God–idea refers to a real religious Object.

This is the effect of the influence of Kant. Modern arguments for the intuitive consciousness of God are dulled. Due to the acceptance of Kant's limitation of the

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[75] Ibid., 1:283–84. Gordon Clark writes in *A Christian View of Men and Things*, "Of all the modern philosophers it is Immanuel Kant who is naturally thought of first as a representative of *a priori* theory. For him experience gives us a rather indefinite, even chaotic manifold of sensation, and the mind arranges, or imposes unity on, this manifold by the application of innate categories so that knowledge results. All items of knowledge are judgments or predications. . . . The mind imposes unity on experience by judging or classifying. . . . These are the categories, the non-empirical contributions of the mind to knowledge-the prerequisites of learning. They are not based on or derived from experience, but rather the possibility of meaningful experience depends on them" (312–13). Clark goes on to highlight the inadequacy of Kant's epistemology from a Christian perspective but the following comments are particularly relevant to the current discussion: "After asserting that there are only two ways in which a necessary harmony of experience with the conceptions of its objects can be cogitated, *viz.*: either experience makes these conceptions possible or the conceptions make the experience possible, Kant attempts to dispose of an alleged third view. This middle way holds that he categories are neither innate (selbstgedachte) and first *a priori* principles of cognition, nor derived from experience, but are merely subjective aptitudes for thought implanted in us contemporaneously with our existence, which were so ordered and disposed by our Creator that their existence perfectly harmonizes with the laws of nature with regulate their experience" (314).

[76] Ibid., 1:380.

significance of concepts to the sense world, cognitive religious knowledge is dismissed.

The focus of the a priori becomes psychological instead of logical. Henry's analysis of

Kant's theory of knowledge is remarkable in its scope and breadth:

> Kant recognized that empiricism, most fully elaborated by Hume, abridges knowledge experience to disconnected animal sense perceptions, and can supply no reason for assuming that the parts of our experience are connected. Such skeptical reduction of human experience, to mere atomistic individual perceptions and one's private psychic responses, destroys the universal validity of human knowledge. Left unchallenged, the empirical takeover of all possibilities of knowledge presaged nothing less than the eclipse of human meaning and worth and the erosion of human culture.

> Kant's contrary theory of knowledge has exerted remarkable influence in the modern era. Historic Christianity viewed man as by creation the bearer of God's rational and moral image, and the entire created universe as structured by the creative Logos. A divinely intended homogeneity therefore exists between the categories of thought and man's rational Creator, other selves, and the cosmic order, as objects of knowledge. Instead of recovering the obscured Christian emphasis on the transcendent Logos of God, Kant proposed a novel revision of the secular notion of the immanent rational a priori. Against an empirical reduction of the categories of reason to optional distillations from experience, Kant strove heroically to preserve the universal necessity and validity of human thought. But his epistemic theory unfortunately forfeited the objectivity of human knowledge, that is, its applicability to the nature of things-in-themselves and the objective constitution of reality. This ruinous sacrifice of intelligible knowledge of God and external reality Kant would have avoided had he espoused the biblical view of man as God's created image and of a Logos—structure universe.

> To be sure Kant insisted that man's innate mental equipment makes human knowledge possible. Although sense perception, as Hume contended, supplies the content of knowledge, yet the epistemic apparatus native to the human mind-that is, man's innate forms and categories of knowing-transforms these otherwise chaotic perceptions into meaningful experience. Kant's monumental *Critique* details how man's inherent noetic endowment supposedly combines with sense experience to produce human knowledge. Knowledge is a joint product; sense perception supplies its content; the innate categories (unity, plurality, causality, substantiality, for example) supply its form. The categories without the perceptions are blank; the perceptions without the forms are chaotic. Even sense phenomena are known only through the modalities of space and time which are subjective human forms of perceiving. The innate forms or categories function as a transcendental ego to preserve the necessary character of all human knowledge and to guarantee its universal validity. But since the content of knowledge is restricted to phenomenal sense-world as ordered by the categories, man has no

cognitive knowledge of the noumenal world, whether of supernatural realities or of things-in-themselves that underlie our sense impressions.[77]

The results of Kant's theory are devastating. Man is deprived of objective knowledge of ultimate reality and of the externally real world, since cognitive experience is assertedly limited to phenomenal appearances or sense perceptions, to impressions presumed to be made upon man by reality and grasped in the necessary way prescribed by the innate categories of understanding and forms of perceiving. The second devastating effect is that "Kant's theory precludes cognitive knowledge of God as well of the objective cosmos or external world of nature, since he limits the content of our knowledge to sense percepts."[78]

Following Kant the argument for intuitive consciousness of God in terms of cognitive knowledge has lost support and influence due to the limitation of the significance of concepts to the sense world. More and more the religious a priori is regulated to the psychological realm rather than the logical. Pre-Kantian thinkers wrote that the a priori involved an ontic reference of ideas (so Plato, Augustine, Anselm, Descartes). Furthermore, pre-Kantian thinkers rejected the thesis that the content of experience is limited only to the sensate or empirical. To hold as post-Kantian thinkers to the position that the content of experience is limited to the sensate or empirical, does violence to knowledge experience and religious experience. Henry argues that the strength of the

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[77] Ibid., 1:387–88. Henry notes some of Kant's theories internal difficulties on (p. 388–89).

[78] Ibid., 1:389–90. Henry goes on to say that, "For Kant God is not all at all object of cognitive knowledge, but a necessary postulate of man's moral nature, an ethical ideal demanded by the 'I ought' or categorical imperative that structures human life" (p. 390).

transcendent a priori is not only that it correlates the questions of the metaphysical basis of religious experience and of its validity, but also of that it emphasizes, in its theological or dogmatic forms, that the religious *a priori* subsists in God, and that without this creation context and basis there would be no human experience whatever. For the theological a priori, the reference to eternity consists not merely in the fact of validity, which is unsubject to the conditions of time and space, but also in the condition of valid experience as they exist in and through the *imago Dei*. Only when the ontological background or reason is kept in view is the a priori guarded effectively from a dissolution into the *a posteriori* through an eclipse of the reality reference of ideas. This circumstance doubtless partially explains the hypostatization of the valid categories of experience, as by Plato, into transcendental realities. The questions of the validity of human concepts, of what lies beyond consciousness, and of the ultimate source of the *a priori* in consciousness which makes possible communication between individual minds cannot long be evaded. If such questions are not answered in the theological-revelational way, they will be answered in a conjecturally speculative way as by Plato, Leibinz and Hegel.[79]

The use of the a priori provides a solution to the "crisis of the west" that Henry spent his entire theological career in answering. The Christian use of the a priori answers the conjectural positions offered by philosophers in their attempt in giving a structured and satisfying answer to the dilemma that is life faced by man. Christianity is not dependent upon the soul's preexistence in a supernatural world that is anchored in a recollection of that world (per Plato); nor is the a priori based in a complex set of ideas common to all men found the pantheistic scheme of existence (per Spinoza); nor is it a mathematical concept that regulates God merely to an idea (per Descartes); it is neither an incipience shared by all ideas, emerging into consciousness only on the occasion of experience (per Leibniz); neither is it a reflex of morality, which bases the morality in a knowledge theory that assigns innateness to the categories of pure reason (per Kant); it is not a direct knowledge of the Absolute in the consciousness of human selves (per Hegel); not is it a form of religious experience (innate) that lacks theoretical content but is universal and necessary (per Troeltsch and Otto); nor is it a nonconceptual consciousness

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[79] Ibid., 1:383–84.

of God that is immediately experience in the feeling of absolute dependence (per Schleiermacher); and neither is it a necessary constituent that links the mind to fictional postulates (per Vaihinger).[80]

The phrasing of the a priori in revelational terms removes the uncertainty of conjectural alternatives as a means of providing and securing its validity. Men can know that their knowledge of God is from him and not based or inferred from their limited experience. Validity is found and secured in the scripturally attested *imago Dei*. Anchoring the test of validity here frees man from the conjectural angst that alternatives based on innate forms, content antecedent to experience, epistemological necessity due to a larger world where man is an isolated and related knower, Platonic pre-existence, Cartesian conjectural theism, Leibniz's monadology, Kant's critical epistemology, and Hegel's pantheism.[81]

> Henry says that the
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> strength of transcendent a priori is not only that it correlates the questions of the metaphysical basis of religious experience and of its validity, but also that it emphasizes, in its theological or dogmatic form, that the religious a priori subsists in God, and that without this creation context and basis there would be no human experience whatever. For the theological a priori, the reference to eternity consists not merely in the fact of validity, which is subject to conditions of time and space, but also in the conditions of valid experience as they exist in and through the *imago Dei*.[82]

The safeguard for the religious a priori is found in divine revelation.

If basic axioms and theorems are so different in providing explanatory methodology, is there any common ground that one can proceed to offer a superior

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[80] Ibid., 1:394.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., 1:383–84.

system to interpret reality? Henry's answer is found in the special characteristics that are safe guarded in a revelational epistemology; "The universality of religion is due not to man's rebellion against God but rather to man's nature on the basis of his creation by God and to those a priori factors which place him necessarily and universally in relationship with the living God."[83]

The fact remains that on the basis of the i*mago Dei*, which all people share, the underlying knowledge of God is present in all people. Given this reality, even though there is the disavowal of common epistemological axioms does not rule out common ground between unbeliever and believer. Henry quotes his mentor Gordon Clark as Clark expounds the Reformed position in that there has always been the contention that there is a common psychological or ontological ground of human understanding that is the basis for human communication:

> Believer and unbeliever alike, though their philosophic axioms and theorems are totally incompatible, bear in their persons the image of God from creation. This image . . . includes their ordinary rational ability as human beings and as an exercise of this rationality certain minimal theological and moral principles. These beliefs, dimly and inconsistently held, often submerged and repressed, can be thought of as a point of contact for the Gospel.[84]

5.10   The God Who Speaks and Shows

Volumes 2-4 of *GRA* form the basis of Henry's revelational epistemology. In Vol. 1 of *GRA*, Henry has established the epistemic starting point and answered objections to it, now in the volumes under consideration he will expound in much greater detail the constituent elements of revelational epistemology.

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[83] Ibid., 1:402.

[84] Ibid., 1:396.

In an interview Henry was asked to name some of the key issues involved in evangelical identity. If anyone was positioned to speak to that topic it would have been Henry, as he was a principle architect of evangelical identity as it emerged and broke from fundamentalism. The first and most important issue was the question of an authoritative word from God. The issue is and has been, has God spoken authoritatively? Henry also addressed the lack of comprehensive evangelical unity, but for the purposes of this work those issues will not be addressed. Henry was asked to provide a comprehensive view of God's revelation and what would it look like. His answer was that was the most distinctive element of that view would be an emphasis on the priority of the truth that God declares.

> I would say that the biblical emphasis falls first and foremost on the authority of Scripture. After that the emphasis falls, it seems to me on the inspiration of God's word. It is what God has spoken; that's why it is authoritative. The notion of an authoritative word that isn't God's word, or that isn't inspired, is out of view. Inerrancy seems to me to be an inference from the inspiration that the Bible teaches. If one denies inerrancy, and affirms errancy, he raises all sorts of questions about inspiration. This affirmation of the errancy of Scripture introduces a principle of instability into the authority of Scripture leads to a lack of agreement as to what parts of Scripture are to be considered authoritative and what parts are not.[85]

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[85] Henry, *Conversations with Carl Henry: Christianity for Today*, 8. Henry would say in a later interview that he did not believe that the affirmation of inerrancy should be used as a test of evangelical authenticity. In response to a question raised about Lindsell's book *The Battle for the Bible* (the question of inerrancy will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter) in which Lindsell argued the case that if a person did not hold to inerrancy he was not an evangelical (in the technical sense p. 210–11), Henry was put in a position to state his position as it differed in its application from that of Lindsell. Henry states, "My position today is precisely what it has been through the years. I hold unequivocally to the authority, the inspiration, and the inerrancy of the Scripture; and I think that any questioning of one or all those emphases represents a departure from what the Bible teaches, explicitly or implicitly, a departure from the perspective of Jesus Christ and the apostles, and a departure from the historic Christian position. . . . When the magazine [*Christianity Today*] began, it was committed editorially to the doctrine of inerrancy as a test of evangelical consistency. We did not hesitate to express that conviction editorially, or to enlist essayists in support of it. But from the beginning we had as key contributing editors evangelicals who did not believe in inerrancy, yet how joined us in bold theological witness on other doctrines to the non-evangelical world. We used all soldiers where they fought well and fought best. At no time during my editorship did we escalate the doctrine of inerrancy into a test of evangelical authenticity. And I think that is what the Lindsell volume does. Cf. Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

5.8.1 Divine Revelation: The Initiative is God's

How does one know God? How can one even know that there is even a God to know? While Henry recognizes the doctrine of natural revelation, he differs with Thomas Aquinas, who stated that man with his unaided reasoning ability can come to know the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.[86] The first thesis that is divine revelation comes from God and God alone.

The only reason that there is divine revelation is that God has taken the initiative to disclose himself to mankind.[87] Henry says, "The essence of revelation is that God steps out of his hiddeness to disclose what would otherwise remain secret and unknown."[88] Henry espouses the biblical view that revelation is God's disclosure of himself to mankind. The best that speculative theology can offer is that revelation is God's unveiling himself to mankind. Instead of man declaring the objective word of God who has disclosed himself to man, the modern period is left with how man has found God in the tales of self-explorers.[89]

So crucial is this issue that H. D. McDonald wrote the question of authority is the issue. He described it as the ultimate issue:

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[86] Henry, *GRA*, 1:184. "While Thomas Aquinas approaches the existence of God both from man's ordinary experience and from supernatural revelation as starting points, he nonetheless invokes philosophical theology, or metaphysics, a natural type of knowledge open to anyone, to supply the foundations of faith. . . . Henry writes in *GRA* 2:123 "We reject natural theology because of the express nature of supernatuaral revelation, because of man's epistemic nature and because of the invalidity of empirically based aruguments for theism. "All Aquinas' arguments for the existence of God rest on an appeal to sense observation without reliance on divine disclosure." Cf. Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 105-106.

[87] Henry*, GRA*, 2:17. "Revelation is a divinely initiated activity, God's free communication by which he alone turns his personal privacy into a deliberate disclosure of his reality."

[88] Ibid., 2:20–21.

[89] Patterson, *Henry*, 85.

The ultimate issue which emerged from the long and lively discussions and controversies of the past century, which our precious chapter intended to make clear, concerns the problem of authority. The question of revelation passed into that of authority, and to discover the locus of revelation is to find the seat of authority. In the words of F.W. Camfield, to which we may refer again, it was agreed that 'We must fine authority in Revelation, for authority is its hall mark. It seems, therefore, a matter of indifference whether we talk of the understanding of revelation or of authority. In the context of religion and religious faith, to say, Here is Revelation, is the same as to say, Here is Authority.[90]

Henry is in agreement with McDonald in that he quotes McDonald, saying "The ideal of God making Himself known is not so much a biblical idea, as it is *the* biblical idea."[91] A great attribute of Henry was that in areas where he could find similar views from people with whom he differed in other areas, he did not hesitate to marshal their considerable skills and efforts. Such is the case with Karl Barth. While Henry's critique of Barth will be the subject of chapter 6, Henry quoted Barth extensively as the two found an area of co-belligerency in recognizing the significance of the authority of God as found in the Scriptures. Henry quotes Barth, "In Barth's words, the God of the Bible is 'the God to whom there is no way and bridge, of whom we could not say or have to say one single word, had He not of His own initiative met us *Deus revelatus*.'"[92]

> Apart from God's self-unveiling any affirmations about the Divine would nothing more than speculation. Only does *Deus revelatus* can banish *Deus dubitandus*. Not even modern theologians armed with sophisticated technological gadgetry could spy upon a reticent deity and program data about him. Barth spoke of "impassible frontier, the unbridgeable gulf" and emphasized that "we could not utter one wretched syllable about the nature of the Word of God, if the Word of God had not been spoken to us as God's Word." The only confident basis for God talk is God's revelation of himself. The self-revelation that God communicates provides what human ingenuity cannot achieve, namely, authentic information about the ultimate Who's Who . . . The very nature of divine reality

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[90] H. D. McDonald, *Theories of Revelation* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), 347.

[91] Henry, *GRA*, 2:18.

[92] Ibid.

and truth are such that, apart from divine initiative and disclosure, they remain intrinsically hidden. The God of the Bible is wholly determinative in respect to revelation. He is either free to reveal himself or not reveal himself; he is sovereign in his self-disclosure.[93]

5.8.2   Authoritative Communication

The universality of religion is not due to man's rebellion against God but rather to man's nature on the basis of his creation by God and to those a priori factors which place him necessarily and universally in relationships with the living God.[94] It is into this relationship that God has spoken. In as much as He has spoken, his authority attaches to what he has said. The question arises, is this communication understandable by man? This is an area where Henry spends considerable effort and energy responding to modern notions that somehow the God of the Bible is incapable of communicating intelligibly to mankind.[95] The world is knowable because God is an intelligent Deity. Henry asserts, "Contrary to the trajectory of rationalism, no autonomous standard of reason can be offered since reason itself loses meaning apart from the divine character. Since the Divine discloses himself as person, revelation is both personal in nature and can, therefore, speak

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[93] Ibid., 2:18-19. H.D. McDonald provides a concise summary of the attempts to find authority outside of the Bible, "Rejecting the records [the Bible] as altogether historically factual, there had to be, eliminated from them whatever the conscience could not verify, or the reason could not explain or the spiritual sensitivity could not authenticate. The actual result was that there was no possible agreement as to what was to be accepted, because conscience and reason and spiritual sensitivity varied from writer to writer. In the end the much acclaimed 'historical sense' turned out to be even more subjective than the subjectivism which it set out to correct. The authority of Jesus came to be nothing more than that of the individual critic's ingenuity, or imagination, or intuition, as the case may have been. The many volumes each supposed to present us with the authority of the Jesus of history were but the outcome of each writer's own uncontrolled dream or unrestricted daring" (*Theories of Revelation*, 354).

[94] Henry, *GRA*, 1:402.

[95] Carl F. H. Henry, *Frontiers of Modern Theology* (Chicago: Moody, 1964, 1965).

to all of humanity. Consequently, revelation both coheres and corresponds to reality

because God is one."[96]

Henry's fifth thesis advances this position and is as follows:

5. Not only the occurrence of divine revelation, but also its very nature, content, and variety are exclusively of God's determination. God determines not only the *if* and *why* of divine disclosure, but also the *when*, *where*, *what*, *how,* and *who*. If there is to be a general revelation-a revelation universally given in nature, in history, and in the reason and conscience of every man-then that is God's decision. If there is to be a special or particular revelation, that, too, is God's decision and his alone. Only because God so wills it is there a cosmic-anthropological revelation. It is solely because of divine determination. Paul reminds us, that "that which may be known of God is manifest . . . for God has shewed it . . . For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. (Rom. 1:19-20, KJV) It is solely by God's own determination that he reveals himself universally in the history of the nations and in the ordinary course of human events. He is nowhere without a witness (Acts 14:17) and is everywhere active either in grace or judgment.[97]

5.8.3   The *Imago Dei*: God's Canvass

Not only has God taken the initiative to speak but he also has created man in such

a way as to be able to receive that communication. Henry avers that "revelational theism

affirms that the human person as divinely created bears the image of God."[98] The

problem is not, as many in modern theology would contend, man's inability to know, or

to acknowledge even his inability to be aware of God, but rather the problem today is

man's unwillingness to acknowledge God as sovereign. The God who Henry writes of is

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[96] Gregory Alan Thornbury, "Carl F. H. Henry as Heir of Reformation Epistemology," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 8 (Winter 2004): 69. Thornberry comments that "in Kuperian fashion Henry avers that all knowledge owes its origins to God who speaks and shows" (p. 70). In this article Thornbury is making the argument that Henry is modeling an Augustinian/ Reformed epistemology.

[97] Henry, *GRA*, 2:8–9.

[98] Ibid., 2:124.

the God who stands over all.[99] As Paul writes in Rom 1:18 men suppress or hold down

the truth of God. There is no inherent deficiency in man that would necessarily limit his

ability to know God through the vehicle of divine revelation. It is as Paul has said, it is

man's volitional choice to hold back the truth of God. Henry writes that after God had

made the other living creatures, God announced his intention to create man in his "'as'

(or, 'according to') our image (selem), and 'after' our likeness (Demuth)."[100] The Bible

does not give the precise content of the original *imago*. But this is a far cry from saying

that the content of the *imago* is vague or indefinite. From the very beginning it is seen in

the Genesis account of Creation that man is a fully developed man. He is not a fully

evolved animal. Bequeathed to him as a constituent element of his creation by God, man

is a personally conscious being in communication with his Maker. Man is given rational

and moral aptitudes. These aptitudes are not the by product of civilization or culture but

are gifted to man as the bearer of the image of God and make possible personal and

meaningful relationship with his Creator. Furthermore, man in his original condition

loved God and gave himself to God. He knew the truth that God communicated to him,

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[99]Ibid., 5:15. Henry articulates this theme of *GRA* volumes 5 and 6 with every day terms so as to provide a readily accessible bridge to cross when contemplating God. Henry uses the terns like the God who stands, stoops and stays, speaks and shows to accomplish this task. The fact that God stoops is indicative of his initiative of divine self-disclosure. The fact that God stands is seen in the act of creation. The eternal I Am- condescended to make a finite universe that includes humans equipped with a rational and moral image to know, worship and serve the God who has made all that there is. "In creation God stoops to fellowship with man who bears his image, as the Logos becomes flesh, God himself assumes man's nature, and as the sinless Substitute gives himself freely for the redemption of the lost. . . . God reveals his nature not in intelligible propositions alone nor only in miraculous deeds; he reveals himself supremely in Jesus Christ, whose life and death and resurrection are cognitively and propositionally interpreted by the inspired Scriptures" (p. 15–16).

[100] Ibid., 2:124. Henry writes in *Remaking the Modern Mind*, "To be created in the divine image was, in part, to share in the divine rationality, thus being able to thing God's thoughts after Him. . . . Hence the most representative Christian thinkers, through the whole sweep of church history, were profoundly convinced of the intrinsic rationality of the Christian theistic world-life outlook" (p. 224).

and although he would eventually rebel against that truth, man understood God's communication and obeyed it.[101]

> The God of the Bible of is a rational God; that the divine Logos is central to the Godhead and is the agent in creation and redemption; that man was made in the divine image for intelligible communication with God; that God communicates his purposes and truths about himself in the biblical revelation; that the Holy Spirit uses truth as a means of persuasion and conviction; and that Christian experience includes not only a surrender of the will but a rational assent to the truth of God.[102]

Another vital component of the *imago Dei* is the inherent awareness of the law of non-contradiction. Henry follows the influence of Gordon Clark, as he will in his understanding of language. Henry believes that human experience presupposes the law of non-contradiction. Additionally, man knows the difference between truth and error. The rational aspect of man has logical priority:

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[101] Ibid., 2:125. Calvin's well known *sensus divintas* comes into play here. "There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity. . . . God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine majesty" John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Vol. 1 (ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1960, 2006), 43. Gordon Clark adds to the distinction of the *imago Dei* that Henry is arguing for: "Since man was created in the image of God, he has an innate idea of God. It is not necessary, indeed it is not possible, for a blank mind to abstract to a concept of God from sensory experience or to lift sensory language by its bootstraps to a spiritual level" Clark, *The Works of Gordon Haddon Clark, Vol. 4*, 203. Clark, writing in context of the suppressed knowledge of God's truth of Romans chapter 1 ". . . this knowledge no doubt is an innate knowledge; it did not come from the Scriptures, but remains part of the original image of God in which he crated man" (p. 263).

[102] Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man*, 14. Nash quotes Henry in answering the question: Can the human logos know the logos of God? In other words, "is there a relationship between the human mind and the divine mind that is sufficient to ground communication of truth from God to humans?" Nash goes to say that to know the truth the mind is necessary but not sufficient. Augustine argued that light of the human intellect is unable to account for human knowledge without the illumination of the presence of God. "We must not think of the forms of as having been given to humans once-and-for-all. Though the forms are part of the rational structure of the human mind belong there by virtue of our having been created in the image of God, the soul never ceases to be dependent upon God for its knowledge" (p. 89). B. B. Warfield, commenting on Augustine, "God having so made man, has not left him deistically, to himself, but continually reflects into his soul the contents of His truth which constitute the intelligible world. The soul is therefore in unbroken communion with God, and in the body of intelligible truths reflected into it from God, sees God" (p. 90). Warfield also wrote, "Augustine's ontology of the intuition by which man attains intelligible truth, embraced especially two factors: the doctrine of the image of God, and the doctrine of the dependence on God." B. B. Warfield, *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine*.

Only if man is logically lighted, and not simply morally or spiritually involved independent or intelligence, can be meaningfully aware of responsible relationships. . . . All distinctively human experience presupposes the law of non-contradiction and the irreducible distinction between truth and error.[103]

If man attempts to deny the reality of these logical presuppositions he sacrifices the intelligibility of what he says and does and his own mental coherence. Any clouding or disparaging the *imago Dei* has serious consequences for the other elements of the *imago Dei*. Sin does affect man's psychological and moral ability, and sin does adversely affect man's ability to think correctly, but sin does not invalidate the law of non-contradiction.[104]

Furthermore, the *imago Dei* has embedded structures of morality. Not only does man come armed innately with an awareness of truth and error but also of right and wrong and good and evil. In the creation account of Genesis, God approved of his work by stating that not only was his work good, but with the creation of man it was "very good" (Gen 1:31). Henry believes that the language here is more than just descriptive of the creative acts of God. But because man is created in the image of God, moral significance is attached to man appearance as the bearer of the *imago Dei*. This significant passage inheres that

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[103] Henry, *GRA*, 2:126.

[104] Patterson, *Henry: Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, 88. "Man is the image [of God]. . . . Therefore, is rational in the likeness of God's rationality. His mind is structured as Aristotelian logic described it." Gordon H. Clark, *Language and Knowledge* (Jerrerson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1980, 1993), 138. A summary of Aristotelian logic can be found in *Unshakeable Foundations*; "Aristotle established the difference between valid and invalid forms of human reasoning, . . . Aristotle showed how every science begins with certain obvious truths he referred to as first principles, explaining how these first principles form the foundations upon which all knowledge rests. . . . The law of non-contradiction is both self-evident and unavoidable; again it must be used in any attempts to deny it. It must be assumed true by anyone who wants to think or say anything meaningful; it is necessary for making any distinction, affirmation, or denial." Norman Geisler and Peter Bocchino, *Unshakeable Foundations* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2001), 19, 23.

man's very self-constitution is stamped with the conviction that the distinction between good and evil is not merely an arbitrary and optional conscience-with the 'good conscience' which approves what is right and disapproves what is wrong; he did not as yea have a 'bad conscience' because of moral disobedience. Anyone who demotes all ethical distinctions to relativity and considers conscience an irrelevancy is not only morally perverse but also a candidate for insanity.[105]

Henry was aware of competing views of the essential and functional nature of the *imago Dei*. The neo-orthodox view of the *imago Dei* will be examined in the next chapter with Karl Barth as the representative of that position. Without going into Henry's critique at this point, he argued that a biblically faithful exposition of the imago dei would entail the perseveration of cognitive knowledge as the essential basis of moral responsibility and meaningful religious experience.[106] Furthermore, the *imago Dei* is not to be located only in the conscience of man or his free will. The image of God in man embraces all psychic elements of man that differentiate him from the animal world. As man is conscious of himself, he is conscious of God. Henry follows Clark who insists that moving beyond the merely formal a priori elements of human knowing

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[105] Ibid., 2:126. A major early work of Henry's on ethics was *Christian Personal Ethics*. The fact that ethics had already found its basis in relativity in lieu of fixed values and standards, had in Henry's words "brought moral chaos." He went on to say, "One fact is certain: simultaneous with this relativity of moral imperatives, human life has lost its worth. The soul-nausea and dread of modern man has reached depths unknown even to the ancient Greek skeptic. The sense of cosmic lostness and of personal insignificance frames modern man's window on life" (p. 13). Henry had first called on evangelicals to be more culturally involved in all aspects of culture in *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. He continued to make that call in books that he wrote and edited. A representative sample would include: Carl F. H. Henry, *Answers for the Now Generation* (Chicago: Moody, 1949, 1969); *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology* (1957), *The Word for This Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); *The God Who Shows Himself* (1966); ed. *Christian Faith and Modern Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971); *Evangelicals At The Brink of Crisis* (Waco, TX: Word, 1967*); A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971); New Strides of Faith (Chicago: Moody, 1972); *Quest for Reality: Christianity and the Counter Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1973); *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (1976), *The Christian Mindset In A Secular Society* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1984); *The Christian Vision: Man In Society* (Hillsdale, MI: Hillsdale College Press, 1984); *Christian Counter Moves In A Decadent Culture* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1986); *Twilight of a Great Civilization* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988); *Evangelical Affirmations* (1990).

[106] Ibid., 2:128.

the very forms of reason and morality may and must, in fact, be viewed as belonging also to the content of the divine image in man. The Bible disowns the vulnerable feature of Kant's theory of innate categories of thought, namely autocracy of creative human reason. It precludes viewing the categories of understanding merely as subjective forms of consciousness or as simply human determinations of knowledge, whose objectivity consists entirely in their validity of mankind.[107]

Henry writes that in opposition to theories like Kant's, human reason is incapable and has no inherent capacity to create lasting significance. Human projections always have an unstable relationship to reality. The issue that creates the unbridgeable chasm is where does the derivation of the governing content of philosophical reasoning arise? Does it derive from transcendent revelation or does it come from an elevated view of human reasoning? Henry insists that Christian theism resists all attempts at deprecating

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[107] Ibid., 2:132. At this point it is again relevant to hear Clark as he analyses Kant's use of a priori as it relates to man's knowing: "After asserting that there are only two ways in which a necessary harmony of experience with the conceptions of its objects can be cogitated, *viz.* : either experience makes these conceptions possible or the conceptions make the experience possible, Kant attempts to dispose of an alleged third view. This middle way holds that he categories are neither innate (selbstgedachte) and first *a priori* principles of cognition, nor derived from experience, but are merely subjective aptitudes for thought implanted in us contemporaneously with our existence, which were so ordered and disposed by our Creator that their existence perfectly harmonizes with the laws of nature with regulate their experience" (*A Christian View of Men and Things*, 314). Earlier Henry critiques Kant's theory that had assumed the autonomy of the human mind. This autonomy compromised the ability to the know God objectively: (1) We cannot know things-in-themselves, or noumenal reality as independently existing or structured; (2) We can have no objective knowledge or even conceptual knowledge of God, since the limits of man's knowledge are such that sense experience supplies the only content of human knowledge. God becomes for Kant a mere postulate with no cognitive grounding; (3) It is not clear, in fact, how Kant could on his theory have acquired objective knowledge of the categories; (4) Kant presupposes that God was not the source—in terms of the imago Dei conferred on man at creation—of the categories thought structuring human knowledge. He ignores the transcendent Logos as the indispensable ground of universally valid knowledge. Yet for all that, he violates his own epistemic theory by attributing to human knowledge some relation to an objective world; (5) If not even sensation can be traced to some independent cause, then the whole process of knowledge must originate in subjective factors; consciousness is merely this necessary process of knowledge, and no basis exists for affirming either an underlying ego or self or an independently real existent; (6) But how can we say that he ego exists when not even my own consciousness is given in sensibility? The ego, self or person, too, must therefore be only an idea; (7) and if the human ego itself is a mere subjective representation, can we then even argue for the necessity and universal validity of our ideas or representations, despite Kant's assumption that this form of experience is common to the human race? Indeed for all Kant's valiant effort to overcome Humean skepticism, his Critical Philosophy sinks at last toward solipsism (we know nothing independent of our experience), illusionism (we know nothing beyond our representations) or nihilism (not even the ego is knowable, not even I exist)" (p. 131–32).

the role and authority of divine revelation in lieu of conjectural principles into the

discussion of the foundations of human reasoning in relation to the *imago Dei*.[108] The

role that reason plays in human reasoning is determinative for a proper understanding of

the *imago Dei*. Henry addresses this issue in the context of discussing the *imago Dei* and

supposed competing ways of thinking:

> But the real complaint now often heard about Western thinking rises from the
> assumption that oriental and occidental minds somehow function with essentially
> different forms of reasoning. Western thought, we are told, is ideally logical,
> whereas Eastern thought is intuitive or at any rate not as much concerned with
> logical antitheses. . . . Not even the oriental outlook is reducible to a view of
> reality in terms of part-and-whole rather than of creature-and Creator. The so-
> called Asian way of thinking differs among even Asians. There is in fact no
> perspective, oriental or occidental, that would be assisted by a good course in
> logic, or that does not soon sacrifice universal validity if it neglects the law of
> contradiction. The laws of logic are not a speculative prejudice imposed at a given
> moment of history as a transient philosophical development. Neither do they
> involve a Western way of thinking, even if Aristotle may have stated them in an
> orderly way. The laws of valid inference are universal; they are elements of the
> *imago Dei*. In the Bible, reason has ontological significance. God is Himself truth
> and the source of truth. Biblical Christianity honors the *Logos* of God as the
> source of all meaning and considers the laws of thought as aspect of the *imago*.
> Not even humanity's Fall into sin has annulled the law of contradiction. The
> noetic effect of sin is serious, for it hinders man's disposition to meditate on the
> proper content of human thinking. But it does not deform or destroy the
> components of logic and reason.[109]

5.11   The Intelligibility of the Logos of God

The ninth thesis in *GRA* says, "The mediating agent in all divine revelation is the

Eternal *Logos*—preexistent, incarnate and now glorified."[110] God created man in his

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[108] Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, 106–07.

[109] Ibid., 109–10.

[110] Henry, *GRA*, 3:164. Emil Brunner's *The Mediator* is a landmark treatment of this subject.
Following Barth, Brunner provides a scathing and devastating critique of the classically liberal
understanding of Christ. And like Barth, Brunner falls short of an orthodox understanding of the role of the
Logos of God—Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Brunner falls short in stating how God communicates to man,
limited as he is by his dialectical commitment, his view of the limitations of language, and his assertion of

image, an image that is inherently rational, just as God is inherently rational. God also created man with the ability to receive intelligible communication. And that communication is mediated by the eternal *Logos*. Henry counters those of the neo-orthodox camp who use mystical language to define the role of the *Logos* of God. Neo-orthodox writers say that the *Logos* communicates in a paradoxical or dialectical manner. Henry contends that that this type of view is at variance with Scripture. To say that "the real language of Christian eschatology . . . is not the Greek logos, but the promise (*A Theology of Hope,* p. 40)" eradicates the objective and rational content of the unveiled Word of God.[111]

The emphasis on the personal truth of God's Word at the expense of the propositional truth of God's Word comes at too high a price. Henry believes that the English versions use of the Word as the authentic translation of the Greek word *logos* protects the meaning of the Word from the various and sundry alternatives that have come from speculative uses of logos in Greek and Roman thought.[112] The import of the *Logos* is found in the following:

> The reality of the transcendent Logos of the Bible involves a distinctive view of reason, one alien to contemporary thought. The earlier history of Western thought pointedly rejected the modern and currently prevalent theory that human reasoning is essentially creative. There was never a denial that the mind of man has the power, on which recent modern knowledge theory concentrates, of

the unreliability of the historical record of the Bible, Emil Brunner, *The Mediator* (trans. Olive Wyon; New York: MacMillan Company, 1934).

[111] Ibid., 3:165. Henry quotes Jurgen Moltmann. Others who Henry quotes or alludes to in this passage are Karl Barth, "divine disclosure is inherently dialectical or paradoxical." Henry summarizes the inherent weakness of neo-orthodox position in what while the neo-orthodox want to claim the Logos of Scripture, they either dismiss the supernatural Logos as myth (Bultmann) or afflict the Logos with a contagious dialetic (Barth).

[112] Ibid. Gordon Clark takes a controversial position in his translation of the Greek word *logos* into Logic. His argument is found in *The Johannine Logos* (p13-45).

conceptually ordering phenomenal realities or sense impressions in a creative way. But the human mind was not considered to be constructive of the order of external reality. As the source of created existence, the Logos of God grounded the meaning and purpose of man and the world, and objective reality was held to be divinely structured by complex formal patterns. Endowed with more than animal perception, gifted in fact with a mode of cognition not to be confused with sensation, man was therefore able to intuit intelligible universals; as a divinely intended knower, he was able to cognize, within limits, the nature and structure of the externally real world.[113]

The loss of this biblically attested view of the *Logo*s is and has been devastating for man. In Western philosophy, the loss of the biblically attested *Logos*, has resulted in intellectual aporia. The resultant skepticism has eroded confidence in ontological affirmations whether they are about God, man or nature.[114] Furthermore, the loss in Western philosophy of the Logos has resulted in the loss of fixed meaning of existence with the consequence that the enduring worth of man is now in question. Henry writes, "If we can learn anything from these speculative or mythological logoi of rationalistic philosophy and religious theory, it is simply that each and every such phantom–*logos* has its day and is soon spent."[115] With the divinely given and biblically attested *Logos*, we have the certitude that man's rationality as it relates and inheres to God's rationality is safe guarded by the objective intelligible reality of the *Logos*.[116]

The *Logos'* ontological reality is centered in the eternal Christ. Epistemologically there are some truths of the *Logos* that confront all men in the general revelation that is given in nature, history, reason, and conscience. Scripture states this truth comprehensively and objectively. The pervasiveness of the *Logos* is such that even

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[113] Ibid., 3:168. Gordon Clark in *Language and Knowledge* summarizes secular and religious theories as they relate to language and its role in knowledge.

[114] Ibid., 3;167.

[115] Ibid., 3:192.

[116] Ibid., 3:170.

unregenerate man is lighted by the *Logos* just as the regenerate man. Nash gives clarity at this point in light of Henry's observation: "After John describes Jesus as the cosmological *Logos*, he presents Him as the epistemological *Logos*. John declares that Christ was 'the true light that enlightens every man' (John 1:9). In other words, the epistemological *Logos* is not only the mediator of divine special revelation (John 1:14), He is also the ground the all human knowledge."[117] The *Logos* doctrine "presupposes an intelligible order or logos in things, an objective law which claims and binds man, and makes possible human understanding and valid knowledge."[118] Jesus Christ as the *Logos* of God guarantees and certifies human rationality and understandability of the Word of God. The correspondence between the mind of God and the human mind that is grounded in the *Logos* enables a human understanding of divine communication of truth. Christianity maintains that the universe is rational and knowable. It is so because it is a universe grounded in the creative act of God and structured by the *Logos* of God. This ground and structure also make possible the logical connections that are based in God's mind and will and are binding for man in view of the *imago Dei*.[119] The effect is that man as a rational creature has thoughts and forms of thought that correspond to the laws of logic subsisting in the mind of God. The *Logos*, as the mediating agent of God, is the conduit that makes divine communication understandable and the rational world rational.

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[117] Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man*, 67.

[118] Henry, *GRA*, 3:193.

[119] Ibid., 3:192.

5.9.1 Rational Religious Language

Henry has argued that man is created as a rational being that follows the rational likeness of the Creator. He has also posited that the *Logos* is the mediator of this divine communication. Now Henry turns to the conduit of divine disclosure, language. Language theory has been and is an area of much dispute. While the limitations of this paper prevent a thorough analysis of the development of language theory, it is within the scope of the present work to present a representative sample of some of the major luminaries in this field that Henry critiques. Such figures as John Locke,[120] David Hume,[121] Bertrand Russell,[122] Ludwig Wittgenstein,[123] Rudolf Carnap,[124] A. J. Ayer,[125] Wilbur Marshall Urban[126] all come under the critical eye of Henry. Among the many things that Henry does well, he is among the best, following his mentor Gordon Clark, at insightful analysis of views that stand in opposition to Christianity. This review of

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[120] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1894), 321-412. Questia: The On-line Library of Books, http://www.questia.com/read/5781514?title=An%20Essay%20Concerning%20Human%20Understanding (accessed May 31, 2008).

[121] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

[122] Bertrand Russell, "The Cult of Common Usage," *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science 3* (1952-1953); 303–07; "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism," *Logic and Knowledge: Essays 1901-1950*,(ed. by C.R. Marsh; New York: Macmillan, 1956), 175-282; *My Philosophical Development* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959); "On Verification," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 38* (1937-38), 1-20;; *Why I Am Not A Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957).

[123] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1953); *Tractus Logico-Philosophicus* (trans. D. F. Pears and B.F. McGuinnes; New York: Humanities Press, 1961).

[124] Rudolf Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language," ed. A. J. Ayer, *Logical Positivism* (New York: Free Press, 1959) 63-79.

[125] A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (London: Victor Gallancz, 1936).

[126] Wilbur Marshall Urban, *Language and Reality* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press; reprint, 1971), 27–28.

Henry's view of language theory will summarize the representative views that have been

listed.[127]

Gordon Clark asks the question(s) that scholars wrestling with the adequacy of

language to convey cognitive information between two people have been attempting to

answer for years:

> What is a word? How can sound be meaningful? Does thought exist before and
> apart from language? How did language originate? Is language adequate for
> knowledge of reality, or is its nature such that it automatically distorts the
> universe? Is all language symbolic and metaphorical, or are some sentences
> strictly literal?[128]

Henry answers these and other questions but in a more pointed way. Religious language

in particular is adequate to convey cognitive knowledge and religious language is bound

by the same rules as non-religious language.

At the outset of Henry's discussion of religious language in *GRA*, Vol. 3, he

addresses those scholars who assert that religious language is guided by a thought

structure that sets it apart from other language discourse. There is the contention that

avers that the language structure and thought structure of biblical revelation is different

from other religious discourse. Thomas Altizer contends that the Western orientation of

philosophers renders them insensitive to the reality of language that is intrinsically

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[127] Norman Geisler, "Analogy: The Only Answer to the Problem of Religious Language, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 16, no.3 (Summer 1973): 167–79. In this article Geisler provides a summary of the positions of those scholars who took the lead in casting doubt on the adequacy of language to convey cognitive knowledge about God. The first was Plotinus. His axiom was that God could neither be spoken of or written of. David Hume followed Plotinus in writing that there were only two kinds of meaningful statements and both of those disqualified religious statements. Geisler next writes of Wittgenstien who in combining mysticism with empiricism created a religious non-cognitivism. A. J. Ayer, of the Vienna Circle, posited (what would turn out to be a self-refuting statement) the verification principle. The verification principle asserts that only statements which are either true by definition (i.e., tautological) or else are empirically verifiable (i.e., known to be true from sense experience) are meaningful. All other statements are literally nonsensical. Paul Van Buren would carry out Ayer's earlier reliance on empirical verification, "the empiricism in us finds the heart of the difficulty not in what is said about God, but in the very talking about God at all" (p. 170).

[128] Clark, *The Works of Gordon Haddon Clark*, Vol. 4, 191.

religious. Altizer makes the following factual claim, "It is a simple fact that all authentic forms of religious language, that is, all language which is the by product of a uniquely religious vision, are grounded by one means or another in a dialectical logic, that is, a mode of understanding which assumes the necessity of contradiction."[129] Why is it necessary to attach contradiction to religious language? Altizer writes that "all authentic forms of religion are directed against the given, against the world . . . against the positive."[130] The negation against the given that Altizer contends is inherent in authentic religious language is the "dialectical coincidence of negation and affirmation is the innermost reality of the life of faith, and all forms of religion which have assumed a fully philosophical form have either adopted or created a dialectical logic."[131] The major point that Altizer makes is that all objects that are "supersensuous" are unknowable. Objects of language and concepts are pure imagination, just mere words. Altizer, according to Henry, tries to marry Buddhist logic with the Hegelian dialectic. In doing so Altizer misses the synthesis of Hegel's dialectic. The new concept which arises as synthesis of thesis and antithesis is a more developed concept than had existed previously. According to Buddhist logicians, "to conceive is to construct an object in imagination. The object conceived is an object imagined."[132] Altizer interprets Stcherbatsky to say that Buddha and all metaphysical objects are beyond experience and consequently cognitively unknowable. Even though there is in the Buddhist theory of perception and judgment a

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[129] Henry, *GRA*, 3:230.

[130] Ibid., 3:231.

[131] Ibid., 3:232.

[132] Ibid., 3:233. Here Henry quotes F. T. Stcherbatsky from his book *Buddhist Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1962), 1–2.

development of the negative dialectic and a mystical approach is at the core of Buddhist logic, Altizer still contends that a "direct or immediate experience in which subject–object distinctions disappear, the world becomes illusion, and ultimate reality is intuited."[133] Henry's analysis of the irrationality Altizer's position is emphasized:

> It is to the pervasive rationality of Hegel's Idea that Altizer objects, since negativity in Altizer's dialectic would contravene any ultimate capable of conceptualization. Those who, like Hegel, think that Christianity is best served by replacing a closed logic by a dialectical logic, and seek to escape logical contradiction through a synthesis of thesis and antithesis, will quickly discover that any rejection of the law of contradiction leads at last to the negation of any intelligible view of God. Altizer demonstrates rather than disproves this when he urges us to "identify Christ as the absolute negativity who is the final source of the activity and the movement of existence. . . . The Christian faith is possible only through radical negativity . . . a negativity that is rooted in contradiction.[134]

Henry astutely points out that in order for Altizer to communicate his statement as something meaningful, it can only be done by a reliance on the logic he professedly wants to disown. And if he relies on logic for meaningful communication, the absurdity of this statement is readily apparent. One would look in vain to find anything in the New Testament that would remotely be in common with Altizer's view of Christ. Henry had earlier made an evaluation of Altizer's proposal, which in light of Alitzer's statement the weight of Henry's analysis is felt: "Were all authentic forms of religious language grounded in a "dialectical logic"—a two term antithesis without any synthesis—not only would all final judgments about religious reality be precluded, but any universally intelligible judgments would seem to be excluded as well."[135]

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid., 3:234.

[135] Ibid., 3:231.

Henry's position is that all forms of logic are valid for all kinds of thought—whether pre-scientific or scientific, religious or non-religious—which have truth as their aim. According to Henry, there are only two ways of thinking, valid and invalid. If truth is the object of language discourse, then the logical laws of correct thinking apply to one's thinking at all times. This thought structure of which Henry is speaking provides the control for language. Language does not decide the role thought, but rather thought controls language. Language is connected to human logic and reason. Henry writes,

> All significant speech presupposes a regard for the law of contradiction; the admission of contrary meanings to the same word at the same time and in the same sense would turn conversation into a madhouse. Not even one who opposes a theistic view of language, and who thinks that logic has no ontological or linguistic import, can hope to communicate his notions to others unless speech presupposes the law of contradiction.[136]

This logical component of language has its basis in the *Logos* of God. Augustine in *De Magistro* developed a theory of language that recognizes the role that the Logos plays in ensuring the intelligibility of language;

> Augustine presses the distinction between words as mere signs of objects and truth as a possession of the mind; words, or signs, he stresses, are useful for communication only because the mind possess truth. The vitality of words in the Old Testament depends not upon some peculiar linguistic endowment and power thought to inhere in them, but upon the instrumentality as a medium of the revealed thought and sovereign agency of God. The Logos is the Reason, Logic or Wisdom of God and not a mere element in language analysis. While words depend on speech, Logos does not.[137]

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[136] Ibid., 3:235–36.

[137] Ibid., 3:238. Gordon Clark's comments are warranted at this point. In writing of Augustine's *De Magistro* Clark says, "Christ is the Logos or Reason who endows every mind with intellectual light. Christian theologians, even the poorer ones, have usually realized that in the moral sphere man is not borne neutral. 'Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.' Men are not born morally neutral, but are born depraved. Intellectually, also, men do not come into the world with blank minds. Inherited depravity only emphasizes the presence of innate moral ideas. . . . In addition to moral ideas, Augustine teaches that the presence of Christ the Logos endows all men with certain speculative or philosophic ideas as well. Communication, therefore, becomes possible because all men have these same ideas. . . . It [Theism] must assert that man's endowment with rationality, his innate ideas and a priori categories, his ability to think and speak were given to him by Go for the essential purpose of receiving a

Language is dependent on the *Logos* of God for its rational content. The Bible depends on a revelational basis for its communicative aspects. The Bible purports that God instituted language as a vehicle for interpersonal communication and fellowship. The Bible does not give a detailed explanation of the origin of language. Instead one finds Adam endowed with language in his communication with God and in his naming the animals. Henry cites Clark in his contention that non-biblically based conclusions on the origins of language are speculative conclusions. In the main they derive their theory of origins based on either evolutionary theory or sensory experience. In either case, the alternative theories have proven themselves incapable of explaining the nature or function of language, nor have they marshaled a compelling account of the origin of language.[138]

Henry chronicles the attempt by secularist to explain language. Many have followed Locke and Hume in their position that all human knowledge, linguistic knowledge included, arises from sense experience. Their position maintains that at birth the human mind is a blank tablet. Nature writes on this blank tablet and man is conditioned by what he sees, hears and feels. Secular language theory states, "Language emerges from his adjustment to nature, and by children imitating their parents' speech habits."[139] Evolutionary theory contends that human speech emerges as a complex

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verbal revelation, of approaching God in prayer and of conversing with other men about God and spiritual realities." Later in the same work Clark again emphasizes that the Logos is the rational light that lights every man. Since he was created in the image of God, man has an innate idea of God. It is neither necessary nor possible for man to have a blank mind that could be expected to abstract the concept of God from sensory experience. *The Works of Gordon Haddon Clark*, Vol. 4, 199-200, 203.

[138] Ibid., 3: 387.

[139] Ibid., 3:325–26.

development of animal cries. Language is deemed to be the result of "instinctual sound-making powers" of a merely quantitatively different sort than those of other species.[140]

The theistic view of the origin of language is that man was endowed with the capacity for intelligible speech. This endowment was given primarily for the communication between God and man and for the communication of truth. Even though Scripture does not give a detailed description of the origin of language, it is inferred from "the first conversation carried on between God and the first human justifies an inference that expressing his thought vocally was an Adamic ability from the very beginning."[141]

The theistic view of language sees language as possible because of man's God-given endowment of rationality, or a priori categories and of innate ideas, all of which precondition his ability to think and speak. Every mind is lighted by the *Logos* of God and consequently thought is the precondition of language or stands behind language. Clark contends that language has a specific purpose. God gives man the rational ability to think and speak. This ability enables man to receive verbal revelation. As man receives verbal revelation he can approach God in prayer and converse with other men about God and spiritual realities. Man is depicted in the Bible as being able to receive rational-verbal revelation by special equipping from God. Human language is adequate for theological knowledge and communication because all men are divinely furnished with certain common ideas.[142]

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[140] Ibid., 3:327.

[141] Ibid., 3:387.

[142] Ibid., 3:389.

5.9.2 Verbal Conceptual Language

The foregoing raises two important questions about language. If thought (God's thought) stands behind language, what is the content of that thought? Henry answers that God's thought is expressed in verbal–conceptual form. The other question that naturally arises is, what is the relationship between God's thought/language and the thoughts/language of man?

Henry starts his discussion of verbal conceptual form of language in the following manner: "The prime issue is therefore not whether human concepts and words are human, but whether—since man was made in God's image and God addresses man in revelation– our concepts and words can convey reliable information about God and his will. Do our conceptions of God in all cases originate with man?"[143] As Henry has been guided and echoes and in many ways develops further the position of Clark as it relates to verbal– conceptual knowledge of God, the univocity of language, propositional revelation and inerrancy.[144]

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[143] Ibid., 4:111.

[144] Gordon Clark's theological views took center stage in a well publicized controversy with Cornelius Van Til and his followers. Van Til was a major proponent of analogical view of language. Clark was seeking ordination in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1944. He was examined by the Presbytery of Philadelphia. He was ordained but only after opposition that can only be described as acrimonious. This acrimony continued in an effort to defrock him. At stake were several issues. The first issue was that Clark had never been to seminary which for some in the OPC was a stumbling block. More substantively were the doctrinal issues that were raised: (1) the meaning of the "incomprehensibility" of God; (2) the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility; (3) the doctrine of reprobation verse the "sincere offer" of salvation to the reprobate; and (4) the relationship of the intellect to will and emotions. Clark was not deposed but the controversy became a schism from which the OPC never recovered. For the purposes of this paper the import of the following works is that they highlight the difference from the Clarkian view (univocity) and the Van Tillian view (analogical). See Greg Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1998); Gordon H. Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God* (Philadelphia: Craig Press, 1964); and *A Christian View of Man and Things*; W. Robert Godfrey, "The Westminster School," in *Reformed Theology in America: A History of Its Modern Development* (ed. David F. Wells; Grand Rapids: Erdman, 1985), 101; Herman Hoeksema *The Clark Van Til Controversy* (Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 1995, 2005); Fred H. Klosseter, *The Incomprehensibility of God in the Orthodox Presbyterian Conflict* (Franeker: T. Wever, 1951); John Robbins, *Cornelius Van Til: The Man and The*

From the beginning Christianity is anchored by its confidence in rational–verbal communication. In the Incarnation, the fully revealed Word of God is shaped and truth is knowable.[145] This condition is facilitated because truth is communicated to mankind *via* the Logos of God. The communication is rational, in that God as a rational being has created man in his image and is therefore rational. Furthermore, this rationality is communicated through conduit of language. Standing behind language are thoughts or concepts. Henry asserts, "The priority of thought over language was well put by Wilhelm Windelband: 'There are plenty of logical principles of Grammar, but there are no grammatical principles of Logic' (*Theories in Logic*, p. 17). We are conscious of thinking before we find the right words to express our thought. It is the case of course, that almost all, if not all, acts of human thought contains some impulse towards speech, and that man's language expands his thought requires it."[146] This verbal conceptual framework is foundational to the communication process. It is impossible to even think without the employment of words. To think is to use words. When the question is asked if human concepts and words are capable of conveying literal truth about God, Henry answers with a very definitive, yes;

> All man needs in order to know God as he truly is, is God's intelligible disclosure and rational concepts that qualify man—on the basis of the *imago Dei*—to comprehend the content of God's logically ordered revelation. Unless mankind has epistemological means adequate for factual truth about God as he truly is, the

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Myth (Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 1986); and Bradley J. Swygard, "The Basis for the Doctrine of the Incomprehensibility of God in Gordon Clark and Cornelius Van Til" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1991).

[145] Henry, *GRA*, 1:36.

[146] Ibid., 3:236. Henry notes the alternative theories of Barth, Brunner, Paul Althaus, Otto Weber that proposed the non-cognitive self disclosure of God. These dialectical and existential theologians oppose the traditional view that God's self-disclosure does not reveal any information about God's nature, purposes or activities. Henry stands in opposition to these positions.

inevitable outcome of the quest for religious knowledge is equivocation and skepticism.[147]

To combat the possibility of equivocation and skepticism, Henry notes that the verbal content of the Bible presupposes a coherent system of concepts. Revelation is a mental conception. The divine disclosure that emanates from the mind and will of God is addressed to the mind and will of man. Any view that reduces the revelation of God to self-revelation, cosmic revelation or historical revelation is a modern view based on modern prejudices.[148] Standing in stark contrast to this modern view that seeks to emphasize the belief in the existential non-historical as a "leap of faith," the early Church was under no obligation to believe in the irrational or to resort to sheer faith in matters of religious commitment. The early Church emphasized that the divine prophetic–apostolic record was a rational–verbal revelation. Additionally, this divine prophetic–apostolic rational–verbal revelation and its objective miraculous attestation gave man reliable, intelligible and trust worthy information about God.[149]

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[147] Ibid., 4:119. Gordon Clark in analyzing Karl Barth's view on language and knowledge quotes Barth, ". . . human cognition is fulfilled in views and concepts. Views are the images in which we perceive objects as such. Concepts are the counter-images with which we make these images of perception our own by thinking them, i.e., by arranging them. Precisely for this reason they and their corresponding objects are capable of being expressed by us (II, 1, 181)." Clark's analysis of Barth's statement is that there is no conceptual language beyond the language of images. Clark identifies Barth's position as the "representational theory of truth: We do not directly perceive the object of knowledge; we perceive it only in an image. This implies too that the object of knowledge is not a truth or proposition, but a sensible object, such as a color or sound, a tree or a song." *Karl Barth's Theological Method* (Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 1963, 1997), 161–62.

[148] Ibid., 3:248.

[149] Ibid., 3:276. Henry argues that much of the modern skepticism about the adequacy of language being able to carry cognitive knowledge about God emanates from Immanuel Kant. Dialectical and existential theologians standing in Kant's shadow operate with the limitations of Kant's epistemological theory and *a priori* dismiss the cognitively ability of language to convey knowledge about God: "Much of this modern theological development stood in witting or unwitting indebtedness to Kantian knowledge-theory, which sharply limited the reality perceptible by theoretical reason. Restriction of the content of knowledge to sensations of the phenomenal world in principle deprives man of cognitive knowledge of metaphysical realities. Divine revelation on this basis can neither be connected with cognitive reason nor

Christian theology maintains that God has revealed himself in a conceptually precise manner. These concepts do not attain their significance because they are religious or technical concepts. Their significance comes from revelational meaning–content in the in context of intelligible sentences and propositional truths. The verbal conceptual component of meaningful discourse requires no dismemberment of logic. No alteration of the structure of human knowledge is required to make the intelligibility of divine disclosure a reality. The Bible stands fast in its depiction of God's self-revelation as conceptually precise and verbally expressible.[150]

5.9.3 Univocal Language

Does the language used in Scripture convey literal truth about God? Henry affirms that it does. He does in the face of alternative language theories that are based on the speculative argument that theology has a unique language and meaning. This theory argues that religious language has no literal significance whatsoever.[151]

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can it have eternal and objective grounding, since Kant's view excludes revelation in nature and history, as well as in an objective scriptural revelation. Kant's influence was reflected both in the dogmatics of German theologians like Albrecht Ritschl and Wilhelm Herrmann and in the writings of British and American liberals who preferred metaphysical agnosticism over Hegelian idealism as an alternative to biblical orthodoxy. God is for Kant only a transcendental postulate: he conceived metaphysical relationships in terms of ethical ideals for fully experiencing selfhood. Kant's denial of the universal cognitive validity of revelational knowledge became a feature of the theological movement from Barth through Bultmann. We should note, however, that by denying cognitive knowledge in order to make room for faith, Kant envisioned not what neo-orthodox theologians stress, namely, faith as a divine gift whereby man trusts the supernatural God, but rather a moral response that issues from man as a rational being" (3:278).

[150] Ibid., 3:302-303. Henry provides an interesting aside to this point: "If one is skeptical of language as a carrier of truth, one cannot verbally communicate even one's own skepticism" (p. 3:359).

[151] Ibid., 3:362. Henry in this section deals with alternative theories that stress the analogical, pragmatic, behavioral, pictorial, dialectical, or existential significance of religious language. Cf. *GRA*, 3:363–85. Geisler in reviewing *GRA* writes with approval while disagreeing with Henry's view of language: "This book follows in the typical Henry tradition. It is comprehensive, scholarly, and wordy. Henry gives a strong defense of the cognitive and rational nature of revelation in balance with the personal revelation in Christ. Despite its many excellent insights and its strong defense of orthodox Christianity, Henry's presentation is flawed by his acceptance of a univocal view of language. He struggles (unsuccessfully) to explain how human language is limited to finite concepts and yet persists in maintaining

To Thomas Aquinas goes the distinction that from his pen flowed the theory that language is analogical predication. The theory of analogy has two purposes: (1) it avoids the agnosticism implicit in philosophies such as Neo-Platonism which stress the incomprehensibility of the Ground of the Universe and the inadequacy of human ideas and language for the knowledge of God; and (2) it avoids excessive anthropomorphisms, which, when speaking of certain attributes of God (i.e., wisdom, goodness, and justice) tend toward projecting God in the image of man.[152] The Thomistic view holds that descriptive terms, when applied to God, are not used in univocally–that is, in the same sense or meaning in which terms are applied to other referents. Neither are they used equivocally. Analogically is the way Thomas views a mediating position. Thoughts are limited by the finiteness of the human condition. Yet, when used of God, concepts bear a fullness and meaning that extend beyond human experience and relationships.[153]

Henry maintains the univocity of language. It combats an obvious weakness of analogy. Henry writes, "The main difficulty with doctrine of analogy lies in its failure to recognize that only univocal assertions protect us from equivocation; the very possibility of analogy founders unless something is truly known about both analogates."[154] Duns Scotus challenged the analogy of Thomas. Scotus argued that Christians use univocal language when attributing to God such characteristics as being good, wise or just. For in

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these finite concepts have a univocal (one-to-one) relation with the mind of God. In his zeal to defend orthodox Christianity against agnosticism, Henry's view is in danger of sliding into verbal idolatry. After all, idols can be mental as well as metal. This weakness notwithstanding, Henry's work is perhaps the most comprehensive defense of biblical revelation in English" Geisler, Norman L., "Review of *God, Revelation, and Authority*, Vol. *3*." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138, no. 551 (July 1981): 274.

[152] Henry, *GRA*, 3:363. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q, 13.

[153] Ibid., 3:363.

[154] Ibid., 4:118.

the absence of univocal language, skepticism is the result.[155] Henry picks up on the

argument of Scotus[156] and Gordon Clark, who embrace the univocal view of language.[157]

> Analogy is, of course, a phenomenon of scripture, and both Jesus and the biblical writers at times refer to likenesses and dissimilarities between the material and spiritual worlds. That the human person bears the image of God and that the visible world mirrors certain of the Creator's invisible attributes are frequent emphases of Scripture. Yet the Bible does not argumentatively develop a doctrine of analogical proof of God. . . . Thomists hold that familiar predicates like love and father are not used of God univocally, that is, they do not carry the same meaning when employed of God as when used of humans. Yet they deny that he consequences of such thinking is equivocation or skepticism. Such predicates, they insist, apply to God analogically and therefore somehow involve genuine knowledge.[158]

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[155] Ibid., 3:363.

[156] Swygard, "The Basis for the Doctrine of the Incomprehensibility of God in Gordon Clark and Cornelius Van Til," 5. Swygard quotes the summarization of Duns Scotus by Norman Geisler, "In summation, there are only three alternatives in our concepts about God. Either they are understood equivocally (i.e., in a totally different sense) in which case we know nothing about God; or they understood analogically (i.e., with partly the same but partly different meaning), in which case we must have some of the univocal concept of God enabling us to know which part of the analgous concept applies to God and which part does not apply to him; or else the concepts must be univocal (i.e., having totally the same meaning) in the first place." See Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 255.

[157] Swygard, "The Basis for the Doctrine of the Incomprehensibility of God in Gordon Clark and Cornelius Van Til," 5–32. In this section Swygard provides a thorough review of the position of Clark. Swygard concludes his analysis of Clark's position: "Primarily Clark's concern is that any view of analogy falls short of the truth, because it is only an analogy of the truth and not the truth itself. Particularly, he finds fault with analogical language because it is linked to an *a posteriori* method, which for Clark cannot lead to certainty. For Clark, the inductive process fails even if it also involves an *a priori* as with Kant and Aristotle. . . . Clark writes, 'Without a univocal element an alleged analogy is pure equivocation, and analogical knowledge is complete ignorance . . . But without even one time in common, they could not both said to be know" (p. 30–31). See also Gordon Clark, *The Trinity* (Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1985, 1990), 63; *God's Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics* (Hobbs, NM:Trinity Foundation, 1982, 1987, 1995), 30–34. Here Clark writes in the context of explaining the necessity of univocity language, "Here it will stand repetition to say that if there is not a singe point of coincidence, it is meaningless to use the single term for knowledge for both God and man. Spinoza in attacking Christianity argued that the term intellect as applied to God and as applied to man was completely equivocal, just as the term dog is applied to a four-legged animal that barks and to the star in the sky. In such a case, therefore-if knowledge be defined-either God knows and man cannot, or man knows and God cannot. If there is not a single point of coincidence, God and man cannot have the same thing, namely, knowledge" (p. 31). Clark in *Religion, Reason, and Revelation* writes in refutation of the Thomistic argument of analogy, "Is it not obvious that a valid argument requires its terms to bear the same meaning in the conclusion that they started with in the premises? Unfortunately Thomas very clearly argues in other places that no term when applied to God can have precisely the same meaning it has when applied to men or things" (p.38). See Gordon Clark, *Religion, Reason and Revelation*, 28-110.

[158] Henry, *GRA*, 4:117–18.

Even though the doctrine of analogy is well attested (i.e., Thomas Aquinas, Cornelius Van Til although in a nuanced version from Aquinas),[159]Henry believes it creates more problems than it solves. Univocal language is possible and necessary in that man has been provided through the *imago Dei* a rational mind that corresponds to the inherent rationality of God and can receive God's intelligible disclosure.[160] This disclosure in univocal language conveys literal truth about God to man. Henry comments on the value of the univocity of language:

> The alternative to the historic insistence that Christianity conveys literal truth about God are hardly convincing and lead invariably toward skepticism. There is only one kind of truth. Religious truth is as much truth as any other truth. Instead of being devised for tasks other than to express literal truths about God, human language has from the beginning had this very purpose in view, namely, enabling man to enjoy and to communicate the unchanging truth about his Maker and Lord.[161]

5.12   Propositional Revelation

Henry has built the case that now moves directly to the defense of the authority of the Bible. He has shown that God has created man in his image. The *imago Dei* equips man with all that is necessary to receive direct and meaningful communication from God, and to have intelligible communication with his fellow man. The intelligibility of this

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[159] Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967), 39–46. See also Greg Bahnsen's *Van Til's Apologetics*, 220–26. Bahnsen provides a nuance to Van Til's position that in many ways is more readily understood than even Van Til stated his position, especially during the *Controversy* with Clark.

[160] Hutchens, "Knowing and being in the context of the fundamentalist dilemma: A comparative study of the thought of Karl Barth and Carl F. H. Henry," 210. Hutchens's analysis is helpful at this point: "The idea that the possibility of analogy founders unless something is truly known about both analogates rests upon the assumption that analogy is in fact mere equivocation in which nothing may be claimed to be truly known about the analogates. The idea of true knowing per analogium, common to Bath, the Protestant scholastics, and Roman Catholic philosophy is simply undigestable to Clark and Henry, for whom a direct, univocally predicable relation must exist between God and man, or no relation exists at all."

[161] Henry, *GRA*, 4:128.

communication is enabled by the *Logos* of God, who gives light to every man. Not only is man given divine enablement for intelligible communication but also he is given the very thoughts and words. The words are meaningful and understandable. They adhere to the laws of everyday language.

Henry continues to build his case for the authority of Scripture with his insistence on propositional revelation. This is a vital part of Henry's defense of biblical authority. Propositional revelation and then inerrancy naturally flow from Henry's revelational epistemology. God has given man the essential equipment to receive intelligible divine discourse. The non-propositional, non-cognitive view of revelation undermined the authority of Scripture and an attendant skepticism that was only growing exponentially. Henry set about to change this tragic course of events.[162] Henry develops his view of propositional revelation by first answering objections to this view, most notably neo-orthodox objections, and then provides a biblical case for his position.

In Henry's opinion neo-orthodoxy had set up a false dilemma with respect to revelation. This position offered by neo-orthodoxy was that revelation was personal as opposed to propositional. This view diminished the rational content of divine communication. Henry continues, "The controversy between Protestant orthodoxy and neo-orthodoxy focused with special intensity on the issue of the propositional or nonpropositional character of divine disclosure, that is, on whether God's revelation is

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[162] Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man*, 9. In the preface to his book, Nash sets the context of the importance of propositional revelation: "Evangelicals are beginning to drift from their former consensus about the indispensability and legitimacy of a belief in cognitive or propositional revelation."

rational and objectively true, or whether it is only non-cognitively life-transforming. Neo-orthodoxy emphasized that God's revelation is personal but non-propositional."[163]

Henry had been engaged with contrasting this view with that of historic Christianity since the 1940s.[164] Henry had always provided insightful analysis of non-cognitive/non-propositional revelational claims. Typically of this analysis is found in the *Frontiers in Modern Theology*, where Henry writes, "A type of recent modern theology inspired by Soren Kierkegaard and popularized by Karl Barth and Emil Brunner. It espouses radical divine transcendence; the content of revelation, it is said, cannot be rationally captured in human concepts and propositions, but can only be witnessed to in a counter-balancing yes and no."[165] Henry continues his critique of this view, exposing the controlling assumptions on which the non-cognitive/non-propositional views were based:

> Chiefly responsible for the tension in contemporary European theology is the speculative notion that divine revelation is never communicated *objectively*— neither in historical occurrences nor in intelligible propositions—but always *subjectively* received through submissive response. This assumption contradicts the historic Christian concept that divine revelation is objective intelligible disclosure. The classic Christian view, moreover, states the divine revelation is addressed by the Logos to mankind generally through nature, history, and conscience, and is mediated more particularly through the sacred history and Scriptures, which find their redemptive climax in Jesus of Nazareth. On this bais-of the accessibility of a trustworthy knowledge of the Living God and of his purpose in creation and redemption-historic Christianity emphasizes the possibility of personal salvation through experiential appropriation of the truth of God and of his provision for sinners. . . . In a word, then, the historic Christian Church has understood divine revelation to be an intelligible, objectively given disclosure, whether that revelation be universal (in nature, history, and conscience) or special (in the redemptive deeds and declarations of the Bible).[166]

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[163] Henry, *GRA*, 3:455.

[164] Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind*, 219–39; *The Protestant Dilemma*, 43–162; *The Drift of Western Thought,* 73–126.

[165] Henry, *Frontiers in Modern Theology*, 10.

[166] Ibid., 78.

In the face of historic Christianity, non-cognitive/non-propositional revelational theories expressly repudiated the objectivity of divine revelation. In its place these theories embraced and promoted the dialectical and existential view of revelation. Emil Brunner, along with Karl Barth,[167] was a major influence in the promulgation and acceptance of the non-propositional theories. His argument was that "we cannot possess divine truth in the same way that we possess other truth because statements in the sphere of personal truth cannot be stated objective truth (*Revelation and Reason*, pp. 371ff)."[168]

The neo-orthodox understanding of revelation severs God's personal and/or historical revelation from the biblical inspiration. The locus of divine disclosure is shifted by the neo-orthodox theologian from the divinely selected prophetic-apostolic writer to inner personal confrontation or to unique external events independent prophetic-apostolic

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[167] Henry, *GRA*, 3:466. "Among twentieth-century theologians, perhaps none has been more influential than Karl Barth in encouraging the disavowal of a propositional view of divine revelation. 'The real content of God's speech,' writes Barth, 'is . . . never to be conceived and reproduced as a general truth. . . . What God said was always different . . . from what we may say and must say to ourselves and to others about its content' (*Church Dogmatics*, I/1, pp.159–60)."

[168] Henry, *GRA*, 3:455. Nash provides a concise summary of Brunner's position: "Emil Brunner, following the early Karl Barth, maintained that 'divine revelation is not a book or a doctrine; the Revelation is God Himself in His self-manifestation within history. Revelation is something that happens, the living history of God in his dealings with the human race. Central to Brunner's doctrine of revelation was the claim that revelation is exclusively an event; it is God's breaking into history, into time in the person of Jesus Christ. . . . It is personal correspondence. It is an address and a response in faith as the individual is confronted by God in Christ. . . . Revelation is an encounter between two persons; God, in the person of Christ, and the individual" (*The Word of God and The Mind of Man*, p. 37–38). See Emil Brunner, *Reason and Revelation* (Wake Forest, NC: Chanticleer Publishing Company, 1946); *The Mediator*. Other major proponents who opposed propositional revelation William Temple, *Nature, God and Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1949); Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, (trans. Kendrick Grogel; New York: Scribner, 1951, 1955, 1979); *Myth and Christianity: An Inquiry into the Possibility of Religion Without Myth*, with Karl Jaspers (trans. Norbert Gutermann; New York: Noonday, 1958); *Faith and Understanding* (trans. Louis Pettibone Smith; New York: Harper Row, 1969); Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). For a summary of the historical development of theory of Revelation, see H. D. MacDonald, *Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study 1860-1960* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963).

inspiration. This neo-orthodox revisionism deprives the Bible of its objective textual authority and in its place is substituted a subjectively based personal encounter.[169]

This tendency to move the revelation of God to personal encounter/confrontation/response rules out a vast body of traditional theological affirmations. The neo-orthodox in their dislike of the propositional nature of revelation due in part to the truth or falsity of theological claims that inhere to propositional claims, have inserted existential hermeneutical properties that are foreign to the biblical text. Propositions, as generally understood, are verbal statements that are either false or true. Propositions are rational declarations that are to be believed, doubted or denied. Gordon Clark points to the fact that "aside from imperative statements and few exclamations in the Psalms, the Bible is composed of propositions. These give information about God and his dealings with men (*Karl Barth's Theological Method*, p.150)."[170] The prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ as well as the apostles communicated in intelligible sentences. Without intelligible communication—that is, communication that is rational has a bent toward logical validity and linguistic sensitivity—"it is impossible to engage in objectively meaningful human communication."[171] Henry emphasizes the expressed form of Scripture, "The inspired Scriptures contain a body of divinely given information actually expressed or capable of being expressed in propositions. In brief, the Bible is propositional revelation of the unchanging truth of God."[172]

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[169] Henry, *GRA*, 4:155.

[170] Ibid., 4:456.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid., 3: 457.

Henry establishes that revelation is propositional in nature. He does not leave unanswered the neo-orthodox claim that the propositional view diminishes the personal nature of revelation. Thesis Six says, "God's revelation is uniquely personal both in content and form."[173] Revelation is personal communication as it originates with a personal God. Revelation is inherently personal due to its conveyance in verbal-conceptual rational thought. At the very center of divine revelation stands a personal God who has decided to disclose himself to mankind. In the Old Testament, God revealed himself to Israel through his divinely revealed names. The Israelites were prohibited to use material representations of God, which was a radical departure from the surrounding cultures.

The personal revelation is compatible with and not in contradistinction to propositional revelation. God, who is the personal form and content of revelation, has of his own initiative disclosed the divinely revealed names that reveal his incomparability to other would be deities. This personal declaration is unfortunately carries with it baggage that detracts from its intended function. As Henry was writing *GRA*, personal revelation had the connotation of non-intellectual and non-propositional. Henry was quick to point out that the high-jacking of the term was due to theological assertions that derived their moorings from modern philosophical speculations alien to the biblical view. In fact, modern philosophical speculations virtually deny that God as personal subject takes any significant initiative in revelation. Only because it unjustifiably dismisses divine revelation as a category of religious knowledge can modern philosophy of religion

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[173] Ibid., 2:151.

discuss deity as an enigmatic cosmic X to be deciphered by human initiative and

ingenuity. What is discovered from Scripture is that

> A self ontologically other than the human self, a reality wholly different from the universe, stands at the center of the truth as God. The case for the reality of God begins not with human experience or speculation about the ultimately real but with God's self-disclosure with Deux dixit. When discussing divinity, God in his self-revelation is not a deferrable or disposable consideration; it is the sine qua non without which all God-talk is but human chatter.[174]

Henry writes that personal revelation emanates from a personal God who has

taken the initiative to disclose himself to man through his divinely chosen names that

disclose who God is to man. Propositional revelation is compatible with that personal

aspect of revelation because in disclosing himself, God wants man to be in relationship

with him. This relationship includes every area of life and for the successful living of life,

God discloses to man truths in propositional form that enable man to live as God intends

for him to live:

> The self-revelation of the living God is therefore not to be defined and curtailed by special theories that declare God to be "off limits" in the world of "external reality" and that seek to debar him from any objective revelation to man. only the superimposing of arbitrary views concerning the externally real world is what restricts God's self-revelation mere to internal confrontation. Only alien views concerning the nature and limits of human knowledge are what confine revelation to the inner non-intellective existential surd championed by recent neo-Protestant religious theory. It should be readily apparent that the one-sided neo-Protestant stress on divine self-revelation dims rather than illumines what actually constitutes revelational truth-data. The intelligible content of divine disclosure becomes unmistakably obscure when we are told, as by William Temple, that "there is no such thing as revealed truth" (*Nature, God and Man*, p.317) but that 'the living God himself' (p. 322) is alone at the center of revelation. Such theories create widespread confusion about the nature of revelation because of the conjectural bias that divine self-disclosure is best preserved by the exclusion of divinely revealed truths. In this misconception neo-Protestant theology does not stand alone. As Carl E. Braaten remarks: "Roman Catholic theology today is catching up with Protestant theology; it is no longer sure of what it means by revelation" (*History and Hermeneutics*, p. 117). Legitimate emphasis on divine

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[174] Ibid., 2:156–57.

self-revelation cannot compensate for illegitimate debarment from revelation of its truth content.[175]

Henry's articulate defense of personal and propositional revelation ensures the integrity and safeguards the intelligible self-disclosure of God to man.

5.13   What Role Does Inerrancy Play?

Inerrancy became the controversial term and the major point of battle in the "*Battle for the Bible*," in the "Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy," a major issue to which one must adhere to join the Evangelical Theological Society, and became the point of demarcation in the Southern Baptist Convention's Conservative Resurgence.[176] As important as inerrancy is, Henry did not make it the test of evangelical authenticity. For Henry, the affirmation of inerrancy was the test of evangelical consistency. From the historical perspective this seems a bit peculiar given the amount of literature that discussion of this topic has produced. Henry's defense of inerrancy in the estimation of sum was/is a hallmark of evangelical scholarship.[177] And yet it is Henry's articulation of

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[175] Ibid., 2:166.

[176] Some of the representative works that chronicle the role of the inerrancy debate in addition to the information covered in chapter 4 and chapter 5 of the present work are: Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, Paul Pressler, *A Hill On Which To Die* (Nashville: B & H, 2002); W. A. Criswell, *Why I Preach That The Bible Is Literally True (*Nashville: Broadman, 1969); Nancy Ammerman, *Baptist Battles*: *Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990); James C. Hefley, *The Truth in Crisis: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Garland, TX: Hannibal Books, 2005; L. Rush Bush, and Tom J. Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible* (Nashville: B&H, 1999). The *ETS* statement on inerrancy is: 'The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs." It is the statement for all who wish to join the Society must subscribe to and it is the founding principle. For a discussion see Gordon Clark "The Evangelical Society Tomorrow," *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 9, no. 1 (Winter 1966): 3-11. The Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States of America, is the denomination of the writer and the issues addressed in this work are of vital interest and importance to the author and for the larger denomination to which he belongs.

[177] Ronald H. Nash, Review of *God, Revelation and Authority* Vols. 3 and 4, *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 23, no. 2 (June 1980): 179–80. Nash writes, "Henry's treatment of inerrancy is probably clearer and more detailed than anything yet available. Evangelicals have not always

biblical authority and inspiration that lead to logical consequence of inerrancy (Henry's deduction).[178]

The major point to be articulated with respect to the Bible is its authority. Following the affirmation of the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, Henry defends its inspiration (verbal plenary). Inerrancy then follows as a logical deduction of its authority and inspiration. The beauty of Henry's logic is clearly seen in the layout of *God, Revelation and Authority*. In reading *GRA*, by the time the reader gets to the section on the authority of Scripture, Henry has made the case with his epistemology that one can easily follow his contention of the Bible's authority, inspiration and inerrancy.[179]

In establishing the authority of Scripture Henry realistically apprises the current situation in which he writes:

> The problem of authority is one of the most deeply distressing concerns of contemporary civilization. Anyone who thinks that this problem specially or exclusively embarrasses Bible believers has not listened to the wild winds of defiance now sweeping over much of modern life. Respect for authority is being challenged on almost every front and in almost every form.[180]

Given the built in resistance to authority that pervades much of modern society Henry offers a view of biblical authority that has not capitulated to modern forms of thought—namely, the loss of absolutes or finalities: "Disbelief now stems from claims that finalities and objective truth simply do not exist; the good and true are declared to be only revolutionary by-products and culturally relative perspectives."[181] Neither does

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distinguished themselves with their grasp of the philosophical and theological underpinnings of the faith. Henry's exploration of the manifold dimensions of the Logos concept ought to be required reading."

[178] Henry, *Conversations with Carl Henry: Christianity Today*, 8.

[179] Henry is not without his critics and the pertinent criticisms will be addressed in chapter 7.

[180] Henry, *GRA*, 4:7.

Henry settle for the functional authority view of the Bible. In adopting this view of biblical authority, those theologians who reject the authority of the Bible as the "final rule of faith and practice set up for the Church a sophisticated way of evading the role of Scripture as an epistemic criterion for doctrine and morals. In this way the church itself sets a precedent for the world in reducing interest in the authority of the Bible."[182] Henry's reply to those that propose a functional view of authority is that the functional view

> can provide no objective reasons why any portion of Scripture ought to sustain a living experience of God in Jesus Christ, or why such a living experience is to be found in Jesus Christ alone, or even that God. . . . even lives. Evangelical Christianity rightly emphasizes that the Bible functions as it does in the human life because there is persuasive evidence for the ontological reality of God, for the authority of the Bible as divinely inspired Scripture, and for Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Old Testament promise.[183]

It is into this cultural milieu that Henry returns to the historic view of Biblical authority.

5.14   Biblical Authority

The Bible is the authoritative Word of God because is the divine self-disclosure of God to man. God has spoken, and the Bible contains the codified word that God delivered to man. In his articulation of biblical authority, Henry followed the argument of B. B. Warfield, because in Henry's view, Warfield has given the representative

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[181] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:9.

[182] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:10. In *GRA*, 4:83-102 Henry gives an extended critique of the functional authority of the Bible. Karl Barth is the watershed theologian with respect to adopting a functional view of Scripture. Henry quotes Kelsey as he amplifies Barth's understanding of functional authority: ". . . in Barth's view 'the text are authoritative not in virtue of any inherent property they may have, such as being inspired or inerrant, but in virtue of a function they fill in the life of the Christian community.' 'To say that scripture is 'inspired' is to say that God has promised that sometimes, at his gracious pleasure, the biblical texts will become the Word of God, the occasion for rendering an agent present to us in a Divine-human encounter" (p. 84).

[183] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:101.

evangelical defense of biblical authority in his *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*.[184]

As has been stated, Henry views the authority of the Bible as the foundational position that inspiration and inerrancy logically find their basis: "For Warfield, the doctrine of plenary inspiration rests logically on the authority of Scripture, and not vice versa. Warfield argues that whatever doctrine is taught by Scripture is authoritative. Scripture is self-reflexive; it teaches even its own inspiration, and in regard to inspiration teaches biblical inerrancy."[185]

The early Church did not base the authority of the Scriptures on inspiration—that is the Spirit's supernatural guidance in articulating their oral and written teaching. The foundational claim of the apostles was that they were eyewitnesses of the historical facets of Jesus' life and ministry. Before receiving their commission as the authoritative verbal witnesses, they were persuaded by seeing the risen Lord. They had seen the risen Lord and were persuaded of the resurrection. During the post-resurrection appearances, the Lord then commissioned them to carry the news that he had risen to the nations. Henry highlights the eyewitness accounts, "Without the resurrection eyewitnesses there would have been no commission for world witnessing. Without the Spirit's guidance there

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[184] Henry, *GRA*, 4:69. See Warfield, B. B. *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. David Kelsey (a proponent of functional authority) has said in commenting on the importance of the biblical authority that "virtually every contemporary Protestant theologian along the entire spectrum of opinion from the 'neo-evangelicals' through Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, to Anders Nygren, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich and Fritz Buri, has acknowledged that any Christian theology worthy of the name 'Christian' must in *some* sense of the phrase, be done 'in accord with Scripture'" David F. Wells, "Word and World: Biblical Authority and the Quandary of Modernity," in *Evangelical Affirmations* (ed. Kenneth Kantzer and Carl F. H. Henry; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 156.

[185] Ibid.

would have been no divinely authoritative teaching."[186] The New Testament documents

come from reliable eye witnesses. These eye witness accounts have the same standard of

proof that any eye witness account has. Having been subjected to serious inquiry and

scrutiny the New Testament documents continue to stand as reliable accounts of those

witnesses.[187] In light of the competency and reliability of the writers of the New

Testament, Henry quotes Warfield with respect to the implication for inspiration: "The

general trustworthiness of the Scriptures can be validly proven, Warfield insists, and

therefore, 'we must trust these writings in their witness to their inspiration, if they give

such witness; and if we refuse to trust them here, we have in principle refused them trust

everywhere' (*Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, p. 212)."[188]

Henry fleshes out the implications of what it means for the words of Warfield's

reliable witnesses: (Commenting an exegesis of 2 Tim 3:15-16):

> If the purity of the Christian faith is guaranteed by an approved and authorized
> succession of teachers, it is established beyond the possibility of change on an
> unalterable bedrock of authoritative sacred writings. . . . Whether we take the
> passages distributively (every scripture) or collectively (all scripture), says Gealy,
> the main point is that the writer is concerned to emphasize the fact that the
> Christian faith is guaranteed by its inspired scriptures. Once written down, these
> become the standard for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in
> righteousness.[189]

The direct affect on the Scriptures is that they authoritative because they are

inspired. In 2 Tim 3:15-16, the writer has delineated the objective inspiration of the

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[186] Henry, *GRA*, 4:69.

[187] See F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

[188] Henry, *GRA*, 4:69. Barr's critique of Warfield and Henry at this point will be addressed in chapter 7.

[189] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:73.

Scriptures. The inspiration extends to their doctrinal teachings, which form a standard

whereby false and erroneous views can be tested. Henry says pointedly,

> Precisely because of its written form as inspired Scripture, the Bible is the
> permanent standard and norm by which all the church's doctrine is to be
> validated. Kirsopp Lake emphasizes that only those unlearned in historical
> theology can suppose that 'the infallible inspiration of all Scripture' is a modern
> fundamentalist viewpoint rather than the inherited view of the Christian church.
> 'The fundamentalist may be wrong; I think he is,' he writes. 'But it is we who
> have departed from the tradition, and not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone
> who tries to argue with the fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and
> the *corpus theologicum* of the Church is on the fundamentalist side' (*The Religion
> of Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 61).[190]

Giving credence to Lake's assessment of the role of biblical authority in the

church's history, Henry cites James I. Packer as noting that it was the spreading influence

of Kant's critical philosophy that resulted in the higher critical derived skepticism that led

to question the authority and inspiration of Scripture. There was no logical or historical

disproof of Scripture that lead to the growing skepticism surrounding the Bible. The

skeptical views of Scripture were the result of alien philosophical views that when

applied to Scripture lead to the questioning of the truth of the biblical record.[191]

The authority of the Scriptures are found in the fact they are divinely imparted to

specifically designated men who codified the verbal conceptual information that they

received from God. The authority of Scripture is not grounded in the life of the

community of faith. The revelation of God chiefly embodied and self-revealed in Christ,

attested by general and special revelation, including scriptural authority, as objective

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[190] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:75.

[191] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:81.

factors that cannot be reduced to mere "function authority." Above all the Scriptures

have been classically viewed as authoritative because they are true.[192]

5.15   Inspiration

Thesis Twelve of *GRA* states: "The Holy Spirit superintends the communication

of divine revelation, first as inspirer and then as illuminator and interpreter of the

scripturally given Word of God."[193] Henry embraces the historic position of the Church

that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. In spite of the attempt of James Barr to frame

the discussion so as to dismiss the Bible's assertion of its inspiration, the Bible does

claim to be inspired by God.[194] Gordon Clark cites the mass of evidence from Gaussen's

book *Theopneustia* (released in the United States as *God-Breathed*). Clark states that no

serious discussion of the question of inspiration can take place unless one first notes the

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[192] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:94.

[193] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:129. How the Bible is revealed to man has been and continues to be a topic of much discussion. The process of inspiration is of immense importance in understanding the doctrine of revelation. A representative reading of the historic position in addition to Warfield's *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* would include the following: Louis Gaussen, *God Breathed: The Divine Inspiration of the Bible* (trans. David Scott, 1863, ed. John Robbins; reprint Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 2001); Basil Manly Jr., *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration* (ed. Denise and Timothy George; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995); Clark, *God's Hammer*; John H. Gerstner, "The Nature of Revelation" *Christian Faith and Modern Theology* (ed. Carl F. H. Henry; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 97-109; Wayne A. Grudem, "Scripture's Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture," *Scripture and Truth* (ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983, 1992),19-64; Phillip E. Hughes, "The Knowledge of God: The Inspiration of the Bible," *Basic Christian Doctrines* (ed. Carl F. H. Henry; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 14-20; David S. Dockery, *Christian Scripture: An Evangelical Perspective on Inspiration, Authority, and Interpretation* (Nashville: B&H, 1995) 37-96; James Orr, *Revelation and Inspiration;* Alan M. Stibbs, "The Witness of Scripture To Its Inspiration," *Revealtion and the Bible* (ed. Carl F. H. Henry; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 105-134; John A. Witmer, "The Biblical Evidence for the Verbal Plenary Inspiration of the Bible," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 121, no. 483 (July 1964): 243-52. For a concise summary of the many competing theories of inspiration see H. D. McDonald, *Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study 1860-1960*, 218-87. Representative theories that opposed the historic position of the Church can be found in William Temple, *Nature, Man and God*; John Ballie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956); Karl Barth, *The Word of God and The Word of Man* (trans. Douglas Horton: Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978), *Church Dogmatics* Vol. 1, Part 1; H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: MacMillan, 1962).

[194] James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977, 1978), 260, 268.

elementary Scriptural data. Guassen in his book has collected passage after passage that attests to its divine origin. Clark's comment on Gaussen's book is noteworthy, "Let me repeat for the third time that the effect is cumulative. One should have in mind the hundreds of instances in which the Bible claims verbal inspiration. . . . If the prophets who spoke, if the authors who wrote, and if our Lord himself are mistaken these hundreds of times, what assurance may anyone have with respect to the other things they said and wrote?"[195] Clark had just referenced passages from the Old and New Testament where the prophets had explicitly stated that they were speaking not on their own authority but on that the Lord. More pointedly Jesus in John 10:34-35 is defending his claim to deity. In doing so he quotes Psalm 82. Jesus here says in the passage from John 10 that all the Scriptures, with Psalm 82 being a part of all the Scriptures, are given by inspiration of God and cannot be broken.[196]

Further textual support for the inspiration of Scripture is found in 2 Tim 3:15-16, 2 Pet 1:19-21, and the passage just cited John 10:34-36. The cumulative effect of these three passages is that (1) the Scriptures in their written form are a product of divine spiration, that is, are divinely 'breathed out' and therefore owe their unique reality to the life-giving breath of God (cf. Gen 2:7) even as man himself owes to it his distinctive existence. In this way Paul moves beyond simply apostolic oral instruction and asserts the permanent validity and value of the inspired writings; (2) the origin of Scripture is not due to human initiative, it is divine. The words of Scripture initiated by God are sure and accurate because God is the source and that specially chosen men spoke/wrote by the

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[195] Clark, *God's Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, 40–41.

[196] Ibid., 41.

Spirit's agency; and (3) in the passage from John, Jesus attaches divine authority to Scripture as a whole. Jesus' statement is a declaration that unmistakably attests that the entire body of Scripture is authoritative.[197] The clear testimony of Scripture is that Jesus viewed the entire corpus of Scripture as divinely given. The apostles viewed Scripture as produced by the Spirit of God (2 Pet 1:21) and as such provided a permanent record necessary for man's salvation and right relationship with God and man (2 Tim 3:15-16).

Henry makes eight affirmations regarding inspiration that he defends as representative of the evangelical position on inspiration:

1) The text of Scripture is divinely inspired as an objective deposit of language. (Henry affirms verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture. This view holds that term plenary signifies that the inspiration extends to the whole-not merely to the ideas but to the words also).[198]
2) The evangelical view affirms that inspiration does not violate but is wholly consistent with the humanity of the prophets and apostles.
3) The evangelical view affirms that inspiration did not put an end to the human fallibility of prophets and apostles. (Henry comments that in light of the critic's objection that this necessarily involves errant autographs, he replies that if historical particularity necessarily prohibits the communication of truth then it applies to the critics as well).

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[197] Henry, *GRA*, 4:133–35.

[198] Henry, as he articulates these eight affirmations, does as he has throughout the six volumes of *GRA* engages in the apagogic method of Gordon Clark, which is while stating his own position, he systematically critiques opposing views. In *Baptists and the Bible*, Baptist theologians and pastors are brought together in one volume to show that through the years Baptists have affirmed verbal plenary inspiration. While there have been a few within Baptist life that have held divergent views, Baptist have a long history in holding to verbal plenary inspiration. Basil Manly Jr., a student of Charles Hodge, advocated the plenary view of Scripture in his book *The Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration*, 53: "The doctrine which we hold is that commonly styled plenary inspiration or full inspiration. It is that the Bible as a whole is the Word of God, so that in every part of Scripture there is both infallible truth and divine authority." Dockery describes plenary inspiration as the view that reflects the Scriptures own testimony and the consensus within the history of the church. "This approach is careful to see the Spirit's influence both upon the writers and, primarily, upon the writings. It also seeks to view inspiration as extending to all (thus, the adjective plenary) portions of Holy Scripture, even beyond the direction of thoughts to the selection of words. Even though the writers expressed the author's unique style, background, and personality, we must recognize the element of mystery involved in this process, which does not fully explain the how of inspiration. The plenary view seeks to do justice to the human factors in the Bible's composition and avoids any attempt to suggest that the entire books of the Bible were dictated. We believe that this model for understanding biblical inspiration best accounts for the design and character of Scripture and the human circumstances of the Bible's composition." Dockery, *Christian Scripture*, 55.

4) The evangelical view also holds that divine inspiration is limited to a small company of messengers who were divinely chosen to authoritatively communicate the Word of God to mankind.

5) The evangelical view believes that God revealed information beyond the reach of the natural resources of all human beings, including prophets and apostles.

6) Evangelicals insist, further, that God is the ultimate author of Scripture.[199]

7) The evangelical view affirms that all Scripture is divinely inspired Scripture as a whole and in all its parts. . . . The historic evangelical insistence has been on plenary inspiration of the Bible; in other words, that Scripture is fully inspired. To stress verbal plenary inspiration simply brings out what this view necessarily implies: since it is written Scripture that is in view, inspiration extends the very words.

8) This view that all Scripture is inspired is the historic doctrine of all denominations. All major bodies have explicitly affirmed the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible.[200]

5.16   Inerrancy of the Scriptures

"The New Testament . . . clearly teaches the plenary inspiration of Scripture; that is, inspiration to the writings in their totality, in the whole and in the parts. These inspired writings are distinguished from all other literature in that divine agency accounts for their production and divine authority inheres in their teaching."[201] Henry poses a question, if the inspiration of the Scriptures as defined as extending to the very words and thoughts of

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[199] Henry quotes Warfield at this point in his articulation of concursive inspiration or as Warfield labeled it concursive operation. Warfield writes: "The Church . . . has held from the beginning that the Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that its words, though written by men and bearing indelibly impressed upon them the marks of their human origin, were written, nevertheless, under such an influence of the Holy Ghost as to be also the words of God, the adequate expression of His mind and will (*Inspiration and Authority of the Bible,* p.173). Revelation takes at times a form that involves the total personality of the recipient and communicator of it, a form which, in distinction from the Old Testament prophecy, Warfield called 'concursive operation' through the action of the human powers—historical research, logical reasoning, ethical thought, religious aspiration—acting not by themselves, however, but under the prevailing assistance, superintendence, direction, control of the Divine Spirit' in contrast with the 'supercessive action of the revealing Spirit' as in prophetic revelation." *GRA*, 4:159.

[200] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:144–61. For an articulate article on Verbal Plenary Inspiration see Lewis Sperry Chafer, "II. Inspiration," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 95, no. 377 (Jan 38):7-21.

[201] Ibid., *GRA* 4:162. Henry cites and then provides and exposition of 2 Tim 3:15-16, 2 Pet 1:19-21, and John 10:34–36 as classic passages that clearly teach the plenary inspiration of the Bible (p. 131–33).

the Biblical authors, can not the association of divine authority be anything less than

verbal inerrancy? In other words, if God has disclosed himself to man in intelligible

verbal-conceptual revelation, is there any other option than to assert that this

communication is any thing other than completely, accurately and precisely the intended

communication from God to man?

In answering these questions, Henry again puts forth the view of B. B. Warfield

as the evangelical representative answer that is most faithful to the historic position of the

church:

> Warfield insists that the Bible not only teaches the divine origin and full
> inspiration of Scripture but also explicitly teaches the doctrine of verbal inerrancy,
> thus disallowing the possibility of error in the text of Scripture. While not an a
> priori commitment of, the doctrine of inerrancy rests, he emphasizes, on what
> Christ and the apostles taught. But we know what Christ taught only if the Bible
> tells the truth. Warfield stresses that if the apostles are wrong in teaching inerrant
> inspiration, they are not trustworthy in other doctrinal matters (*Inspiration and
> Authority of the Bible*, p. 174). He so connects the truth of inerrancy with the
> teaching of Jesus and the apostles that a necessary forfeiture of the doctrine would
> undermine their reliability: The evidence of its truth is . . . precisely that evidence
> . . . which vindicates for us the trustworthiness of Christ and His apostles as
> teachers of doctrine (p. 218).[202]

Henry opposes any view of that opens itself to a view of errancy or a view

inerrancy that limits itself to soteric issues only. Inerrancy applies to the whole of

Scripture. Henry opposes the view that Barr proposes that inerrancy rests "solely on

philosophical supposition and has no rootage in the Bible."[203] Henry also resists the view

that Arthur Holmes puts forth that neither inerrancy is taught explicitly in Scripture nor is

it a logical inference from Scripture. Holmes writes that inerrancy is a "second-order

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[202] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:163.

[203] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:164. Barr develops his alternate theory in his book *Fundamentalism*, 72–84.

theological construct that is adduced for systematic reasons."[204] Henry also finds

defective the views held by Daniel P. Fuller and Dewey Beegle. Cumulatively their views

limit the claim of inerrancy to matters of salvation only. Beegle offers that in shifting the

line of defense from absolute truth to essential truth, the Bible is protected from the

alleged discrepancies and harmonization problems that opponents of inerrancy regularly

cite in an attempt to discredit the inerrantist position. Clark Pinnock, an early champion

of inerrancy, in later years began to question and redefine what inerrancy means. Pinnock

offered an alternate view that in an appeal to authorial intention the historical precision of

the text could be nuanced so as not to place on it the burden of historical accuracy. This

accommodation shifts the line of defense from absolute truth to a more nuanced view that

would allow for the writer's intent to be an excuse for historical inaccuracies, thereby

accommodation error in the biblical content.[205]

    In making the case for inerrancy, Henry positively states that "the prevailing

evangelical view affirms a special activity of divine inspiration whereby the Holy Spirit

superintended the scriptural writers in communicating the biblical message in ways

consistent with their differing personalities, literary styles and cultural background, while

safeguarding them error."[206] In refuting the claim that inerrancy should only apply to

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[204] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:169.

[205] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:179. Pinnock defended inerrancy in his earlier theological career. *A Defense of Biblical Infallibility* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971); and *Biblical Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971),were written in defense of the historic position of affirming inerrancy. Later Pinnock would repudiate this position. In article written by Rex A. Koivisto entitled "Clark Pinnock and Inerrancy: A Change In Truth Theory?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 24, no. 2 (June 1981): 139–51, Koiviston chronicles Pinnock's change from being a staunch defender of inerrancy to one who opposes inerrancy.

[206] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:167. A common misrepresentation of opponents of inerrancy is to make the unsubstantiated claim of mechanical dictation. Mechanical dictation affirms that the biblical writers acted as a stenographer who took down word for word the revelation from God. Gordon Clark in *God's Hammer:*

salvific matters and should not be extended to matters of history and science, Henry again

marshals Warfield who refused to acquiesce to any diminishing or limiting of the extent

of inspiration in its relation to inerrancy. The dangerous implications of

compartmentalizing theology and morals, sealing them off from history and science are

too great to allow to go unchallenged. To imply that God could deliver accurate and

precise information on theology and morals and somehow would not extend that same

accuracy and precision to historical and scientific matters attacks the reliability and

integrity of the Writer of the Bible.[207]

At issue is the question of the trustworthiness and reliability of the Bible. Can the

Bible be trusted in all matters that it addresses (objectively inspired truth) and not just

salvific efficacy? Barr overstates the issue when he alleges that harmonization of

apparently conflicting passages as a critical weakness of the conservative evangelical

position. Henry brings attention to the critical role of presuppositions at this point. Barr

claims that the fundamentalist approaches the hermeneutical task with an a priori

commitment to inerrancy. Henry's response is yes. While Henry has longed called for an

awareness and forthrightness about presuppositions, he demands the same for those of

Barr's positions as well:

> . . . one cannot both have his cake and eat it. One approaches Scripture either on
> the premise that it's teaching is reliable unless logical grounds exist for a
> rejection, or on the premise that what Scripture teaches is errant unless
> independent grounds can be found for crediting its content. Is the evangelical
> approach less principled than the view that the Bible must not be taken as reliable
> except where empirically verified-when in fact its supernatural claims and past

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The Bible and Its Critics clearly repudiates the dictation theory (p. 42–43). J. I. Packer gives a
representative evangelical view of the deficiencies of the dictation theory, "This 'dictation theory' is a man
of straw. It is safe to say that no Protestant theologian, from the Reformation till now [1958], has ever held
it; and certainly modern Evangelicals do not hold it" (*Fundamentalism and The Word of God*, p. 79).

[207] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:168–70.

historical events are beyond empirical accessibility? The constant factor in some non-evangelical interpretation may well be that Scripture should be regarded as myth when it speaks on its own, but this exegetical a priori is not to be dignified as objectively neutral.[208]

As Henry did for inspiration, he does for inerrancy. He puts forth both positive

and negative affirmations:

1. Inerrancy does not imply that modern technological precision in reporting statistics and measurements, that conformity to modern data, or that conformity to modern scientific method in reporting cosmological matters, can be expected from biblical writers.[209]
2. Inerrancy does not imply the only non-metaphorical or non-symbolic language can convey religious truth.
3. Inerrancy does not imply that verbal exactitude is required in New Testament quotation and use Old Testament passages.
4. Inerrancy does not imply that personal faith in Christ is dispensable since evangelicals have an inerrant book they can trust.
5. Scriptural inerrancy does not imply that evangelical orthodoxy follows as a necessary consequence of accepting this doctrine.[210]

Henry then affirms the positive aspects of inerrancy:

1. Verbal inerrancy implies that truth not only to the truth of theological and ethical teaching of the Bible, but also to historical and scientific matters insofar as they are part of the express message of the inspired writings.[211]

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[208] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:173.

[209] Henry is answering the charge from Barr, Fuller, the later Pinnock and Hubbard and others of their ilk, that non-salvific matters are errant in that they do not conform to modern scientific precision (a term that is used with the necessary reservation and skepticism). An additional claim from these representative writers is that the ancients were necessarily in error as their measurement standards are not in compliance with the modern standards (cf. *GRA*, 4:170–95).

[210] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:201-04. Roman Catholicism at the present (time of the writing of *GRA*) advocates inerrancy in the context of the Church's role as the supreme interpreter of the Scriptures. Jehovah Witnesses and other cults accept the inerrancy of the Scriptures (p. 204).

[211] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:205. Nelson Glueck, the distinguished archaeologist has said that in all of his archaeological investigations he had had never found one artifact of antiquity that contradicts any statement of Scripture. Henry repudiates Berkouwer's reduction of Scripture in *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth.* Berkouwer advances the position that Scripture need not concern itself with "perfect precision." Due to the limitations of human language and historical conditioning, really advances a non trust worthy inerrant text. Henry replies that Berkouwer's view creates an untrustworthy Bible by imperiling the biblical testimony to Christ on a an indifferent view of propositional truth that nullifies its Chistological emphasis that Berkouwer attempted to protect (p.189–90) See G. C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952, 1976), 211. Daniel Fuller advocated the view that in historical and scientifica matters the Biblical writers taught error. Henry opposes

2. Verbal inerrancy implies that God's truth inheres in the very words of Scripture, that is, in the propositions or sentences of the Bible, and not merely in concepts and thoughts of the writers.
3. Verbal inerrancy implies that the original writings or prophetic apostolic autographs alone are error-free. The theopneustic quality attaches directly to the autographs, and only indirectly to the copies.[212]
4. Verbal inerrancy of the autographs implies that evangelicals must not attach finality to contemporary versions or translations, least of all to mere paraphrases, but must earnestly pursue and honor the best text.[213]

5.17   Infallibility

If inerrancy applies to the originals, it does not follow that it applies to the copies.

Inerrancy means that there is no error. Scripture teaches inerrancy (i.e., John 10:34-36, 2

Tim 3:15-16, 1 Pet 1:20-21), but nowhere is there any indication that inerrancy is

extended to the copies. Infallibility is the correlating position that states that the copies of

the inerrant originals are not prone to error.   The question that arises from the extant

copies is not their inerrancy, but rather, are the copies fatally corrupt or are they

infallible?[214]

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that view. For a representative view of Fuller's view see "Benjamin B. Warfield's View of Faith and History: A Critique in the Light of the New Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1968): 75–83. Henry's critique of Fuller is as follows: "Fuller thus correlates plenary divine inspiration with supposed textual error in what the Bible expressly teaches in historical and scientific matters. His subdivision of Scripture into revelational-inerrant and non-revelational-errant content and his express contrast of revelational with the historical and scientific, moreover, involves and arbitrary and costly disjunction (*GRA*, 4:182).

[212] Henry answers the claims of some critics that the claim of inerrancy begin extended only to the autographs is in fact only more confusing and in some sense dishonest. Greg L. Bahnsen in "The Inerrancy of the Autographa" gives a masterful defense of the rationality and defensibility of extending inerrancy to the originals only and not to the copies. See Greg L. Bahnsen, "The Inerrancy of the Autographa," in *Inerrancy* (ed. Norman L. Geisler; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 151–93.

[213] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:205–10.

[214] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:220. Henry defines infallibility as not prone to error. "One may 'trust and believe' the copies because, although they are subject to incidental verbal variation and linguistic deviation, they faithfully convey the propositional truth of the original. It is not helpful to depict the infallibility of the copies as a matter of 'partial inerrancy'—a term fully as confusing as the notion of partial virginity! Linguistic deviation of copies from the originals is fluid rather than universally fixed; it varies with families of texts and within these families. Yet the copies are not error-prone, since error need not characterize all

Henry, again in his logical and forceful manner, asserts what infallibility means

and does not mean.

Infallibility of the copies does not imply:

1. Infallibility of the copies does not mean that prophetic and biblical extends beyond the biblical writers to the copyists or to the translators of the transmitted originals, let alone to the interpreters of the Bible.
2. Infallibility of the copies does not imply the inerrancy of the copies. Inerrancy is a divinely vouchsafed quality of the prophetic-apostolic autographs; it was a consequence of divine inspiration, of that special activity of inspiration whereby the Holy Spirit safeguarded the writers from error by superintending the choice of words they used. But such inspiration extended only to the original writings, not to transcripts or to translations.
3. Infallibility of the copies does not imply the personal infallibility of the copyists.
4. Finally infallibility of the copies does not imply the equal adequacy of all families of text, versions, and translations.[215]

Infallibility does imply the following:

1. That the copies reliably and authoritatively communicate the specially revealed truth and purposes of God to mankind.
2. That the copies unfailingly direct mankind to God's proffer of redemption. . . . The efficacy of Scripture is a consequence of the inerrancy of the autographs and is an implicate of the infallibility of the transcripts.
3. That the infallible copies and accurate versions remain the conceptual frame by which the Holy Spirit, Inspirer of the originals, and Illuminator of the transcripts and translations as well, impresses upon human beings their created dignity and duty, and ongoing answerability for moral revolt, and the differing destinies of the believers and unbelievers.
4. That the copies expound God's will and purpose and truth with clarity.
5. That the copies preserve the only sufficient divine rule of faith and conduct.

In summary, it may be said that although the copies are not inerrant, they are

nonetheless infallible, and that they possess this equality of infallibility because of their

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copies, is not constant in location, and does not distort the propositional and doctrinal teaching given by the originals" (p. 220).

[215] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:243–44.

perpetuation of the truth of the inerrant autographs.[216]

5.18   The History of Inerrancy in the Church

Henry has said he has done nothing other than defend the historic position of the Church. In asserting his position on biblical authority, the adequacy of human language, the inspiration of the Bible, its inerrancy and infallibility, Henry contends that he is doing nothing but citing the evidence from Scripture (as already examined) and now turns to the historical evidence.

By in large the question of the inspiration of the Bible is no longer in dispute. But with respect to the inerrancy of the Bible, the debate was far from over. Henry now offers conclusive evidence that inerrancy, while in his view is a logical inference from the authority and the inspiration of Scripture, is the view that was held by the biblical writers, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church Fathers, and the Reformers. The evidence that Henry cites is a direct refutation of the allegation of Rogers and McKim who allege that inerrancy was a theological innovation by the Princetonians (Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield) made in light of the writings of the seventeenth century scholastics, principally Francis Turretin.[217] Henry argues that the objections to the doctrine of inerrancy from a

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[216] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:246–53.

[217] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:368–69. Turrentin and his *Institutio theologiae elencticae* was so influential because it was used as a primary text at Princeton by Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge. Mark Noll has complied an anthology of the Princetonians' significant theological works and other Princeton theologians that were influenced by Old Scholl Presbyterian in *The Princeton Theology 1812-1921* (ed. Mark A. Noll; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1983, 2001). Rogers and McKim allege that in formulating the doctrine of inerrancy, the Princetonians were theological innovators. Inerrancy in their opinon was never held by the Church, at any point in its history prior to the time of Hodge and Warfield. See Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, *The Authority and Intepretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979). John D. Woodbridge has carefully researched the proposal by Rogers and McKim. Woodbridge has skillfully refuted the claims by Rogers and McKim and decisively discredited their allegations. See John D. Woodbridge, "Biblical Authority: Toward An Evaluation of the Rogers and McKim Proposal," *Biblical Authority and Conservative Perspectives: Viewpoints from Trinity Journal* (ed.

historical position arise from philosophical preconceptions. If one follows the evidence

from church history, the evidence clearly points to the acceptance of inerrancy from the

very beginning of the Church.

In looking at the evidence from the Bible and history even Emil Brunner, who at

one time held to the position that inerrancy was an invention of the seventeenth century,

came to the conclusion and admitted that "the doctrine of verbal inspiration was already

known to pre-Christian Judaism and was probably taken over by Paul and the rest of the

Apostles (*The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 107)." [218] George Duncan Barry even more

forcefully states, "The fact that for fifteen centuries no attempt was made to formulate a

definition of the doctrine of inspiration of the Bible, testifies to the universal belief of the

Church that the Scriptures were the handiwork of the Holy Ghost (*The Inspiration and*

Douglas Moo; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997), 9-64. Another attack on the historicity of inerrancy is found in the writings of Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*. Sandeen influenced many who have attacked inerrancy including Rogers and McKim, and Barr. Sandeen argues that inerrancy was a doctrinal innovation introduced by the Princetonians (A.A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, "Inspiration," ed. Mark A. Noll *The Princeton Theology 1812-1921*, 218-32) and elevated the belief in inerrancy to combat a defection by Presbyterians from a commitment to a high view of Scripture. Influential in their innovation was millernaian thought. The combination of millenarianism and the rising tide of fundamentalism (see chapter 4 of the present work) contributed to the pervasisve influence of inerrancy in Fundamentalism. Marsden asserts that Sandeen has over emphaised the influence of millenarian thought and has not adequately taken into account the theological and cultural factors that lead to Fundamenatliasm (see Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 5). Sandeen and Marsden began a polite repartee in responding to respective critiques of their opinions. See George Marsden, "Defining Fundamentalism,"141–51; see Sandeen's reply in *Christian Scholar's*, 227–32. Another aspect of the criticism on inerrancy as articulated by the Princetonians was the undue influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism. The alleged influence by this perspective is that the Princetonians took and adapted a rising paradigm in the United States (Scottish Common Sense Realism) and applied it to the doctrine of Scripture and formuatled their position of inerrancy. For a detailed anaylsis of the influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism on Princeton Theology see Sung Shik Jang, "Contextualization in the Princeton Theology 1822-1878: Scottish Common Sense Realism and the Doctrine of Providence in the Theology of Charles Hodge" (Th.M. thesis Westminster Theological Seminary, 1993). Jang argues that while Scottish Common Sense Realism was an influencer on Charles Hodge, it was the cultural milieu in which he lived. Its influence gave him, and the other Princetonians, the tools to communicate to their cultural context the historic position of inerrancy. For additional comment on the influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism see Mark A. Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," *American Quarterly* 37, no.2 (Summer 1985): 216–38. One can see the influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism in the theological method of Charles Hodge in the opening pages of his systemic theology. See Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology 3 Volumes,* Vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1872, 2003), 1–17.

[218] Henry, *GRA*, 4:371.

Authority of Holy Scripture, p. 10)."[219]

Henry begins his listing of significant figures of church history that affirm and advocate the doctrine of inerrancy: Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Athenagoras, Amborse, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, Basil the Great, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, John of Damascus. Any attempt to misconstrue the language used by Church Fathers in affirming the inerrancy (even they themselves did not use the term) is a significant departure from their articulation of the doctrine.[220]

The Roman Catholic Church teaches today the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Even though in the medieval period verbal inspiration was linked to mechanical dictation, Hans Kung who does not embrace the view himself, writes, "From the time of Leo XIII, and particularly during the modernist crisis, the complete and absolute inerrancy of Scripture was explicitly and systematically maintained in papal encyclicals (*Infallible? An Inquiry*, p. 174.)."[221]

Henry in analyzing Rogers' opinion of the views of Luther and Calvin cites that his analysis was not thorough enough.[222] Henry appeals to John Warwick Montgomery who refutes the often alleged statement that Luther only viewed as inerrant those passages with Christological content, who shatters the misconception of Luther by showing that Luther identified himself with the view held by Augustine: "St. Augustine, in a letter to St. Jerome, has put down a fine axiom-that only Holy Scripture is to be

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[219] Ibid.

[220] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:370–73.

[221] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:374.

[222] Woodbridge makes the same criticism of Rogers.

considered inerrant."[223] Rogers also has a defective view of Calvin. Rogers asserts that in

accommodating himself to mankind, God was not able to procure the inerrancy of

Scripture. Packer notes that typically the view that reduces the view of Calvin's view of

Scripture are taken from a small number of passages and leaves unmentioned the whole

context of Calvin's writings. In order to evaluate Calvin properly, Calvin's statement

from the *Institutes* (I, viii, 8–9) must be taken into account with other statements like his

exposition of 2 Tim 3:16. Henry's analysis is that

> Calvin speaks, therefore, of both divine revelation and condescension, and of both
> dictation and accommodation. What about the passages in which he seems to
> speak of error in Scripture? Packer insists that to attribute to Calvin a 'willingness
> to admit error in Scripture rests on a superficial mis-reading of what he actually
> says,' and that 'the evidence shows that Calvin's real view was the opposite'"
> ("Calvin's View of Scripture," p. 105).[224]

In looking at the seventeenth century, theologians believed they were continuing

the tradition of the Reformation in their exposition of the inspiration and inerrancy of

Scripture. They would have heartily disagreed with the Rogers, et al. in his assertion that

Princetonians would take their writings and invent the doctrine of inerrancy to suit a

theological/cultural agenda. In answering the challenges of Hobbes, Spinoza, Isaac de la

Peyrer, along with the deistic challenges and skeptics in general, Quenstedt (gives a

representative response of the time) wrote,

> "The holy canonical scriptures in their original text are the infallible truth and free
> from every error, that is to say, in the sacred canonical Scriptures there is no lie,
> no deceit, no error, even the slightest, either in content or words, but every single
> word which is handed down in the Scriptures is most true, whether it pertains to
> doctrine, ethics, history, chronology, typography, or onomoastics."[225]

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[223] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:375.

[224] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:377.

[225] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:378. Woodbridge brings even more evidence to bear with respect to the
widespread acceptance and propagation of the doctrine of inerrancy throughout the history of the Church in

The evidence is overwhelming that the consistent testimony of the Church has been to affirm the authority of Scripture, its inspiration, inerrancy and infallibility. Kirsopp Lakes' words ring even louder than before that the historic position of the Church is taught by Scripture and affirmed by history, and those that disagree with inerrancy have been the theological innovators.

5.19   Conclusion

This chapter has examined the major contribution to evangelical theology of the revelational epistemology of Carl Henry. Henry has laid out for evangelicals a ready defense of the intelligibility of the divine self-disclosure of God. God himself has given man the essential equipment to receive this disclosure. Contrary to competing views that lapse into either mysticism or skepticism, Henry solidly anchors his claims that absolute truth is objectively real and part of the transcultural, transhistorical self-disclosure of God. This truth is not dependent on evidentialism and the limits placed on knowledge in a post-Kantain world. Rather, Henry argues from a presuppostinonalist view, stating his presuppositions or axioms and then building his theological case from a clearly articulated position. Henry's foundational axioms are the true and living God and divine revelation. Henry asserts that a theologian must insist on truth and then demonstrate the

his article, "The Princetonians and Biblical Authority: An Assessment of the Earnest Sandeen Proposal." Woodbridge shows that the historical record does not match the claims of Sandeen and those that followed his research (i.e., Rogers and McKim). William Whitaker and William Ames were noted advocates of biblical inerrancy. Whitaker's *Disputation on Holy Scripture* (1588) was a seminal book on biblical authority. Citing Augustine as an authority, Whitaker unhesitatingly affirms biblical inerrancy, "We cannot but wholly disprove the opinion of those, who think that the sacred writers have in some places fallen into mistakes. That some of the ancients were of this opinion appears from the testimony of Augustine, who maintains, in opposition to them, 'that the evangelists are free from all falsehood, both from that which proceeds from deliberate deceit, and that which is the result of forgetfulness" (p. 255). William Ames is also cited in his support of inerrancy. The breadth of Woodbridge's research is worthy of note as he goes to great lengths to refute convincingly the proposal of Sandeen.

method for knowing truth. God had created man in his image (the *imago Dei*), and in doing so he gave man rationality. This rationality corresponds to the rationality of God. This creature-Creator relationship, while in no sense pantheistic, equips man to know accurately and extensively. This relationship between God's intelligible attributes and human existence in the *imago Dei*, provides a conduit between the indispensability of logic and human reason with a sovereign personal God, making the existence and the possibility of truth a attainable reality. But how does one know? What is the principle of verification?

Theological verification is not dependent upon personal faith, national or cultural perspectives. Verification is found in the Word of God. Christians through the ages have appealed to the Bible as the source for what correct beliefs and actions are and are not. In accordance with Scripture man has as his aide the laws of logic to determine the validity of truth claims. The law of non-contradiction is the negative test for truth and coherence is a subordinate test. These laws of logic are the way God thinks. Here the influence of Gordon Clark is unmistakable. Rationality is the way God functions, and is the way that God has created man to function rationally. This God– given rationality is the conduit through which God communicates to man and the way that man recognizes his world and the communication he receives from God.

God has communicated to man. This communication is two fold: general and special revelation. It is special or divine revelation that Henry lends his considerable theological mind to defend. In addition to using the *imago Dei* and the laws of logic to communicate authoritatively to man, God employs the Logos. The Logos doctrine, articulated by Augustine, but embedded in the Gospel and Epistles of John, presupposes

an intelligible order or logos in things, an objective law which claims and binds man, and makes possible human understanding and valid knowledge. Jesus Christ as the Logos of God guarantees and certifies human rationality and understandability of the Word of God. The correspondence between the mind of God and the human mind that is grounded in the *Logos* enables a human understanding of divine communication of truth.

Language, common every day language, is used by God to communicate objective truth to man. The law of non-contradiction attaches to words, for without it meaning would be impossible. According to Henry, there are only two ways of thinking, valid and invalid. If truth is the object of language discourse, then the logical laws of correct thinking apply to one's thinking at all times. With respect to the thought behind language Henry would makes this statement, the prime issue is therefore not whether human concepts and words are human, but whether–since man was made in God's image and God addresses man in revelation–concepts and words can convey reliable information about God and his will? Henry would say yes. In fact language is same language that God uses. When God thinks of a rose or says a word, he does so in the same way that man does. This univocal view of language stands in opposition to equivocal (there is no correspondence between the language God uses and that man uses) and analogical (that there is some similarity but it does not correspond exactly in the same way).

In moving toward a defense of biblical authority, Henry follows his views of language with the assertion of propositional revelation. That is, revelation is given in statements that can either be affirmed or denied. They are either true or false. He does not fall prey to those who insist on a false dichotomy of personal and propositional

revelation. Given that God has spoken in intelligible discourse to man in a propositional manner, the Bible is authoritative depository of that communication. Biblical authority is the first and most important concept to be defended from Scripture. If the Bible has been authoritatively communicated by God, then based on the Bible's own testimony, it is inspired by God. The Bible being inspired by God then can be inferred to be inerrant. Although this is a logical inference, Henry does not see inerrancy as a test of evangelical authenticity but rather consistency. The chapter concluded with a summation of the history of the Church and its assertion of the doctrine of inerrancy. Henry repudiates any claim that the inerrancy was a theological innovation in the nineteenth century by American Protestants to further a theological and social agenda.

CHAPTER 6   **CARL HENRY'S CRITIQUE OF KARL BARTH**

6.1   A Theological Critique

One important aspect of the enduring legacy of Carl Henry is his engagement and critique of theological methodologies. Henry possessed an intelligent mind that would quickly assess a theological approach and be able to ascertain if that approach encouraged or detracted from the historic position of the church. Henry articulated from the beginning of this theological career, a theological methodology that adhered to "the faith once delivered to the saints," but in doing so he was particularly adept at pinpointing weaknesses in competing methodologies. This practice was learned at the feet of Henry's mentor and major theological and philosophical influence, Gordon Clark. As has been referenced already, this approach is known as the apagogic method.[1]

Henry, in *GRA*, uses the apagogic method throughout the six volumes and over three thousand pages. This chapter will focus on the representative use of this method with the theological methodology of Karl Barth.

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[1] Wade, "Rationalist Presuppositionalism: An Exposition and Analysis of Carl F.H. Henry's Apologetics," 9–10. "Once Clark has demonstrated the logical consistency of Christian theism as far as he is able, he turns to rival systems to show their inconsistency. This he calls the apagogic method. . . . Henry also uses the apagogic method. In fact, his magnum opus, *God, Revelation and Authority* as a defense of evangelical Christianity and a refutation of rival views on pertinent issues is an example of this method." Christian theism would for Clark be the Reformed view of Christianity.

Henry references Barth more than any other figure in the entire corpus of *GRA* with over 214 references.[2] This chapter will take a representative look at Henry's critique of Barth in two areas: Barth's doctrine of revelation and Barth's theory of reason. The rationale for this review of Henry's engagement with Barth, is given the stature of Barth in twentieth century theology; his work cannot be ignored and must be addressed in any work addressing theology in the twentieth century.

Karl Barth was a towering figure in the theological field by any standard during the twentieth century. When he first burst onto the scene in the early decades of the 1900s with the publication of his commentary *The Epistle to the Romans*, followed by such works as *The Word of God and The Word of Man*, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, to the magisterial and massive *Church Dogmatics*, Barth has left a lasting impact on the contours of the theological landscape of the twentieth century.[3]

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[2] The author wishes to thank Steven W. Ladd, Assistant Professor of Theology and Bible of Southeastern College at Wake Forest, for the generous use of an index of *GRA* that he complied. The index is unpublished.

[3] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. E. C. Hoskyns; New York: Oxford University Press, 1933); Barth, *The Word of God and The Word of Man*; Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* (trans. Ian W. Roberston; London: SCM Press, 1930) (widely regarded as a bridge between the two editions of *CD*); Barth, *Church Dogmatics*. For a thorough analysis of Karl Barth's theological career see Gary Dorrien, *The Barthian Revolt in Modern Theology*. Dorrien provides an excellent summary of Barth's early theological education that led to his break with liberalism. He continues to show Barth's theological development of his theology of the Word and his impact on the theological world. See also Phillip R. Thorne, *Evangelicalism and Karl Barth*. Chief among those theologians that continue to carry the work and legacy of Karl Barth is Thomas F. Torrance. See his *Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990). Other representative works of Barth's contributions would include: Hans Frei, *The Doctrine of Revelation in the Thought of Karl Barth, 1909 to 1922: The Nature of Barth's Break With Liberalism (*Ph.D. diss. Yale University 1956); Frei, "Eberhard Busch's Biography of Karl Barth," in *Karl Barth in Re-View* (ed. H. Martin Rumsheidt; Pittsburgh: Pickwick Publications,1981), 95-116; Eberhard Jungle, *God as Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute Between Theism and Atheism* (trans. Darrell L. Guder; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); T. H. L. Parker, *Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970); Robert Jensen, *God after God: The God of the Past and the Future as Seen in the Work of Karl Barth* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill Co., 1969); Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979); G. C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace In The Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956); George Hunsinger, *How To Read Karl Barth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Bernard Ramm, *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983). Works

6.2   Rational or Irrational—Barth's view of Reason

Henry placed a premium on rationality. Rational thought is to be distinguished from rationalistic thought. The distinguishing factor between rational and rationalistic is that to be rational is to be as God has designed and equipped man. To be rationalistic is to take man as the center of his universe and rely solely on his powers of mental reasoning and observation in isolation from God. Henry has no problem using the rational capacities given to man by God. But to be rationalistic is to set the creature above the Creator and Henry would have no part in that. This is an area where Henry's critics attempt to find fault with his theological method. This will be a topic of discussion in chapter 7. Henry affirms the position that God has equipped man with rational capacities to receive a rational, verbal, conceptual self-disclosure. Man's rational capacity is part of the *imago Dei* and is wedded to the Logos that gives light to every man.[4] In looking at Barth's view of reason, Henry, following Clark, early on began to detect aspects of irrationalism.[5] In Henry's articulation on the intelligibility of the Logos of God he writes,

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that take a more critical approach to Barth's theology would include: Gordon H. Clark, *Karl Barth's Theological Method* (Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 1963, 1997), Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma*, *The Drift of Western Thought*, *Frontiers In Modern Theology*, *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, *God, Revelation and Authority 6 Vols*. A representative sampling of Cornelius Van Til's ongoing literary engagement with Barth would include the following: *Christianity and Barthianism*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962, 1974); Van Til, *The New Modernism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1946); Van Til, "Has Karl Barth Become Orthodox?" *Westminster Theological Journal* 16 (1954): 135–81; Van Til, "Karl Barth and Historic Christianity," *Presbyterian Guardian* 4 (July 1937): 108–09; Van Til, "Karl Barth on Scripture," *Presbyterian Guardian* 3 (January 9, 1937): 137–38. For a survey of those evangelical theologians that rejected Barth, those that were in critical dialogue with Barth, and those that appropriated Barth see R. Albert Mohler's, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Bart: Representative models of response." See Henry's *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology* for an incisive analysis of Barth's break from classic liberalism and the rise of neo-orthodoxy (pp. 30-83).

[4] Henry, *GRA*, 3:164–247; Nash, *The Word of God and the Mind of Man*, 59-69, 79-90; *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge*.

[5] Clark, *Karl Barth's Theological Method*, 62, 125–74. Clark as well as Henry note that in the revision of *CD's*, Barth backs away from his earlier emphasis on paradox (following the influence of Kierkegaard), but this retreat does not satisfy Clark's discerning eye as to irrational elements of Barth's theology.

"In recent years neo-Protestant theologians have focused on the Word of God as a living, divine confrontation of man, only to develop this emphasis on ways patently alien to the Bible. . . . They hold, moreover, that the divine Word of revelation, as personal, cannot be known as object of reason but has its reality only in an internal decision of faith."[6] Barth in particular is cited by Henry as holding that the Word of God is inherently dialectical or paradoxical.[7] Barth has a deficient view of rational capacity of man. While at one point Barth says God is knowable to man as a result of "language that is bound to the *theos*, which makes it possible and also determines it (*Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, p.16)," Barth fails to emphasize that this self-disclosure of God to man includes the mental equipment to receive that revelation.[8] Barth has ruled out any point of contact for knowledge of God. Man is finite and a sinner. As such, man has no capacity for comprehending the infinite and has no capacity for receiving the Word of God. The reason for man's lack of comprehension is that point of contact with God has been lost due to the fall of man. In *CD* (I/1, p. 273), Barth writes that man's capacity for God has been lost. Barth, even though he stated that he stood in the tradition of the Reformation, is at odds with the Reformers at this point. Henry summarizes the view of the Reformers, "The Reformers understood the image of God in fallen man to embrace the humanity and personality remaining over to sinful man from the creation and found here a point of contact between God and man and between man and man. For the Reformers the fall defaced rather than annihilated the image of God. They insisted therefore that the image

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[6] Henry, *GRA*, 3:164.

[7] For an analysis of the philosophy behind Barth's theology see William T. Riviere, "The Philosophy Underlying Barth's Theology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 91, no. 362 (April 1934): 154–76.

[8] Henry, *GRA*, 3:171.

survives the fall as a psychological, mental, ontological reality . . . an existing part of human nature . . . a capacity for faith not shared by a tree or stone."[9]

As Henry notes in *Frontiers of Modern Theology*, Barth "still disowns conceptual knowledge of God. While the logico–grammatical configuration of meaning is present both to belief and to unbelief, the religious reality is present to only belief. . . . The correspondence and congruity of out ideas with the religious reality involves no epistemological identity between God's knowledge of himself and our knowledge of him."[10] The early Barth in *The Epistle to the Romans*, wrote of a disjunction between pagan philosophers and their insistence on conceptual knowledge versus the personal revelation of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[11]

6.2.1   Kant and Kierkegaard

Barth in his early phase contended that "divine revelation is given neither in revealed truths nor in the historical Jesus, but is concentrated in interpersonal divine-human confrontation that elicits obedient faith."[12] Barth is directed in his reductionistic view of the verbal conceptual capacity of man to know God, due to the influence of Kant. Henry incisively and concisely shows the influence of Kant:

> Much of this modern theological development stood in witting or un-witting indebtedness to Kantian knowledge–theory, which sharply limited the reality perceptible by theoretical reason. Restriction of the content of knowledge to sensations of the phenomenal world is principle deprives man of cognitive knowledge of metaphysical realities. Divine revelation on this basis can neither be connected with cognitive reason nor can it have external and objective grounding,

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[9] Ibid., *GRA*, 1:397.

[10] Henry, *Frontiers of Modern Theology*, 69.

[11] Henry, *GRA*, 3:225.

[12] Ibid., *GRA*, 3:277.

since Kant's view excludes revelation in nature and history, as well as in an objective scriptural revelation. Kant's influence was reflected both in the dogmatics of German theologians like Albrecht Ritschl and Wilhelm Herrmann and in the writings of British and American liberals who preferred metaphysical agnosticism over Hegelian idealism as an alternative to biblical orthodoxy. God is for Kant only a transcendental postulate: he conceived metaphysical relationships in terms of ethical ideals for fully experiencing selfhood. Kant's denial of the universal cognitive validity of revelational knowledge became a feature of the theological movement from Barth through Bultmann. We should note, however, that by denying cognitive knowledge in order to make room for faith, Kant envisioned not what neo-orthodox theologians stress, namely, faith as a divine gift whereby man trusts the supernatural God, but rather a moral response that issues from man as a rational being.[13]

The other major influence on Barth that is pertinent at this point is Søren Kierkegaard. Henry cites the irrational move in philosophy and theology was a reaction against Hegelian rationalism. Hegel's premise was that "the real is the Rational." Unfortunately, from Henry's perspective, Hegel gave his position a pantheistic exposition that paved the way for thinkers such as Marx, Nietzche and Freud who stressed irrationalism.[14]

The view that came into vogue replaced both the Triune God and patterned reality. This view denied that rational and morality exists independently of human beings and rejected universal rational and moral principles. This reaction against Hegelian rationalism set the stage for contemporary philosophy that would revolt against reason itself.[15]

It would be Søren Kierkegaard that set into motion in Christian theology the irrationalistic trend that Barth would incorporate into his theology. Brunner cites

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[13] Ibid., *GRA*, 3:278.

[14] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:359.

[15] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:360.

Kierkegaard as the one who influenced dialectical theology by emphasizing a radical antithesis between reason and revelation (*Revelation and Reason*, p. 376). Kierkegaard depicted God as totally other in such a way that no human concept or analogy appropriately represents him. Kierkegaard then followed by rejecting univocal or analogical language as appropriate language models that could communicate adequately God to man. Henry quotes Kierkegaard, "If man is to receive any true knowledge about the Unknown (God) he must be made known that it is unlike him, absolutely unlike him. This knowledge the Reason cannot possibly obtain of itself. . . . It will therefore have to obtain knowledge from God. but even if it obtains such knowledge it cannot understand it. . . . How should Reason be able to understand what is absolutely different from itself? (*Philosophical Fragments*, p. 37)."[16]

As Kierkegaard was prone to use the term paradox it is readily seen in his view of the relationship of the rationality between God and man. Nowhere does Kierkegaard attribute irrationality to God. In fact, only God is rational as is his work. This is where the difficulty begins in Kierkegaard's system as Henry interprets it. Due to the fall of man and his finitude, the works and purposes of God seem irrational to him. The only way that man can know eternal truth is that it comes by special Divine revelation and even then it is in the form of absolute paradox. While Christianity proclaims revelation from God to man, Kierkegaard states that this revelation is not "a communication of knowledge in an intellectual sense which has to be apprehended by man through thought and reason; it is a communication of existence or reality to be apprehended by the act of faith

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[16] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:361.

(*Kierkegaard: The Melancholy Dane*, pp. 64ff.)"[17] Kierkegaard launched a period of theological irrationalism by asserting both divine revelation and irrationalism. In doing so Kierkegaard asserted that the ultimately real world cannot be grasped by reason, nor can it be comprehended intellectually, but is grasped in passionate decision.[18]

Barth would employ Kierkegaard's irrationalism in its deprecation of the reason by emphasizing that personal decision was of prime importance in grasping ultimate reality. Again Hegel was the focus of the revolt. Barth rejected Hegel's misrepresentation that man and the world are the rational externalization of the Absolute mind. It would be Barth, who more than any other theologian who was responsible for embracing irrational revelation in Euro-American thought.[19]

As already mentioned, the later Barth did move in a more conservative direction with respect to the knowledge content of revelation. But it was the early Barth who ruled out the possibility of all ontic statements. In the *Epistle to the Romans*, Barth asserted that God is completely unknowable. Barth emphasizes in an extreme way the transcendence and even the inconceivability of God. Barth in *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* (1931), would move in a more conservative direction by asserting that faith is a call to cognitive understanding.[20]

Henry does note that Barth even in his earlier writings showed genuine interest in the knowledge of God. God's Word is not irrational. Barth opposes Rudolf Otto's view of God as the "Idea of the Holy." Barth would write that "whatever else it may be, (it) is at

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[17] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:362.

[18] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:364.

[19] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:365.

[20] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:366.

all events not to be regarded as the Word of God, for the simple and patent reason that it

is the numinous, and the numinous is the irrational . . . (*CD*, I/1, p.153)."[21] Even as Barth

was moving to the more orthodox position as viewed from a conservative evangelical

viewpoint, he still came up short. Henry cites a basic intelligibility in Barth's revised

position:

> Despite his verbal assurance that theological theses and propositions are finally
> "adequate" to their object, Barth does not assign reason an adequate role in the
> knowledge of God. Correspondence and congruity between out theological
> predications and the self-revealed religious object do not, after all, turn out to be a
> matter of universally valid truths. The correspondence and congruity emerge only
> in subjective decision. . . . But evangelical orthodoxy does not depict truth about
> God as first created in the mind of the believer by the gift of saving faith.
> Regeneration itself involves a response to previously known truth about God,
> truth against which the sinner in his unregenerate state had maintained at attitude
> of revolt.[22]

Barth in his view of the *imago Dei* disallows any possibility of intellectual

capacity (reasoning or moral capacity) by which he can know God. Barth allows that

communication between God and man happens in sporadic acts where there are no

universal, valid shareable propositions (*CD* II/1, p. 229). Communication between God

and man occurs through "the sporadic creative act whereby God enables our concepts to

become adequate for knowing him is none other than the sporadic internal act of diving

grace on the occasion of penitent response; it is bounded by fore and aft by the

hiddenness of God (*CD* II/1, p. 244)."[23]

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:369.

[23] Ibid. See Thomas M. Smith, "A Critical Analysis of The Image of God in Man According to
Karl Barth" (Th.M. thesis Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1983). Smith concludes that Barth has erred
in estimation of the ontological content function of the *imago Dei*.

The result of Barth's view of the ontic content of the *imago Dei* has devastating consequences for man. Barth excluded epistemological identity between God and man. Barth disallows objective content to exist from God's revelation to our minds and our knowledge of God as he has revealed himself. He allows only for a partial correspondence of analogy between man's concepts, words and Gods (*CD* II/1, p. 227). As Henry argues for the univocity of knowledge of God, Barth makes no room for univocal knowledge of God even by the sporadic reoccurring miracle of divine grace. The effect is that in spite of Barth's argument to the contrary in relation to the miracle of divine grace on revelation and understanding, "his theology does not convincingly transcend the gulf that isolates human reason from knowledge of God-in-himself."[24]

6.3   Man's Mind and God's Mind

Barth being a representative of the early form of neo-orthodoxy had a deficit view of man due to neo-Kantian epistemology. Henry, in following the trajectory of his theological system, that being founded on two axioms of (1) the ontological axiom– the one living God, and (2) the epistemological axiom–divine revelation, has a divinely inspired view of man. Henry is not left to rationalistic, mystical, or existential alternatives in developing an anthropology that leads to skepticism. Rather, Henry understands that because of divine revelation man is created as "a rational-moral-spiritual creature made in the divine image, a responsible creature uniquely lighted by the Logos (John 1:9a). He is to think God's thoughts after him and is morally accountable for his knowledge of the truth and of the good."[25]

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[24] Henry, *GRA*, 5:370.

[25] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:382.

Contrary to Barth et al. who viewed the incomprehensibility of God renders him unknowable, Henry adheres to the biblical view that man does not merely possess the image of God, but is the image of God. As such, man has reason that is made possible by the Supreme Reason. Man's mind and the faculty of reason are connected to the Divine intelligence and not solely dependent on a sensory dependence to the external world or a subjective knowledge of an inner psychological world. Man is a finite and fallen creature. Man's knowledge is dependent and derivative. But this condition does not render impossible the objective and real knowledge of God. God has compensated for man's limitations in the giving of divine revelation that is knowable.[26]

6.4   Propositional or Personal—Barth's Doctrine of Revelation

Henry viewed the interrelationship between reason and revelation as two sides of the same coin. Both came from God and both were given to man. God equipped man with reasoning ability that allowed for the successful communication between God and man. Revelation, the divine self-disclosure at the initiative of God, was given to man to so that he could know the will and purpose and more importantly who is God is and how to know and relate to God. Having seen the contrast between Henry and Barth on their respective views of reason, it becomes apparent that the divide only widens with respect to revelation.

Henry's position is that revelation is essential rational. The revelation from God is given to man in propositional form. Barth denied both of these of attributes of revelation. Mohler writes of Barth's position, "Barth's rejection of the inherent rationality of revelation, his insistence on the impossibility of speaking of God, and his disparagement

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[26] Ibid., *GRA*, 5:383–85.

of language doomed his theology to an irrational ambiguity."[27] Henry cites from Barth's

CD the very irrationality that crippled Barth's theology from wider appropriation:

> Barth reflects an indebtedness to contemporary language theory when he insists that "there is not . . . a pure conceptual language which leaves the inadequate language of images behind, and which is, as such, the language of truth" (CD II/1, p. 195); indeed he asserts that "in fact, the language of the strictest conceptuality participates in the inadequacy of all human languages' (ibid.). Elsewhere Barth asserts that "our words require a complete change of meaning, even to the extent of becoming the very opposite in sense, if in their application to God they are not to lead us astray" (*CD*, II/1, p. 307).[28]

It is apparent from Barth's perspective the inherent necessity of a continuing, if albeit

sporadic, act of divine grace in God's communication to man. Henry quotes Barth again

to further drive home the irrationality of Barth's argument:

> The real content of God's speech is . . . never to be conceived and reproduced as a general truth. We may and must of course . . . work with definite general conceptual material, apparently repeating and anticipating what God has said . . . We may do this in words or our own coining or in Scripture quotations. However in that case we must continually be reflecting that this conceptual material is our own work, and not to be confused with the fullness of the Word of God itself. . . . What God said was always different . . . from what we may say and must say to ourselves and to others about its content (*CD*, I/1, pp.156–60).[29]

Henry's assessment of this passage is representative of the break that Henry has

with Barth. Barth does not allow for propositional truth, a position that Henry, as cited

earlier in chapter 5, defends as essential for any cognitive information to be shared from

God to man. As Henry has argued that propositional statements are not exhaustive of

truth, but all truth must have some propositional expression in order to be intelligible and

communicative.[30]

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[27] Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 124.

[28] Henry, *GRA*, 3:290.

[29] Ibid., *GRA*, 3:466.

[30] Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response," 126.

There is no basis in the Scriptures for Barth's theory that divine revelation is nonpropositional, personal truth. Since Barth contends that dogmas are to strive inwardly toward and event and are not to be confused propositionally with dogma—or for that matter with Scripture—does he not therefore reduce Scripture to irrelevance? Must not the dogmatic statements of Scripture then also "strive" for an inner meaning? And for what "inner meaning" are the virgin birth or resurrection narratives to strive?[31]

Furthermore, cognitive skepticism is unavoidable. Under Barth's position there is no true knowledge of God. Henry does recognize a change between the early and the later Barth (cf., *GRA*, 3:466), but then Barth, characteristically as Gordon Clark would say, says the exact opposite of what he has said at another point. Henry cites (*CD*, I/2, p. 499), "it is quite impossible that there should be a direct identity between the human word of Holy Scripture and the Word of God." Later Barth writes, "God's revelation is authentic information about God because it is first-hand information" (*CD*, II/1, p.210).[32] This is but one of many instances (cf. Clark's *Karl Barth's Theological Method*, 125–74) of Barth writing contradictory statements in his theological works that lead Henry to conclude "he [Barth] can only be charged with colossal inconsistency."[33]

6.4.1   Biblical Authority and Rejection of the Inerrancy

Henry along with other evangelicals applauded Barth when they found common ground. Such was the case with Barth's affirmation of biblical authority. Barth's "theology of the Word of God" is just such an instance. Henry wrote "Barth's bold effort to revive a theology of the Word of God faltered when he refused to identify the

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[31] Henry, *GRA*, 3:468.

[32] Henry, *GRA*, 3:466

[33] Ibid., *GRA*, 3:467.

scriptural word with God's Word."[34] While the Bible became once again a subject of

prime importance, Henry et al did not shy away from citing failures, in their estimation,

of Barth's *Wort*-theology.[35] There are two primary deficiencies that Henry cites as

undermining Barth's theology and in part were the causes that Barth's theology could not

stem the rising tide of Bultmannism.[36] These deficiencies arise from two irreconcilable

axioms: (1) Scripture is errant in the original; (2) Scripture is the authoritative Word.[37]

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[34] Carl F. H. Henry, "Where is Modern Theology Going?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1968): 10.

[35] Henry, *Frontiers of Modern Theology*, 66. Henry in 2n writes, "The 'theology of the Word of God' became a descriptive summary phrase for Barth's dogmatics, in view of the appeal by crisis-theologians to divine transcendence, initiative, and disclosure-especially to the God who both acts and speaks. But the dialectical character of revelation, as Barth defined it, precluded an identification of this Word with Scripture. In contrast to the teaching of Jesus (John 10:35) and Paul (1 Thess. 2:13), the crisis theologians demeaned Scripture to 'witness' to the Word, rather than recognizing it as the Word written." Miner Broadhead Sterns recounts the development of what has become known as Barthianism in "Protestant Theology since 1700 (Part Two)," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 105, no. 417 (January 1948): 59–81. "For Barth the Word of God is Christ, not the Bible. The Word of God is addressed to man in a threefold way: in preaching, in Scripture, and in revelation.[13] The last-named seems to mean the *coming* of the Word of God to man. The fact that Barth puts preaching and Scripture on the same level as means through which the Word of God comes to man is revealing as to his view of Scripture. When God speaks to a man through the Bible, then that is the Word of God to him. Of course, Barth is right in holding that a man may read the Bible without God's speaking to him through it; but he is wrong in thinking that the Bible is not God's Word in that case. Barth has made a radical separation between reason and revelation which is very fine, but he pushes the consequences much too far" (p.70).

[36] Ibid., 30. "Why was the theology of Karl Barth unable to stem the tide of Rudolf Bultmann's theories?" Henry's answer can be found in his quote that he takes from Wilfried D. Joest, "A wide gulf separates the emphasis that God has not objective reality at all, but exists only for me, from the emphasis that concedes that there is no objective revelation, yet asserts an objective reality that cannot be objectified by methods of reason and must be won by faith" (pp. 30-31).

[37] Mohler, "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative models of response,"128. "Henry did not suggest that Barth denied the authority of the biblical revelation. Indeed, he granted that Barth was capable of granting scripture the most sweeping authority within his dogmatic system. Nevertheless, this authority was granted the text only by the theological contortion of affirming "two irreconcilable axioms." The first axiom, that scripture was errant in the original, was held by Barth in one form or another throughout his dogmatic phase. On the other hand, in seeking to construct a theology of the Word, Barth was forced to grant scripture the authoritative status inerrancy assumes; the second axiom. In Henry's view, Barth's assumption of these two incompatible axioms, with an errant yet authoritative Word, rendered his dogmatics a mass of revelatory confusion."

The first axiom, the errancy of the originals, undermines the second axiom, the authority of the Word. Barth insists that Scripture is errant. Barth believes this is necessarily so due to the limits of his epistemological and anthropological views:

> The writers, he [Barth] says, may have used an "antiquated numbers-symbolics or number mysticism, whereby arithmetical errors, whimsies and impossibilities may have crept in" (I/2, p. 51), and "the fact that the statement that 'God reveals himself' is the confession of a miracle that has happened certainly does not imply a blind credence in all the miracle stories in the Bible. . . . It is really not laid upon us to listen to its testimony when we actually hear it" (*CD*, I/2, p. 65). . . . Barth deplores as "very 'naturalistic'" the postulate that "the Bible . . . must not contain human error in any of its verses' (*CD*, I/2, p. 525). He attributes error to prophets and apostles in their authoritative teaching: "The prophets and apostles as such even in their office," he states, "were historical men as we are, and . . . actually guilty of error in their spoken and written word (*CD*, I/2, pp. 528-529). The error that Barth ascribes to Scripture, moreover, is not limited to its historical details, but stretches even to its religious or theological teaching. "The vulnerability of the Bible, i.e., its capacity for error, also extends to its religious or theological content" (*CD*, I/2, p. 509). "There are obvious . . . contradictions —e.g. between the Law and the prophets, between John and the Synoptists, between Paul and James. . . . Within certain limits they are all vulnerable and therefore capable of error even in respect of religion and theology" (*CD*, I/2, pp. 509-510; cf. also III/1, p. 80).[38]

Barth's a priori insistence on the errancy of Scripture is an obstacle that Henry, a champion of Biblical authority and inerrancy, could not countenance. Barth denied inerrancy due to his insistence that the human witnesses to revelation were necessarily fallible. Scripture, while not objectively revelation, is a witness to revelation that is free from error. Scripture as the vessel of revelation does contain errors, and necessarily so. Henry predictably responds, "If the Bible is thus humanly fallible, and necessarily so, as Barth contends, what sense does it make to insist, as he does, on its divine infallibility."[39]

Henry's criticism of Barth exposes his position at a very vulnerable point. Barth has asserted that the Bible as a witness to God's revelation does not give man any divine

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[38] Henry, *GRA*, 4:196.

[39] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:197.

"revealedness" in any sense. The Bible does not impart revelation to man. Barth writes, "How can it be witness of divine revelation, if the actual purpose, act and decision of God . . . is dissolved in the Bible into a sum total of truth abstracted . . . and . . . propounded to us as truths of . . . revelation? If it tries to be more than witness, to be direct impartation, will it not keep us from the best, the one real thing, which God intends to tell us and give us and which we ourselves need? (*CD*, I/2, p. 507)."[40]

Barth has missed the essential question. Henry says the question is not whether the Scriptures are mediated through chosen writers, but whether divine revelation is mediated in the form of truths through the prophetic-apostolic writings which communicate accurate truth about God to man? For Barth the answer is, no. This position highlights Barth's irrationalism. For Barth to maintain this position, one of two things must necessarily be the case: (1) God's revelation does not involve rational communication, which would mean that there would no way of determining if God intended to tell man anything or what he in fact decided to tell man; (2) Barth must withdraw his contention that divine revelation as witnessed to the written Scripture necessarily conceals the truth, or embrace unequivocally rational revelation.[41]

Barth consistently claimed that he stood in line with the Reformers. He stated that it was the post-Reformation conception of verbal inspiration and inerrancy that froze the understanding of the Bible and removed the continual, sporadic act of divine grace that brought man into confrontation with the Word of God. "This post-Reformation view transformed it [the Bible] from a statement about the free grace of God into a statement

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[40] Ibid., *GRA,* 4:198.

[41] Ibid.

about the nature of the Bible as exposed to human inquiry brought under human control."[42] The loss of mystery in the Scriptures due post-Reformation doctrinal changes to verbal inspiration reduced the Bible to the status of inquiry as any other historical document and ushered in an emergence of secularization with respect to biblical studies. Henry's comment on this statement was that is was the product of a "deficient view of post-Reformation history." It was not the Deists or naturalists who asserted the divine authority of Scripture and verbal inspiration. Rather, as Clark has pointed out that secularization precludes belief in the verbal inspiration of Scripture.[43]

Henry summarizes the foundational problem that he sees in Barth's view of the doctrine of revelation:

> The difficulty lies not in Barth's appeal to divine revelation as the basic axiom of the Christian faith. It lies, rather in his presuming to derive two incompatible positions from the appeal, positions which from the outset ought to be seen as incompatible and contradictory. The axiom that the Bible contains errors and contradictions cannot be reconciled with the axiom that he prophetic-apostolic writings are the Word of God. Barth, in other words, develops his theology in terms of irreconcilable axioms. By trying to maintain these positions side by side, or emphasizing now one view and then the other, Barth burdens his *Church Dogmatics* with confusion. By respecting the law of contradiction, he could and would have avoided irrational tendencies. The difficulties of Bath's exposition can be overcome only by closing the gap, as Scripture itself does, between divine revelation and the prophetic-apostolic writings, between the Word of God and the Bible.[44]

6.5   Conclusion

This chapter has examined Henry's critique of Karl Barth's view of the role of reason and his doctrine of revelation. Henry finds that Barth has a defective

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[42] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:199.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., *GRA*, 4:200.

epistemological, anthropological, and view of the content of revelation. The foundational reason for these deficiencies is Barth's commitment to a Kantian epistemology and Kierkegaardian irrationalism that denied a rational conceptual content to God's divine disclosure to man. While God is not irrational, per Kierkegaard, God's communication and acts seem irrational to man. Concurrent with the limitations that Barth set on God's ability to communicate to man, was the inability of man to receive this communication, hence the notion that God's communication seems irrational to man.

Not only is there inherent epistemological and anthropological limitations that man faces, but Barth in his doctrine of revelation is committed to two irreconcilable axioms: (1) an errant Scripture in the originals and (2) the authority of the Word. In these two axioms, Henry sees the irrationalism of Barth coming again to the surface. Henry asks the question: Why should Scripture be afforded the authority that only inerrancy can give it Barth, by having an a priori commitment to errancy (i.e., the original Scriptures necessarily contain errors), Barth then makes a leap of faith by declaring that the Bible has authority. This authority is contained in that infallible revelation is contained in the Bible even though it contains errors in all material issues. Henry's commitment to a rational view of man and the verbal conceptual nature of divine revelation is at odds with Barth's view. Consequently, Henry does not find compatibility between Barth's view of reason and revelation and evangelicalism. However, it is Henry's commitment to rationalism that has brought Henry under fire. This criticism of Henry will be the focus of chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7   Henry, His Critics, and His Legacy

As in much of life, one's perspective determines if there is a positive or negative assessment of the particular situation. So it is with Carl F. H. Henry. Depending on who is being asked, Henry is lauded as the leading evangelical theologian of the twentieth century, or deplored as the one who brought back a form of turgid scholasticism. This chapter will examine the principle criticism of Henry and his theological method, and then will look to what legacy he has left.

7.1   Henry and His Critics

The criticism that is most often leveled at Henry is that he has employed an alien epistemology in his theology that is more Cartesian than biblical. He has been called rationalistic and a modernist.[1] Typical of this type of criticism can be seen in the comments from William J. Abraham. In his book *The Coming Great Revival: Recovering the Full Evangelical Tradition,* Abraham, in criticizing the evangelical position of inerrancy, describes the debate about inerrancy as sterile and scholastic. The debate surrounding inerrancy is a millstone around the neck of evangelicalism, drowning the movement needlessly in a sea of divisive, defensive, theological rhetoric.

> When one looks critically at the benchmark of systematic theology within evangelical circles, Carl F. H. Henry's six-volume work, *God, Revelation, and Authority*. . . . This work represents the distillation of a whole generation's labor and has rightly been lauded

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[1] Chad Owen Brand, "Is Carl Henry a Modernist? Rationalism and Foundationalism in Post-War Evangelical Theology," 44-60; Thomas Reginald McNeal, "A Critical Analysis of the Doctrine of God in the Theology of Carl F. H. Henry" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986).

as the most important work of evangelical theology in modern times. Henry, as we have seen, was one of the key architects of modern evangelical orthodoxy and he is generally regarded as the dean of evangelical theologians. Yet the climax of his work is deeply disappointing. One looks in vain here for a fresh, invigorating expression of the Christian gospel. There is nothing here that humbles the soul before God, drives one to Christ in fresh love and adoration, inspires one to love one's neighbor as oneself, or encourages one to preach more faithfully. Henry provides no deeply– illuminating account of the human predicament and no penetrating analysis of how the gospel is good news to a broken world. There is no compelling account of Christ; there is next to nothing on the doctrine of Christian life or the work of the Holy Spirit in renewal; there is very little on the nature and demands of Christian community. What we have instead is over three thousand pages of turgid scholasticism. Readers swirl around in a sea of names who are either called in defense as witnesses to the truth or carefully worked over as inconsistent heretics. A dead and barren orthodoxy decked out in a magnificent display of learning is presented as the riches of Christian faith. Even educated readers will soon find themselves suffering from either boredom or indigestion.[2]

The criticism continues that Henry is a Thomist, having ushered in a new scholasticism. His critics allege that–reason plays too prominent a role in his theological system. Additionally, Henry has taken the mystery out of Christianity by reducing revelation to mere propositions.[3] Hans Frei was one of the first to criticize Henry for being a modernist. Frei criticizes Henry for a narrow and simplistic view of language and truth. Frei asserts that language and truth are culture bound and historically conditioned. Frei employs Barthian language in describing how one can escape those limitations only through the miraculous.[4]

Theologians such as Roger Olson and Donald Bloesch are representative of those theologians who believe that Henry is reductionistic in his view of Christianity. They cite that

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[2] William J. Abraham, *The Coming Great Revival: Recovering the Full Evangelical Tradition* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 36–37.

[3] Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry: Makers of the Modern Mind*, 165–69.

[4] Hans Frei, "Response to 'Narrative Theology: An Evangelical Appraisal," *Trinity Journal* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 21–24. Brand, "Is Carl Henry a Modernist? Rationalism and Foundationalism in Post-War Evangelical Theology," 45. Brand cites the following as evidence of Frei's criticism of Henry: "Hans W. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology* (ed. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 24–25. This volume was assembled from lectures given by Frei in 1983 and 1987. See also Hans W. Frei, "Response to 'Narrative Theology: An Evangelical Appraisal," *Trinity Journal* n.s., no. 8 (Spring, 1987):23–30. This is Frei's reply to Carl Henry's criticisms of narrative theology," (n.10).

Henry has taken the mystery out of Christianity by reducing it to a series of correct doctrines that will direct thoughts into proper thinking about God in *lieu* of leading to personal confrontation with Christ.[5] Brand writes, "The most wide-ranging indictment of Henry as a modern thinker has been offered by James William McClendon, Jr. This theologian argues that Henry's theological method fits neatly into the modern paradigm, as his "philosophical work" is characterized by the "four recurrent marks" of that epistemological paradigm: It is "human-centered, universalizable, reductionist, and foundationalist."[6] The one last criticism of Henry that seems to have rallied a wide range of support is his view of the univocity of language. The criticisms of Henry will be addressed in brief as the substance of the response has already been addressed at length in preceding chapters.

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[5] Brand, "Is Carl Henry a Modernist? Rationalism and Foundationalism in Post-War Evangelical Theology," 47. See Donald Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, Vols. 1-2 (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1982). David A. Hubbard makes a similar claim in his well known opposition to inerrancy and Henry's defense of it. See David A. Hubbard, "The Current Tensions: Is There A Way Out," *Biblical Authority*, (ed. Jack Rogers; Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1977,1978), 176.

[6] Ibid. Brand gives the following qualifications concerning McClendon's criticism of Henry: "Modern thought is *anthropocentric* in that it makes human nature the measure of all things. It tends to *universalization* by assuming that 'what matters for anybody must matter for everybody.' This tendency assumes that one set of experiences will provide the norm for the rest of culture, and is, thus, 'imperialistic' in its approach to knowledge. Further, modern thought is *reductionist* in its tendency to reduce everything to its components in a manner analogous to the scientific tendency to reduce analysis to molecules, atoms and subatomic particles, (an approach found in Positivism) rather than to widen the angle to a more expansive investigation. The fourth of McClendon's attributes of modernist thought requires a bit more comment. *Foundationalism* refers to the tendency of Cartesian and, to some extent, Lockean epistemologies to construct all of knowledge upon self-evident and indubitable foundations. It is the attempt to find an Archimedean Point from which one's entire system can be recursively built. . . . For Wittgenstein, [Philosophy] was the attempt to remove the bewitchment to understanding caused by language. This means that there is no such thing as final truth, construed as correspondence to reality, since each community of discourse does nothing more than attempt to mark out, in a coherent fashion, the language game which is endemic to that community. At best, truth is judged by the coherence of the game, or perhaps only as that which works. The search for indubitable and noninferential foundations to universal truth claims, it would seem, had now been permanently banished from the field of respectable intellectual inquiry." Henry is a presuppositionalist. For a concise summary of his position see *Toward A Recovery of Christian Belief*, 37–60. For a modern treatment of foundationalism see Alvin Plantiga's *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). For a treatment on the differences between presuppositionalism and foundationalism see *Five Views of Apologetics* edited by Stanley N. Gundry and Steven B. Cowan.

7.2   Critique of the Criticism

In light of the criticism of being a modernist or rationalist, would one be justified in attributing these criticisms as being credible or not? In response to the claim of Henry being a modernist, the verdict would have to be in the negative. Throughout Henry's writings, as evidenced by this paper, one can readily see his reliance, first and foremost, on the self disclosure of God. That this self-disclosure is rational, intelligible, and not prey to the variant methodologies that prize ambiguity or a lack of certitude is readily conceded, but to attribute the moniker of being a modernist on that basis is a misrepresentation of Henry's theological methodology. Henry is criticized for his insistence that biblical truth is communicated primarily through propositional truth. At times the charge is made that Henry only affirms propositional truth. This charge misrepresents the substance of Henry's position. Truth is communicated primarily in propositional form, as this form communicates information that it is either true or false. However, truth is personal in that it comes from a personal God who desires to communicate, rationally and intelligibly, with man. Contrary to mediating theologians who opt for a non-propositional, non-cognitive communication with man, Henry asserts that to hold that position leaves man awash in a sea of skepticism or mysticism. Henry denies that there is an inherent contrast between divine self-revelation and propositional truths. The essence of propositional divine progressive revelation is that it is expressible. Henry writes,

> If its content is incommunicable, and has only private significance, then one's personal non-revelation falls by the wayside. Unless the divine 'more' is revelationally vouchsafed, it is but sheer speculation. If it is revelationally meaningful and true, moreover, it is propositionally expressible. No one has ever cited any meaningful example of this divine 'plus,' nor can this be done except in propositional form.[7]

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[7] Henry, *GRA*, 3:458.

The glaring inconsistency of Henry's critics who espouse personal over propositional revelation is, that by and large, they use expressible propositions to affirm the personal non-expressible revelation that man has received from God.

McClendon accuses Henry of being a "twentieth– century Cartesian."[8] In analyzing the criticism of McClendon it becomes apparent of the role that pluralism plays in his thinking.[9] McClendon specifically accuses Henry of . . .

> . . . being anthropocentric in that he grants to the *imago Dei* a "central role." Henry's philosophy is universalizing in the place he gives to the role of reason. Henry is also a reductionist, a fact that can be seen in his tendency to reduce "Scripture's content to rational propositions." According to McClendon, he is a foundationalist, as can be seen in his commitment to "the architectonic [system] with its threefold foundation."[10]

McClendon's characterization of Henry as a modernist does not stand the test of scrutiny. As for McClendon's charge that Henry's view of the *imago Dei* is anthropocentric, Henry would argue that his estimation of the *imago Dei* emanates from Scripture and is a faithful model that expounds the full scope of the dimensions of the *imago Dei*. While Scripture does not provide

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[8] James William McClendon, Jr., "Christian Knowledge in the Sunset of Modernity," unpublished paper delivered at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, (February, 1998), 8.

[9] James William McClendon, Jr. and James M. Smith, *Convictions: Defusing Religious Relativism* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1975, 1994), 3–10. McClendon is included in those theologians who have followed Hans Frei in the post-liberal movement. While not a monolithic group, they do share common affinities; among those affinities is an antithesis to the use of language as Henry would understand language theory. See Gary Dorrien, "A Third Way in Theology," *The Christian Century,* 118, no. 20 (July 4, 2001): 16.

[10] Brand, "Is Carl Henry a Modernist? Rationalism and Foundationalism in Post-War Evangelical Theology," 49. In footnote (n. 52) Brand makes the observation that McClendon never clarifies what he means by "three fold foundation." "It is not readily apparent what McClendon means by the 'threefold foundation,' since he does not elaborate on this matter at this point in the paper. Likely, he is referring back to his earlier comment about Descartes's foundationalism, when he noted that human thought was built on the foundations of the existence of [one's] own self or mind, backed by the existence of that mind's Cause, the mathematically infinite God."

the exact content of the *imago Dei*, there is no reason for viewing the *imago* as having a vague or indefinite content form before the fall.[11]

Brand's answer to the charge of anthropocentrism is with great clarity:

> The charge of anthropocentrism is unfounded. One cannot read (or even skim, since few have actually read all of it) his six-volume *God, Revelation and Authority* and not come away with the impression that God is majestic and sovereign and that this is a theology which sees God as high and lifted up. That Henry spends a great amount of time dealing with such issues as the *imago Dei* is not in itself proof that this is an anthropocentric theology. Few thinkers have accorded the image of God in humans as much attention as did Emil Brunner, who also construed the *imago Dei* as an apologetic point of contact, but McClendon does not paint him with the brush of "modernity." Henry makes it clear that his concerns over anthropology are apologetic and polemical, but it is pretty clear that his dogmatic project is not determined simply by such polemical concerns, and it seems certain that his methodology does not locate "morality and reality alike in *human beings*," but in the sovereign God.[12]

Henry at the outset of his methodology follows the Augustinian example of faith preceding reason. Having rejected Thomism and the irrationality methodology modeled by Tertullian, Henry, while allowing a significant role in his methodology, is certainly not a slave to it. Henry allows reason to function as God has intended it to function, and serve as reason was intended to serve:

> The fact that reason precedes faith in some respects does not violate Augustine's position. It does not mean that faith rests upon truths discovered by man's natural or pure reason as with Aquinas. While reason can serve as a negative test for truth, it cannot establish truth; revelation is needed for that. For Henry, as for Augustine, reason was not the ground of faith, even though it was essential for faith. Reason involved faculties necessary for man to know God and what is true. But faith is not in reason; it is in God and his revelation. One must begin with revelation that can comprehended, and that revelation informs man of reason. All of life is to be interpreted, not through fallen reason, but by divine revelation rationally appropriated.[13]

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[11] Richard A. Purdy, "Carl Henry and Contemporary Apologetics: An Assessment of the Rational Apologetic Methodology of Carl F. H. Henry in the Context of the Current Impasse Between Reformed and Evangelical Apologetics" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1980), 508.

[12] Brand, "Is Carl Henry a Modernist? Rationalism and Foundationalism in Post-War Evangelical Theology," 50.

[13] Walter E. Johnson, "A Critical Analysis of the Nature and Function of Reason in the Theology of Carl F. H. Henry" (Th.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989), 224.

The charge of reductionism has already been addressed. Revelation comes from a personal God who gives information in expressible (propositional) form *versus* inexpressible form. This impinges on the last charge of McClendon, which could be summarized as Henry using a foreign methodology to state scriptural truth. Given Henry's defense of revelational epistemology and its scriptural grounding, the criticism is more readily leveled at his critics. McClendon and others of his ilk are concerned that in a pluralistic world one can no longer argue with the absolutism of bygone eras. To commit this fallacy is, in McClendon's word, "imperialistic."[14] McClendon and others move from an adherence to the law of non-contradiction in favor of using a coherence or pragmatic view of truth. The consequences portend the inability to argue for absolute truth, to contend for the exclusivity of the Gospel and the authority of the Bible:

> There is no essence of religion; religions are neither . . . all more–or–less true nor . . . all more or less evil. It follows that generalizations about religion are generally mistaken, since religions differ in kind, and only concrete, sympathetic, historical and empirical study can tell us about any particular religion. We may call this the practical theory of religion . . . in the sense that its concern is the life shaping . . . practices religions embody.[15]

The last major criticism to be addressed is Henry's view (following his mentor Gordon Clark) of the univocity of language.[16] This criticism comes from all quarters and from within

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[14] McClendon, *Convictions: Defusing Religious Relativism*, 8.

[15] Brand, "Is Carl Henry a Modernist? Rationalism and Foundationalism in Post-War Evangelical Theology,", 51

[16] For a representative presentation of Clark's view on univocal language "The Bible As Truth" is an adequate Clarkian treatment. Clark writes, "This denial of univocal predication is not peculiar to the professors quoted, nor need it be considered particularly neo-orthodox. Although the approach is different, the same result is found in Thomas Aquinas. This medieval scholar, whose philosophy has received the papal sanction, taught that no predicate can univocally be applied to God and created beings. Even the copula *is* cannot be used univocally in these two references. When therefore a man thinks that God is good or eternal or almighty, he not only means something different from what God means by good, eternal, or almighty, but, worse, if anything can be worse, he means

evangelicalism as well as from without. Van Til is a major architect in modern times of the analogical view of language.[17] Clark and Henry defend the view that in order for any true communication to take place between God and man, it is necessarily the case that when God says "rose," it means the same thing for God as it does for man. This realistic epistemology, as Clark explains it:

> By realism in this connection I mean a theory that the human mind possesses some truth—not an analogy of the truth, not a representation of or correspondence to the truth, not a mere hint of the truth, not a meaningless verbalism about a new species of truth, but the truth itself. God has spoken His Word in words, and these words are adequate

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something different by saying that God is. Since, as temporal creatures, we cannot know the eternal essence of God, we cannot know what God means when He affirms His own existence. Between God's meaning of existence and man's meaning there is not a single point of coincidence. The Scholastics and Neoscholastics try to disguise the skepticism of this position by arguing that although the predicates are not univocal, neither are they equivocal, but they are analogical. The five professors also assert that man's 'knowledge must be analogical to the knowledge God possesses (*The Text*, p. 5, col. 3). However, an appeal to analogy, though it may disguise, does not remove the skepticism. Ordinary analogies are legitimate and useful, but they are so only because there is a univocal point of coincident meaning in the two parts. A paddle for a canoe may be said to be analogical to the paddles of a paddle-wheel steamer; the canoe paddle may be said to be analogous even to the screw propeller of an ocean liner; but it is so because of a univocal element. These three things, the canoe paddle, the paddle wheel, and the screw propeller, are univocal devices for applying force to move boats through the water. Without a univocal element an alleged analogy is pure equivocation, and analogical knowledge is complete ignorance. But if there is a univocal element, even a primitive savage, when told that a screw propeller is analogous to his canoe paddle, will have learned something. He may not have learned much about screw propellers and, compared with an engineer, he is almost completely ignorant—almost but not quite. He has some idea about propellers, and his idea may be, literally, true. The engineer and the savage have one small item of knowledge in common. But without even one item in common, they could not both be said to know. For both persons to know, the proposition must have the same meaning for both. And this holds equally between God and man. If God has the truth and if man has only an analogy, it follows that he does not have the truth. An analogy of the truth is not the truth; and even if man's knowledge is not called an analogy of the truth but an analogical truth, the situation is no better. An analogical truth, except it contains a univocal point of coincident meaning, simply is not the truth at all. In particular, and the most crushing reply of all, if the human mind were limited to analogical truths, it could never know the univocal truth that it was limited to analogies. Even if it were true that the contents of human knowledge are analogies, a man could never know that such was the case: he could only have the analogy that his knowledge was analogical. This theory, therefore, whether found in Thomas Aquinas, Emil Brunner, or professed conservatives, is unrelieved skepticism and is incompatible with the acceptance of a divine revelation of truth." Gordon Clark, "The Bible As Truth," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 114, no. 454 (April 1957): 165–66.

[17] Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology. In Defense of the Faith, Vol. V* (Nutley NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974); *Apologetics* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976). For a summary of Van Til's analogical view see Jim Halsey, "A Preliminary Critique of *Van Til: The Theologian* A Review Article," *Westminster Theological Journal* 39, no. 1 (Fall 1976): 120–36. For an alternative to both univocal and analogical view of language, see William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

symbols of the conceptual content. The conceptual content is literally true, and it is the univocal, identical point of coincidence in the knowledge of God and man.[18]

7.3   Henry and His Legacy

The recognition of Carl Henry's contributions to Christianity has long been documented. Henry is typically described as the dean of evangelical theology. His shaping presence as the founding of some of Evangelicalism's foundational institutions is remarkable by any standard.[19] Russ Moore comments on his impact, "Carl F. H. Henry, from his early career on the founding faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary, to his editorship of *Christianity Today* to his authorship of his theological *magnum opus, God, Revelation and Authority*, served as the intellectual powerhouse behind the evangelical renaissance in the United States."[20] The fact that in the *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind* series, Carl Henry was the lone evangelical representative is significant.

But it may be that Henry's most enduring legacy is his writings,

> which number well into the scores of books, articles, editorials, and edited volumes. His theological writing has appeared in seven decades. His most significant achievement is his six-volume *God, Revelation and Authority*, which appeared in three two-volume installments between 1976–1983, but which was never sold *as a set* until Crossway Books reprinted the volumes in 1999. Coupled with earlier works such as *Remaking the Modern Mind* (1946), *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947), *The Protestant Dilemma* (1948), and *Christian Personal Ethics* (1956), to name just a few of those early works, these later volumes demonstrate a consistent, sustained, comprehensive vision for evangelical theology and its place in the world.[21]

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[18] Clark, "The Bible as Truth," 170.

[19] Henry was instrumental in the founding and shaping of the Evangelical Theological Society, Fuller Theological Seminary, and *Christianity Today*.

[20] Russ Moore, "God, Revelation, and Community: Ecclesiology and Baptist Identity in the Thought of Carl F. H. Henry," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 8, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 27.

[21] House, "Remaking the Modern Mind: Revisiting Carl Henry's Theological Vision," 4–5.

The really noteworthy aspect of Henry's career, is that it was so lengthy and yet it contained

a consistency that is virtually unrivaled on the contemporary theological stage. Paul House

brings together a nice summary of Henry's theological vision:

> This vision was comprehensive in that it considered the proposed evangelical worldview as the hope of the world, not just the way to reform straying American denominations affected negatively by modernism. This vision was a sustained one in that it remained amazingly consistent for over fifty years. It deepened and broadened, especially as it was shared in several cultural contexts, yet retained its basic shape. . . . stated simply, Henry's vision for theology was that it be epistemologically viable, methodologically coherent, biblically accurate, socially responsible, evangelistically oriented, and universally applied. In this way theology will thereby serve the church universal, which was the view of the church most important to him. Henry's vision was that evangelical theology be nothing less than God's means of remaking modern and postmodern minds.[22]

Timothy George summarizes the legacy of Carl Henry:

> What made Carl F. H. Henry great? The answer to this question is as myriad as the varied movements, institutions, and initiatives to which this remarkable man gave himself on behalf of the evangelical church during his long and productive life. Along with Harold John Ockenga, the mover and shaker of neo-evangelicalism, Henry established a platform for Bible-believing Christians against obscurantist fundamentalism on the one hand and compromising liberalism on the other. Ever committed to the life of the mind, Henry was the "brains" behind the National Association of Evangelicals, Fuller Seminary, *Christianity Today*, and much more. His trumpet-call in *Uneasy Conscience* set the direction of evangelical social and cultural engagement for the next half-century. Henry was a journalist by training; he never lost the common touch. He could lecture at Harvard and Yale on existentialism and process philosophy one week, and preach a revival in a country church the next week, and do both with integrity and credibility. Henry's *God, Revelation and Authority* is a monumental statement of theological epistemology that still rewards careful study today. Carl Henry was an evangelical statesman, a world visionary, a networker of unparalleled skill, and a shaper of institutions that still bear the imprint of his mind and heart. All of this, and much more, made him great.[23]

George adds one last comment that many will not know about Henry in that . . .

> He was an unflagging encourager of others. . . . Carl Henry felt a special responsibility to encourage younger pastors and scholars in their work for the Lord. On his subsequent visits to Beeson as a visiting professor and conference speaker, he always took time to be

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[22] Ibid., 5.

[23] "The SBJT Forum: Testimonies to a Theologian," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 8, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 85.

with students. He would preach in their churches on the weekend, eat Chinese food (one of his favorites) with them over lunch, and invite them to his apartment for "theology and tea." The last time he preached in chapel at Beeson, he spoke from a chair as he was not able to stand. He talked about his conversion to Jesus Christ and what it meant to be born again.[24]

Carl Henry was a man who embodied in the truest sense the calling to loving our Lord with all his heart, soul, and mind. Henry was consistent throughout his lengthy and unbelievably productive academic career, in that he articulated unfailingly a theological vision that sought to confront culture where the battle was the hottest. He modeled for generations of scholars and pastors the way to articulate the great verities of Scripture and discerningly critique alternative views. Henry's legacy will grow in the years to come as generations look across the theological landscape of Evangelicalism and see the looming shadow of this theological giant who walked among twentieth century Christians.

7.4 Conclusion

In summary, this paper sought to chronicle the role of revelational epistemology in the theological method of Carl F. H. Henry. In doing so, it was important to set the historical context that gave rise to Henry's emergence on the theological scene of America and the rise and expansion of evangelicalism. The study had as it hypothesis that Henry's presuppositionalism (defined and expounded) was not held captive to Enlightment epistemology, but that it is a useful methodology in speaking to the culture and articulating the eternal verities of the Bible.

Chapter 2 started with an examination of the historical situation that enabled Carl Henry to emerge on the theological scene as a major influencer and shaper of what would become known as evangelicalism. In many ways it is instructive to look at the current scene in

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[24] Ibid., 86.

evangelicalism and then to look at its beginnings through the pen of its principle architect Carl Henry. In doing so, there is a greater appreciation for where evangelicalism has originated, how it thrived, and if it needs a current course correction.

A biographical survey provided key details in Henry's life: his parentage, conversion, early work as a journalist, formative theological education, and marriage. Henry not only would meet his bride at Wheaton College, but also would meet men who would play a major role in his life for decades to follow. Henry was influenced by Gordon Clark, who would become the major theological influence on him; he met Billy Graham and Edward John Carnell. Henry would study at Boston University, earning a Ph.D. in Philosophy. His dissertation on the theological attempt of A. H. Strong in finding a mediating way between orthodoxy and the rising tide of modern thought, would find a developing theological acuity that would distinguish Henry as a theologian/philosopher of the first order. In these early works (and certainly within *God, Revelation and Authority*) Henry follows Gordon Clark in using the apagogic method– a methodology that seeks to show Christianity as consistent and the only rationally–viable belief system, and that shows alternative belief systems to be inconsistent. Henry, following Clark, relies extensively on the laws of logic and principally the law of non-contradiction.

Henry had written two earlier theological works *Remaking the Modern Mind* and *The Protestant Dilemma*, which laid his theological foundation that he would amplify in the years to come. However, it was the release of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* that drew national notice. The Modernist-Fundamentalist Controversy was still fresh in the minds of many across the country, and as a result of the Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tennessee, fundamentalists had become obscurantist in their orientation toward contemporary culture. What

Henry wrote would become a manifesto for evangelicalism in *The Uneasy Conscience* as he called for cultural engagement.

Henry continued to develop his theology, but it would be his role in the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary and the launching of *Christianity Today* that gave Henry a platform to shape the contours of evangelicalism. Henry would not stay at Fuller because the allure of becoming the founding editor of a conservative answer to *The Christian Century* was too great to turn down. Although Henry would have problems from the very beginning with the Board of *Christianity Today* and would depart after twelve years in less than amicable circumstances, it would be his influence during those years as editor that really shaped a maturing evangelicalism.

Chapter 3 picks up and advances an exposition of *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism.* Henry calls for those who were committed to the "Fundamentals of the Faith" to come of out of their self-imposed exile and re-engage the culture in fulfilling the mandate of Scripture. While *The Uneasy Conscience* was not of the theological nature of the *Remaking the Modern Mind*, *The Protestant Dilemma* or certainly *God, Revelation and Authority*, it called forth and gave direction to a movement whose time had arrived. *The Uneasy Conscience* following on the heels of *Remaking the Modern Mind* laid out a two–pronged agenda. This agenda called for the rescue of western civilization through the reassertion of an evangelical Christian worldview and the reformation of fundamentalism to accomplish this task.

Henry set out in *The Uneasy Conscience* to show the weaknesses of Fundamentalism. He shined a spotlight on the rigidity and the temperament of the movement that had isolated itself from the larger world, and in doing so, the word itself became either a badge of honor or a term of disparagement. The fundamentalists, while believing in the historic orthodox doctrines of the Church, had marginalized themselves by their failure to engage culture. Henry believed that the

fundamentalists had narrowly focused solely on individual sins and left societal ills untouched. This was due in part to the "Social Gospel" emphasis of a recent by–gone era. Henry argued that a consistent evangelical Christianity was rightly concerned with the individual but could not escape its responsibility to address the wrongs of society.

Henry next addresses a topic that had become a sacred cow to fundamentalists– dispensationalism. Henry takes to task those who view dispensationalism as a litmus test of unity. Furthermore, dispensationalism had provided a mechanism whereby fundamentalists could rationalize their lack of participation in the larger culture. Henry challenged this view and then laid out a plan to re-engage culture with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. The chapter then fast forwards and looks back at evangelicalism since the publication of *The Uneasy Conscience*. Following the re-examination of evangelicalism from the pen of Henry, fundamentalism is examined. A brief survey of competing theories that attempt to explain it origins and its appeal, to the fundamental tenets, the reaction to liberalism and the philosophy that gave rise to liberalism, and the fundamentalist reaction to it, is provided.

Chapter 4 provides an evangelical definition. Recognizing the ambiguity that characterizes much of the scholarly world with respect to definitions, this chapter follows Henry as he writes about what it means to be an evangelical. Henry's vision is laid out as well as the works that Henry used to articulate his vision. As Henry repeatedly said, evangelicalism was not meant to replace fundamentalism but rather fulfill what fundamentalism should have been before it became obscurantist. Greater treatment is given to the institutional development as seen in the National Association of Evangelicals, the Evangelical Theological Society, and *Christianity Today*. A summary of the advances by evangelicalism are also covered as well as the continuing development of Henry's theological approach.

Chapter 5 addresses the essential tenets of Henry's theological method. In providing an answer for the modern crisis of "Truth and Word," Henry offers a methodology that is rational, logical, and grounded on the divine self-disclosure of God. The principle focus is on *God, Revelation and Authority* as it represents the mature theological treatment of the central issues of modern theology as Henry sees it. Henry starts his treatment with the issue of truth. Is there such a thing as absolute truth? And can man know it? Henry reacts against the modern tendency to see truth as culturally conditioned and man's consequent reaction that ends in skepticism. Combating this tendency Henry offers the presuppositionalist position as the way out of the current morass. Everyone has presuppositions whether they admit them or not. Henry explains his method with the necessary criteria for verification. Henry posits two axioms of Christianity: (1) the epistemological axiom—divine revelation; (2) the ontological axiom—the living God. In Henry's discussion of these two axioms, he proffers Augustine as a model to follow as man searches for God's truth and word.

Henry believes that the starting place to know truth for man is divine revelation. Henry makes an important point with respect to divine revelation being his starting point. Without the divine interpretation of the divine acts, the acts are subject to wholesale misinterpretation. Major elements of Henry's methodology that are used to verify his axioms are reason (the method for recognizing truth), Scripture (as it the principle of verification), logical consistency and coherence (as test for truth), the theological task (as exposition and elucidation), the task of apologetics (confrontation), a prorism and its development and role since Kant.

Having laid out his method, Henry begins to show how his methodology impacts divine revelation. Consequently one can know that God has spoken in Scripture, and this communication is authoritative. Henry then argues his position on how God communicates to

man through the role of the *imago Dei*, the Logos doctrine, rational language that is verbal and conceptual and univocal. The communication that man receives from God is in propositional form. Henry does not countenance the distinction of revelation as either personal or propositional but sees revelation coming from a personal God Who communicates to man in an expressible (propositional) manner. As God communicates to man, it follows that the Bible is authoritative, is inspired by God and as such is inerrant. Henry sees inerrancy as a logical inference from the authority and inspiration of the Bible. Henry then shows in answering the criticism that inerrancy is a recent theological innovation, that it has existed from the very beginning of Christianity, and has continued until the rise of German Higher Criticism.

Chapter 6 examines Henry's continuing interaction and critique of evangelical alternatives principally the neo-orthodoxy as espoused by Karl Barth. Henry applauded Barth (and others) when he found serviceable portions of their theologies that contributed to historic orthodox Christianity, but he did not shy away from showing deficient elements in rival theological methodologies. The main criticism of Barth revolves around the irrational element in his view of divine revelation. Barth contended that due to God's transcendence only through a miracle of divine grace could man even begin to receive communication from God. What he does receive is appropriated through existential confrontation. Barth denied the possibility of objective revelation. Henry writes that Barth borrows Kantian epistemology and a Kierkegaardian irrationalism that emphasized a radical antithesis between reason and revelation. Barth denies propositional revelation, inerrancy. Consequently, Henry does not see Barthianism as being serviceable to evangelicalism.

Chapter 7 examines Henry's critics and his legacy. Henry is charged with being a modernist and a scholastic. Henry, it is alleged, places reason at the epicenter of his theological

method. In response to this main allegation, it is obvious from even a cursory reading of Henry that he places a high priority on divine revelation and the God who gave it. Henry does employ reason and rationality but only as divine enablements.

Henry's legacy is such that even with the criticism he has received, it in no way diminishes his contributions to the Church. For decades, Henry has called for a radical adherence to the biblical mandate of loving God with all one's heart, mind and soul and loving one's neighbor as one's self. Henry continues the emphasis of the Reformers on the primacy of Scripture. He has given to the Church a prodigious body of masterful theological work. Additionally, he had modeled a desire to pass the baton to the next generation of believers who desire to change the world because their world has been changed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Henry was a theological giant. His footprints have left an indelible imprint on the theological landscape of the twentieth and now the twenty–first century. May they serve as markers to lead man to a deepening love, devotion, and service to the God Who so impacted Carl F. H. Henry.

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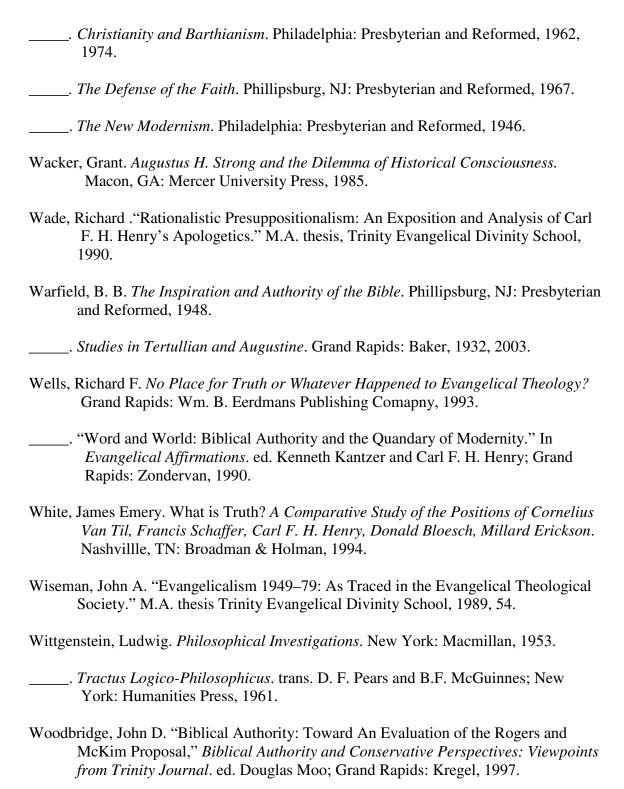Plantiga, Alvin. *Warranted Christian Belief*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

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