A Critical Study of Carl F. H. Henry's Portrayal of the Human Role in Revelation and Inspiration

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF CARL F. H. HENRY’S PORTRAYAL OF
THE HUMAN ROLE IN REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

A dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Boxter Kharbteng

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ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL STUDY OF CARL F. H. HENRY'S PORTRAYAL OF
THE HUMAN ROLE IN REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

by

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Adviser: Miroslav M. Kiš
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A CRITICAL STUDY OF CARL F. H. HENRY'S PORTRAYAL OF THE HUMAN ROLE IN REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

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Date completed: January 1997

This dissertation investigated Carl F. H. Henry's portrayal of the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration. The study queried whether his depiction of that role in revelation is harmonious or consistent with the one given in inspiration. This question arises from a consideration of Henry's own formulation of his doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and man. The thesis of this dissertation is that inasmuch as man has the innate ability to receive, understand, and impart revelation without divine help, he should likewise be expected to exercise that ability at the level of inspiration without detailed or comprehensive superintendence of the Holy Spirit.

In the course of the investigation it was observed that man, during revelation, actively and independently uses his will, conscience, linguistic capacity, reasoning powers, memory, and verbal skills to receive, elucidate, or articulate revelation. Its nature is so adjusted to man that he does not need supernatural help to understand and communicate it.
In fact his reasoning faculties can even discriminate between revelation and pseudo revelation.

When it comes to inspiration, however, man is portrayed as one lacking the natural capacity to carry out the task, namely that of inscripturating revelation. This incompetency is brought about by his inherent sinfulness. To solve the predicament, God had to subject man to a long period of comprehensive training. That preparation, however, does not qualify him to execute independently his role in inspiration. Thus, the man that is depicted as active, independent, and naturally competent and ready for revelation is now portrayed at the level of inspiration as one who is naturally incompetent, unready, passive, and totally dependent upon supernatural help. This is despite the fact that man inerrantly receives, understands, remembers, and has the linguistic capacity to articulate revelation. In fact, he had to be given the mind of the Holy Spirit, and even guided in the choice of words. That is, Henry does not allow the competent operation of the writer's natural faculties in inspiration as he does in revelation. And neither does he admit the weaknesses and limitations of man as depicted in inspiration to have a bearing upon his reception and conveyance of revelation. In view of his insistence upon revelation's lucidity, its propositional form, man's linguistic capacity, the content identity between revelation and inspiration, as well as the identicalness of the human agent in the two events, Henry's divergent portrayal of human role within these phenomena betrays inconsistency.

The study concluded by first pointing to Scripture's depiction of the human role in revelation and inspiration as being broader than that given by Henry. From that perspective, some suggestions were then recommended which hope to supply a degree of consistency in his portrayal of the human role in revelation and inspiration.
To

My dear mother, Noristina, whose life stands as a tall monument of persevering prayer, love, caring generosity, and family unity. I learned more about the Christian life by observing yours.

My daughter, Evonne, from whose lips I first heard the tingling word, “Daddy.” You challenge me with the task of being a wise father to a teenager, struggling to find his/her place in the sun.

My other daughter, Lavonne, who genetically demonstrated to me the idea of “looking like father.” You taught me the art of vibrant living by learning how to laugh—and often, to tears—at things that you see or hear as funny.

And my wife, Jennie, who powerfully convinced me of the truthfulness of the Genesis pronouncement: “It is not good for man” to live alone. You are my best friend and greatest ally, and my ready solution to computer problems that mysteriously but promptly showed up whenever I used it in writing and crafting this dissertation.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Revelation and inspiration as methods of divine communication of God and his will for humanity are basic presuppositions of Christianity.¹ Several theories have been advanced attempting to define these two presuppositions and to clarify their relationship to one another. Since this dissertation critically assesses the human role in Carl F. H. Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration, it is necessary that we place Henry's exposition of these doctrines in the light of others's formulations or theories of the doctrines. In fact, Henry's treatment of these two theological concepts has often been carried out with an explicit recognition of and a reaction to some other competing or alternative approach. Our acquaintance with the theories also helps us in enhancing our appreciation and understanding of these doctrines in Henry's own thought.

The number of theories chosen is limited and the focus is only on those that have been most influential in terms of articulation of Christian theology. The presentation is descriptive, brief, and limited to the modern period,² and broadly follows a historical


²The demarcation of the history of Western civilization into premodern, modern, and postmodern is seen in several authors. See, for instance, Ted Peters, God—The World's Future: Systematic Theology for a Postmodern Era (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).
sequence. The classification as well as naming of the theories may differ from one author to another. However, the nomenclatures attached to them are those that seem to be more commonly used. ¹ Since the focus of this dissertation is on the human role the survey of the theories is pursued with an interest on how they portray that role along with its counterpart: the divine role.² I approach the examination of the theories by combining them on the basis of the degree of correspondence and similarity in their portrayal of the human as well as divine roles. The approach, however, is aimed at sharpening the focus on the human role in the revelation-inspiration phenomena.

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²Since it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to directly address the divine role, I nevertheless want to acknowledge its importance in the doctrines of revelation and inspiration. Moreover, one's understanding of the human dimension can be enhanced by viewing it from the perspective of the divine dimension.
This chapter also provides a brief sketch of Henry's own formulation of the doctrines of revelation and inspiration with the purpose of facilitating his portrayal of the human role in them. In addition, the sketch indicates the significance of my dealing with the human role and the appropriateness of choosing Henry for the dissertation. Finally, the chapter concludes by furnishing both statement and justification of the problem, the purpose and scope of the research, the methodology adopted, as well as the chapters that constitute this dissertation.

**Theories of Revelation**

**Reason as Revelation**

Proponents of reason as revelation hold that reason is capable of deducing God's

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1The emphasis on the primacy of reason over revelation and/or experience is also seen in Descartes, Kant, and Hegel. Descartes, for example, felt that questions pertaining to God and the soul should be "demonstrated by philosophy rather than theology." His method of systematic doubt—or the mental destruction—of all "former opinions"/beliefs that are not "entirely certain and indubitable," is seen not only as the sure avenue to true knowledge, but also an indication of the priority of reason for all epistemic inquiries. See Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, The Library of Liberal Arts, no. 29, trans. Laurence J. Cafluer (New York: Bobbs Merrill Co., 1960), 3, 17, 43-44. See also Helmut Thielicke, *Modern Faith and Thought*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 52, where he observes that Descartes' "Cogito, ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am) placed emphasis on the priority of the noetic over the ontic.

Kant likewise made reason the basis of religion so that what is "contrary to [it] is to be rejected" (Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Kant as Philosophical Theologian* [Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1988], 90). And since reason cannot "penetrate beyond the limits of experience," it is therefore impossible to know "the existence of a God or a future life; for, if he knows this, he is just a man whom I have long wished to find" (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn, intro. A. D. Lindsay (London: J. M. Dent, and New York: E. P. Dutton, 1959), 469, 25. God for Kant is therefore "not a being outside, but merely a thought within" (Willibald Klinke, *Kant for Everyman* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951], 89; italics original), "a logical possibility and a moral necessity" (Hans Schwarz, *Responsible Faith: Christian Theology in the Light of Twentieth Century Questions* [Minneapolis: Ausburg Publishing House, 1986], 104). See also Kant,

---
existence, nature, and will, and of determining the foundations of religion and ethics.¹

Therefore what is called revelation can be none other than "the pure religion of reason."²

---

Critique of Pure Reason, 469-70 and 342-361, where Kant rejects all proofs for the existence of God, hence of revelation, and does not even feel the need for a being superior to himself to tell him what is right and wrong because his own reason can find it out. See also Immanuel Kant, "Preface to the First Edition," in Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, trans. with intro. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 3.


¹S. N. Williams, "Deism," NDT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 190. "For most of the deist writers revelation served no other purpose than to reinforce the truths of natural reason" (Reardon, 190). John Hales, a deist thinker of the 17th century, believed that "the seat of authority in religion [should be] found ultimately in reason and conscience, [and] revelation must be interpreted by the enlightened mind of man." Hales's contemporaries, John Bidle and John Fry, went as far as claiming that beliefs either "contrary to or above rational understanding could not be part of true Christian religion." See Stephen H. Daniel, John Toland, His Methods, Manners, and Mind (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univer-sity Press, 1984), 37-38, italics original. Toland himself said, "There is no doctrine of the Gospel contrary to reason: . . . neither is there any of them above reason; and by consequence, . . . none is a Mystery." See John Toland, Christianity Not Mysterious (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Gunther Holzboog], 1964), 7, 174.


²Kant, Religion Within the Limits, 144, 146. Note: Kant (ibid., 144-155) attempted to show Christianity as a product of pure reason. In his own words, "Christianity [is] a natural religion [as well as] a learned religion" (ibid., 145), and "through reason, it was able to spread [itself] at all times and among all peoples" (ibid., 155).
Reason alone is the seat for "all moral concepts," and "the supreme exegete of Scripture."\(^1\) Because what is called revelation is actually a discovery of reason, the word "revelation" should then be used mythically as a "way of describing sudden and transforming insights that arise from the exercise of the latent powers of the human mind."\(^2\)

This theory assumes that man has the mental capacity to discover for himself truths that otherwise would have been considered revelatory by others. Divine role is not anticipated by this theory because man is assumed to possess the requisite capability to find out for himself the very truths God would want man to know.

The Bible as Revelation

Philip Hughes observed that for centuries and until modern times, revelation was essentially understood as the divinely revealed will and plan for sinful man\(^3\) that was made


\(^3\)Philip Hughes, "The Knowledge of God: The Inspiration of the Bible," in *Basic Christian Doctrines*, Contemporary Evangelical Thought Series, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 17. With the onset of modernity, scholars began to study the Bible through the lenses of the critical-historical method, which treated the Bible like any other ancient document, and credited its production to "forces" other than God, such as "history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, [and] politics." Consequently, the Bible, for many, ceases to be the Word of God or revelation, and no longer is allowed to be its own interpreter. See E. Edward Zinke, "Postreformation Critical Biblical Studies," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974), 71, 75, 84; Hendrikus Boers, "Historical Criticism Versus Prophetic Proclamation," *Harvard*
available in written Scripture, later called the Bible, to be used as a normative guide in his relationship with God and his fellowmen.\(^1\) God has revealed himself directly through timeless truths that are universally valid,\(^2\) and these are to be found in the Bible. This revelation was mediated through specially chosen prophets and apostles who, with the help of the Holy Spirit, put it in scriptural form.\(^3\) The Bible therefore is God's revelation. It is his "Word in written form,"\(^4\) "the written body of revelation,"\(^5\) and "the pure Word of

---


God.\textsuperscript{1} It originated in his mind.\textsuperscript{2} So whenever a person reads or hears the Bible, he is actually reading or hearing God's word.

Compared to the preceding theory, this one swings to the opposite direction by shifting the responsibility of revelation to God. This theory presents him as the primary author of Scripture. Although the Bible was written by men in human words, language, and literary style, yet these are only vehicles of revelation. Man's role in revelation is secondary.

Revelation as Experience

Revelation is a "consciousness" of God,\textsuperscript{3} a "sense and taste for the Infinite." It is

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}The Augsburg Confession: Confession of Faith Presented in Augsburg by Certain Princes and Cities to His Imperial Majesty, Charles V in the year 1530, trans. from the German Text (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 24, 57.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}Harold Lindsell and Charles J. Woodbridge, A Handbook of Christian Truth (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1953), 20.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}Precursors of this view included the Schwenkfeldians (16th century) with their mystical reflections and the Quakers (17th century) by their emphasis of the Inner Light that "either supplemented or superseded Scripture" (Bromiley, ISBE 4, 170), or "seemed to set aside [its] authority. . . and [that of] the historic Christ." See The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (1990), s.v. "Friends, Religious Society of." According to Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, the idea of revelation as experience seems to evolve out of the stress on the continuity between God and man. See Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 407, 442. For other representatives of this school see McDonald, 32-33, note 6. See also Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1968), 52; idem, On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers, trans. John Oman (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), 39; hereafter cited as "Schleiermacher, Speeches."
\end{itemize}
an "original feeling," an intuition, or a "new communication" generated within the soul.1

Revelation is an "insight, a penetration . . . which gives to . . . our very being that point of
contact it needs for its vital power for salvation, and for the realization of our true
dignity."2 Revelation stands for the self-communication of God to man,3 a "consciousness
of infinity within."4 Revelation is an experience of "commerce" with God by generations of

1Schleiermacher, Speeches, 89; idem, The Christian Faith, 51. Schleiermacher attempted to address those cultural despisers who had exhibited carelessness and indifference to the religion of the church because they thought it was a superstitious relic of the past and hence, unbefitting for a "man-come-of-age" (Rudolf Otto, "Introduction," in Schleiermacher, Speeches, vii-ix). In fact, the despisers went beyond by showing sympathy with the views of Spinoza (pantheism) and atheism (Hendrikus Berkhof, Two Hundred Years of Theology: Report of a Personal Journey, trans. John Vriend [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989], 33, 37-40). In his Speeches (pp. 36, 39, 45-101) Schleiermacher argued for the universality of religion by pointing to the feeling of absolute dependence upon God that all men experience. Religion is "God-consciousness," and not one based on reason or morality that gives only an indirect knowledge of God. A religion based on feeling yields a direct experience of God as it is divinely caused. This redefinition of religion led Schleiermacher to the emphasis on God's immanence rather than his transcendence. Christian revelation is described by him as "a knowledge of God mediated through the corporate experience of redemption rather than of a body of doctrine propositionally revealed." See Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 47, 50; see also W. A. Hoffecker, "Schleiermacher, Friedrich Daniel Ernst," EDT (Baker, 1984), 982; J. B. Webster, "Schleiermacher, Friedrich Daniel Ernst," NDT (1988), 619.


3Ibid. See also John Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 94.

religious persons, a communion with him by each individual soul.\(^1\) Revelation therefore stands for that profound insight of men gifted with the scent for truth. It is an intuition of a religious genius, an inner consciousness of God. This has been perfectly achieved by prophets and apostles who were religious geniuses, and most of all, by Jesus Christ.\(^2\)

This theory points to man as the primary source of revelation, brought about by his own willingness to be open towards God, and conditioned by the latter’s own spirituality and religious sensitivity, which characteristics he shares with God himself.\(^3\) The theory emphasizes the broadening and heightening of man’s psychological, psychical, and emotive faculties so that he is able to give expression to sublime experiential truths. Christian doctrines are therefore none other than accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech or writing.\(^4\)


\(^2\)Söderblom, 115. Supporters of revelation as experience reject the dichotomy between natural and revealed religion, and between general and special revelation. Further, since revelation is an experience, any suggestion for a propositional form of revelation is also set aside. Schleiermacher, for example, rejected the historical fall, the originally righteous Adam, the Virgin Birth, the Trinity, and the second coming of Christ (see Hoffecker, 982-983); see also Auguste Sabatier, *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, trans. Louise Seymour Houghton (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), xxx, 266, 268-69, 276-278.

\(^3\)Trueblood, *The Essence*, 98.

\(^4\)Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 76-78; 112-118.
Revelation as Encounter

Revelation as encounter is generally espoused by neoorthodoxy and stresses the personal nature of revelation. Karl Barth, for instance, held that revelation is the revelation of God himself as the eternal Word in Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh. Jesus

The neoorthodox view of revelation is also classified as revelation through history, because it holds that an event itself should not be identified with revelation, but as one through which revelation can and does occur to a believing Christian. The event, however, is personal and subjective, which only the person of faith, through the action of the Holy Spirit, can experience or know. Similarly, although the Bible is not to be equated with revelation, yet it too, in spite of its many errors and contradictions, can be the means through which revelation can and does occur. See Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1-vol. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 183.


CD 1/1, 129-131; see also Rudolf Bultmann, *Existence and Faith*, trans. Schubert M. Ogden (New York: Living Age Books/Meridian Books, 1960), 74. For Bultmann, revelation is a divinely caused occurrence from without that breaks in upon a person’s heart. It is an occurrence resulting in the opening of "man’s eyes" so that he sees "his own existence and is once again able to understand himself." Therefore revelation is self-understanding or self-knowledge. It is understanding of his being limited by death. As such, revelation gives life. In fact, it can be equated with salvation or life. But since Jesus Christ is really the one who gives life, revelation then "consists in nothing other than the fact of Jesus Christ. Revelation has occurred in the sending of Jesus in his incarnation, death, and resurrection." Based on this understanding of revelation, the NT can be spoken of as revelation to the extent that it is kerygmatic, or is "the proclaimed Word of Christ" only insofar as it "preaches Christ" (ibid., 62, 71-72, 75, 78, 80, 85, 88, 90; italics original; idem, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 2, trans. Kendrick Grobel [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1955], 127-128; see also Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology*
Christ is therefore "the essence of revelation."¹ Moreover, when God reveals himself as Word, he does so through either of the threefold forms: direct revelation in Jesus Christ, Scripture, and proclamation, which he also terms as the Word revealed, the Word written, and the Word preached.²

In a similar vein, Brunner holds that "the real content of revelation . . . is not 'something', but God himself. Revelation is the self-manifestation of God. The revelation with which the whole Bible is concerned is God's self-manifestation." This manifestation of God is concretely realized in Jesus Christ who is the Word of God, and the Bible is

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¹Barth and others, 44-45, 49; CD I/1, 134.

²"The revealed Word of God we know only from the Scripture adopted by Church proclamation, or from Church proclamation based on Scripture.

The Written Word of God we know only through the revelation which makes proclamation possible, or through the proclamation made possible by revelation.

The proclaimed Word of God we know only by knowing the revelation attested through scripture, or by knowing the Scripture which attests revelation" (CD I/1, 136).

For an exposition of each of these forms of the Word of God, see ibid., 98-135. With respect to the Bible as the Word of God, Barth said that although the Bible is not to be equated with revelation itself, yet "it is the revelation, if and in so far as Jesus Christ speaks to us through the witness of his prophets and apostles" (Barth and others, 67; italics original). It is God's Word "so far as" in the event of its reading and/or proclaiming it "attests revelation" (CD I/1, 136). Therefore, the Bible should be read or heard as the Word of God (ibid., 299). Otherwise, and properly speaking, Scripture is "the witness to revelation" (ibid., 331, 339, 359). For a further exposition of this concept, see CD I/2, 457-538.

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witness\(^1\) to that Word—though not every part of it bears witness equally. In fact, some parts of Scripture do not at all witness to or reveal the Word of God, and others only "stammer" his name.\(^2\) A similar view also seems to be shared by Bernard Ramm and Donald G. Bloesch, who hold that the Bible is a witness to Jesus Christ who is the content of revelation. Accordingly, Ramm and Bloesch regard the Bible as having a functional/instrumental authority rather than a normative one.\(^3\)

The neoorthodox concept of revelation not only points to God as one exclusively

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\(^1\)A similar view has also been espoused by Baillie, 50; and Austin Marsden Farrer, *The Glass of Vision* (London: Dacre Press, 1948), 36-38.


Reinhold Niebuhr also held a neoorthodox view of revelation. For him revelation is relational because it is an "encounter between two subjects," or selves, namely, man and God. Revelation is an "invasion of the historical by an absolute world of God." It is a consciousness of the "sense of being confronted with the `wholly other.'" It is this disclosure of God as a "Thou"—and is discerned by faith—that brings meaning to man's life. See Miroslav M. Kiš, "Revelation and Ethics: Dependence, Interdependence, Independence? A Comparative Study of Reinhold Niebuhr and Carl F. H. Henry" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 1983), 69, 71, 75-76, 90, 98. For a further exposition of the neoorthodox view of revelation as given by those who espouse it, see Baillie, 25, 27-28, 31-33, 49, 60, 64, 106, 110; Gordon Kaufmann, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), 69; and Lewis, 20-22.

responsible for revelation, but also makes him its content. While revelation implies an ongoing process, yet it always is and ever will be the Person of God himself who is the locus of revelation. Man's role is reduced only to an object of this encounter who can authentically and authoritatively witness to the experience of revelation, but whose articulation of it cannot be identified with revelation itself. Moreover, whatever man has to say about revelation is incomplete and fallible because it is beyond his nature to be infallible.

Revelation as Event

This theory has been taken to mean two things: (1) Revelation in history, and (2) Revelation as history. Revelation in history refers to God's redemptive actions through certain biblical events wrought in order to fulfill his purpose for his people. Both the events and their meaning are revelatory because they are not obvious to a secular historian, except those to whom God chooses to disclose. This school of thought, also called Salvation

1Scripture is man's word about revelation; it becomes revelation (God's Word) to us only through faith (CD I/1, 121, 124, 127, 131).

2Oscar Cullmann said, "Apart from revelation [or the divinely given interpretation of the event] and faith in this revelation, the event may signify nothing. Since, however, the revelation and faith in this revelation are related to the event, it is of central importance that the bearer of revelation be himself an eyewitness to the event." See Oscar Cullmann, Salvation in History, trans. Sidney G. Sowers and editorial staff of the SCM Press (London: S.C.M. Press, 1967), 90, 92, 97-98. G. E. Wright and Reginald Fuller, however, seem to differ from Cullmann with respect to the interpretation of the events. According to them, although the acts/events were wrought by God, yet their meaning and significance are derived through or "inferred from" the "historical experience " of his own people, made possible by the "eye of faith" of the "covenant community," and not by an individual in isolation. See G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, The Book of the Acts of God (New York: Doubleday, 1957), 27-28, 32; see also G. E. Wright, God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital (London: SCM Press, 1952), 107. David Kelsey dismissed Wright's equation of inference with revelation as being an "odd use." As Kelsey sees it, it

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History or *Heilsgeschichte*, holds that the Bible should be regarded as a witness to God's revelatory acts, or as a record of the acts of God. In this sense, revelation is subordinated to one section of history, namely, salvation history, instead of to history in general.

Revelation *as* history, on the other hand, views history as the *content* and not *context* of revelation. That is, revelation is identified with the whole of history, and brands "revelation in history" as a "ghetto" type of history, because God is revealed only at history's end event, and not in one or a few of such historical events. And when viewed from the end-point perspective, one can say that all of history is the medium through which God makes himself known. Moreover, revelation does not require any special prophetic

would have been less confusing had Wright used the word "discovered" or "found out" instead of "revealed" because what is found out is not the same as what is revealed (see David H. Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975], 38).

1Kelsey, 50.


3Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, 57, 89. Cullmann also pointed out that of all the events, the Christ-event is central because its significance stretches from creation to the end of time, and epitomizes all other special acts of God in history. Therefore all the events in the past (OT) are interpreted in the light of the Christ-event, and all future events are likewise consequential of that event. This is another way of saying that these events are to be understood in a context of promise-and-fulfillment. We now stand "in the midst of a stream of salvation history," which will be consummated only at the end of history (ibid., 99-100, 293).


interpretation because history is self-interpreting.¹

In the theory of revelation as event, we observe one common emphasis: the limitation of revelation to certain events or to universal history per se which is a clear departure from the personal nature of revelation as espoused by the preceding theory. However, the two ideas of revelation as event differ in their emphasis on the human role. The first minimizes it because both event and interpretation of the event originated with God. The second maximizes the human role because it assigns to man—to his intellectual powers—the gigantic responsibility of showing that history and its events are indeed a revelation of God.²

**Theories of Inspiration³**

In the preceding pages, we saw how differently revelation has been understood by various authors, and how they allow less or more room for man's role in revelation. Those different ways of understanding revelation are similarly reflected in the understanding of

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²When interpretation is left to man, reason is the tool to be employed. Because of this, Platcher considers Pannenberg a theologian of reason. See William C. Platcher, "Revealed to Reason: Theology as 'Normal Science,'" *The Christian Century*, 19 February, 1992, 192.

inspiration. The human role likewise varies in degree from one theory to another. We shall consider the following six theories.

Dictation Inspiration

The dictation theory holds that God gave us the Bible by means of a supernatural dictation by the Holy Spirit to the sacred writers of Scriptures. In this dictation, nothing is left to man's own judgment. "All the words, without exception, contained [in Scripture]..."

'The Jews, who were the precursors of the dictation theory, believe that "the whole Pentateuch [was] dictated by God." Moses's Torah was but "a copy of the heavenly original" (Daniel Shürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Times of Jesus Christ* [175 B.C.–A.D. 135], trans. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, vol. 2 [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973], 316, 315). The Jewish belief in the heavenly origin of the Torah was so deep that whoever does not believe in that "has no share in the world to come" (ibid., 315). The Torah is eternal. It existed in heaven before creation; and the world was created for the Torah. See Alfred Edersheim, *A History of the Jewish Nation: After the Destruction of Jerusalem Under Titus*, rev. Henry A. Dwight (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1954), 313-314. The notion of dictation inspiration was also an early teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. This was supported by the Council of Trent (1545-1563). See *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Original Text with English Translation, trans. H. J. Schroeder (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Books, 1941), 17. This position was also reaffirmed verbatim by Vatican I (1869-70). See *Dogmatic Canons and Decrees: Authorized Translations of the Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent, the Decree of the Immaculate Conception, the Syllabus of Pope Pius IX, and the Decrees of Vatican Council* (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1912), 8. Vatican II (1962-65; "Dei Verbum"), however, while still affirming the inspiration of the Bible, yet dropped out the phrase "dictation of the Holy Ghost" in favor of "at the prompting of the Holy Spirit." An added emphasis of Vatican II is the need for the recognition of literary forms in order to arrive at a correct understanding of the text. Moreover, while the word "inerrant" is retained to describe the effect of inspiration, it seems that it is limited only to the writer's intention and the overall purpose of Scripture, namely, salvation. See *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, gen. ed., Austin Flannery, pref. John Cardinal Wright (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1957), 753, 756-58. Furthermore, and in the manner of a reminder, the council states that all interpretation of Scripture must be finally ratified by or "subject to the judgment of the church which exercises the divinely conferred commission and ministry of watching over and interpreting the Word of God" (ibid., 753, 756).
were dictated by the Holy Spirit to the pen of prophets and apostles. "1 The Bible writers "neither spoke nor wrote any word of their own, but uttered syllable by syllable as the Spirit put it into their mouths."2 The Scripture was "entirely dictated by the Holy Ghost; it gives us the very words of God; it is entirely . . . given by the breath of God."3 "The very phrases of which [Scripture] is composed have been given by him."4 The necessity of God's choosing "his own words" in writing Scripture resides in the fact that the matter that he wanted to share with man is so "important and delicate" that only dictation can ensure a

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1David Hollaz/or Hollazius (d. 1713) in Christian Dogmatics, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 66. The inspiration of the words "was necessary to the proper expression of the mind of the Holy Spirit. For the prophets and apostles were not at liberty to clothe the divine meaning in those words which they might of their own accord select; but it was their duty to adhere to, and depend upon, the oral dictation of the Holy Spirit, so that they might commit the sacred Scriptures to writing in the order and connection so graciously and excellently given, and in which they would appear in perfect accordance with the mind of the Holy Spirit" (Hollaz quoted in Heinrich Schmid, The Doctrine of Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, trans. Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobson, 5th ed. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1876), 65. According to Berkhof, "the climax of [the dictation idea of inspiration was brought about by] the Swiss Formula Consensus (1675) which declared the Masoretic Text fully inspired, including its consonants and vowel points. For if anything remains doubtful on this point, in principle the authority of all Scripture collapses." See Hendrickus Berkhof, The Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith, trans. Sierd Woudstra, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 95; see also Moody, 46.

2Richard Hooker (d. 1600), in Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace Book, Designed for the Use of Theological Students, 3 vols. in one (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1944), 208.


4Ibid., 67.
"correct" expression of how he wanted it said.\(^1\)

This theory exclusively limits inspiration to God's action, with the result that man, in the event of inspiration, is completely passive, reduced to a mere hand, or stenographer,\(^2\) and hence, psychologically and intellectually detached from the content of inspiration. The genuine and active involvement of his various faculties is therefore virtually suspended from the writing.


Berkhof (The *Christian Faith*, 95) observed that the dictation theory of inspiration as expounded by Protestant scholasticism left "no room for the individual authors of the Bible other than that of being stenographers of the dictation of the Spirit; an inspiration which also pertains to chronological, geographical, and physical data and which left no room for deviation and contradiction among the writers." With respect to the diversity of styles observed in the Bible, this was attributed to the accommodation of the Holy Spirit. His versatility is such that he has no difficulty in accommodating it with perfection (Schmid, 65).

\(^2\)Athenagoras, the 2nd-century apologist, said that during inspiration the prophets and apostles were "lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the Divine Spirit, uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit making use of them as a flute-player breathes into a flute." See *The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagoras*, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. 2, trans. Marcus Dods, George Reith, and B. P. Pratten (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1868), 384. In Bromiley's observation, the acceptance of Scripture as a divine product produced through passive human agents was a common view from the early church to the medieval period. See Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "Inspiration, the History of," *ISBE* (June 1990), 2:849-851; hereafter cited as "Bromiley, *ISBE* 2." Bruce Vawter observed that the concept of God as author of Scripture, and the prophets and apostles as his writing instruments, was of patristic origin. See Bruce Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 31, 34-35. Similarly, James D. G. Dunn noted that the 17th century scholastic Protestantism espoused the dictation theory of inspiration and conceived the Bible writers as "living and writing pens." See James D. G. Dunn, *The Living Word* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 90-91.
Verbal-Plenary Inspiration

According to advocates of this theory, inspiration is an "absolutely unique and specifically different . . . divine influence" exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of

1James Oliver Buswell observed that "verbal" and "plenary" inspiration are used interchangeably. However, quite "frequently, the two words are coupled together to avoid any ambiguity." See James Oliver Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 186.


2Lee, 242; italics original.
God" so that what they wrote was without error because the Holy Spirit "commanded their gifts and abilities." The inerrant nature of the writings is due to their having been "breathed out" (theopneustos) by God, which some see as a metaphor for his speaking.

So, when Paul says "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16), he is in effect saying that "every word [hence, plenary] written was exactly the word God wanted written, so that Scripture is not only the words of men but also the words of God."

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2Turretin (pp. 54, 237-238) said that while under inspiration, the prophets and apostles "made no mistakes . . . not even in matters of little significance, because if they did, faith in the whole of Scripture would be turned into doubt." Outside of inspiration, however, they were men like us, subject to errors and moral lapses. Since all of Scripture has been written under inspiration, "whatever contradictions seem to be in Scripture are apparent but not real. [They appear] only with respect to the understanding of us who are not able to perceive and grasp everywhere their harmony. They are not in the material itself" (ibid., 61).

Lindsell (The Bible in the Balance, 14-15) too holds a similar view regarding the inerrancy of Scripture—not only that this quality of Scripture was brought about by the action of the Holy Spirit upon the Bible writers, but that the Bible itself plainly teaches this doctrine. Moreover, "once inerrancy is abandoned, it inevitably results in further concessions and points in the direction of apostasy." And those who believe in the teaching of an apostate church cannot be saved. The inerrancy of Scripture is pervasive; it includes "values, the meaning system and religious things, . . . [and also] when it speaks of history and the cosmos." See Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian World View*, vol. 2, *A Christian View of the Bible as Truth*, 2d ed. (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1985), 120, 146.


5For those who identify this theory of inspiration with dictation, James I. Packer says that such an identification is "a man of straw," for none of the Christian theologians from the Reformation till now has ever held it. "And certainly" none of the modern evangelicals. Although the word dictation sometimes is still used by some evangelical
writers, yet it is often used figuratively to show the identicalness of the writer's thought with that of God and not with "psychological overtones." James I. Packer, 'Fundamentalism' and the Word of God: Some Evangelical Principles (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 79. See also Arthur Gabriel Herbert, Fundamentalism and the Church of God (London: SCM Press, 1957), 56; Lee, xxxi.

The correlation between inerrant manuscripts (autographs) and sinful human writers is also made possible by the supernatural intensive and comprehensive preparation of the writers so that they were able to write exactly "what [God] intended" (Packer, Fundamentalism, 80; see also idem, God Has Spoken [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979], 100; Warfield, Inspiration and Authority, 155-156. Moreover, the emphasis on inerrancy points to the text as the focal point of inspiration. "The object of inspiration is not the inspiration of the men but the books—not the writers but the writings." See James M. Grey, "Doctrine of the Bible—Definition, Extent and Proof," in The Fundamentals for Today, ed. Charles L. Feinberg, Jubilee Year ed., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1958), 126; italics original.

The production of Scripture through the breath of God is likened to the creation of the hosts of heaven by means of the same breath (Ps 33:6) (Packer, God Has Spoken, 98). Warfield explains this phenomenon by pointing to the Greek term theopneustos as meaning "breathed out" ("spiring" or "spiration") and not "breathed into" ("inspiring" or "inspiration") because Scripture is not the product of divine in-breathing into its human authors but that it is breathed out by God. It is the "product of the creative breath of God." This means that Scriptures are a divine product. The Holy Spirit does not breathe into the writers so that it becomes a human product. "Men were moved by the divine initiative and borne by the irresistible power of the Spirit of God along ways of his choosing to ends of his appointment" (Warfield, Inspiration and Authority, 133, 153); Grudem, "Scripture's Self-attestation," 57-58; see also Lindsell, The Bible in the Balance, 12. One of the favorite analogies for illustrating the divine-human nature of Scripture has been that of the divine-human nature of Jesus Christ. See Lee, ix, xi, xiii; Gerhard Hasel, Biblical Interpretation Today (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1985), 101, 113.

Those who espouse the inspiration of the reader instead of the text (as is stressed by the dictation and verbal-plenary theories of inspiration) said that this is indicated by the unevenness of authority of Scripture where some texts are found to be readily significant and thereby are formative and normative, while others remain only nominally normative. Inspiration is therefore identified with the apprehension of the Bible as God's message of salvation. This means that inspiration is instrumental ("inspiring") rather than normative ("inspired") (See Kern Robert Trembath, "Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration: A Review and Proposal" [Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame University, 1984], 215, 168). For an elaboration of this attempt at locating inspiration in the readers/community—i.e., the social theory of inspiration—in the form of enrichment and transformation, see William J. Abraham, The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture (Oxford: Oxford University, 1981), 63-65, 71-72; and Trembath, 131, 133-134, 141, 145, 193-195, 230-233.
such a way that their thinking and writing was *both* free and spontaneous on their part *and* divinely elicited and controlled, and what they wrote was not only their own work but also God's work.¹

According to Warfield, "revelation is but half revelation unless it be infallibly communicated, it is but half communicated unless it be infallibly recorded."²

This theory claims inspiration is a cooperative effort involving both the divine and the human. The divinity of the writings is indicated by their inerrancy,³ and their humanity is evidenced by their distinct human traits and character such as style and language. The inspiration that allows for God to express his thoughts (revelations) perfectly through imperfect human writers, without mechanically controlling them, is often admitted by supporters of this theory as an "inscrutable mystery."⁴ With respect to the human role, this theory clearly attempts to portray it as being genuinely present—one in which man's faculties were equally involved. But despite its attempts to acknowledge the genuine human role in inspiration, the verbal-plenary theory still subordinates man to the direction and detailed superintendence of the Holy Spirit. This subordination is necessary in order to guarantee the inerrancy of what they wrote.

¹Packer, *Fundamentalism*, 80; italics original. The emphasis on divine control of the writers in order to render their product inerrant is also indicated by Packer in *God Has Spoken*, 97-98.

²Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority*, 442.

³Since inerrancy is limited only to the autographs, "inspiration [therefore] belongs only to the autographs." See Hodge and Warfield, 42.

Limited Verbal Inspiration

Clark H. Pinnock defines inspiration as a "divine activity accompanying the preparation and production of the Scriptures."¹ Inspiration, however, does not extend to every word nor is it to be equated with "perfect errorlessness" of the Warfieldian type.² That is, inspiration is not to be equated with inerrancy as fundamentalists and their followers understand it.³ The Bible is inspired in its broad and practical sense. Inspiration refers "to the sufficiency of Scripture through the Spirit of God to nourish and instruct the church for its faith and life, and not to an abstract perfection." Inspiration refers to Scripture's ability "to bring us to know and to love God in Jesus Christ and to nurture us in that saving relationship."⁴ Inspiration is to be correlated with the purpose of the Bible, which is "to witness to the salvation of God and to faith" and not to provide us with "a scientific gnosis in order to convey and increase human knowledge and wisdom."⁵

³Ibid., 66.
⁴Clark H. Pinnock, "Theological Table Talk. Evangelicals and Inerrancy: The Current Debate," Theology Today 35 (April 1978): 67. The "focussed purpose of the Bible . . . [is to] lead us to know God and love God in Christ and to grow to maturity in him, not to be a textbook giving scientific particulars that can be found by empirical research. It is a religious classic, operating in a specialized area, and not running a competition to the sciences" (idem, The Scripture Principle, 69, 127).
⁵G. C. Berkouwer, Holy Scripture, Studies in Dogmatics, trans. Jack B. Rogers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 178, 180. Stephen T. Davis, who identifies himself with this view and who suggests that it be called "limited inerrancy," holds that inspiration refers to the Bible's trustworthiness on matters of faith and practice but not on science and...
Bible is therefore inspired and/or inerrant only insofar as it deals with "revelational truths" and not with "non-revelational matters."¹

This theory, like the preceding one, accepts the Bible as both divine and human.

¹Daniel P. Fuller, "Benjamin B. Warfield's View of Faith and History: A Critique in the Light of the New Testament," Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society 2 (Spring 1968): 81, hereafter cited as "Fuller, 'Warfield's View'." For Fuller, inerrancy should be limited to the writer's or writing's ability to fulfill his/its intended purpose, namely, "to give the correct meaning of God's redemptive acts in history." Nonrevelational matters, on the other hand, may be errantly understood, but they can nevertheless be effectively used for the service of revealed truths. See Daniel P. Fuller, "The Nature of Biblical Inerrancy," Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation 24 (June 1972): 47, 49-50.


Berkouwer distinguishes between time-bound and timeless elements. The latter belongs "to the depth of the Gospel." The time-bound elements are essential "in order to hear the Word of God," and should therefore be taken seriously because "God's words themselves cannot be understood in their content and meaning without this time-relatedness." The time-related material, however, must be reckoned "in the context of the goal of Scripture" (Berkouwer, 186-190; italics original). For God to communicate with man, he has to do so in the language and thought categories that man uses and understands. But since man's language is culturally and historically conditioned, God had to accommodate himself to this finite and fallible human language. For instance, Christ pointed to the mustard seed as being the smallest of seeds which, in actuality, is not the case. But he accommodated himself to the common thinking of that time "in order not to divert their attention from the knowledge of the salvation he was about to bring to their souls" (Fuller, "Warfield's View," 81-82). For an articulate defense of the theory of accommodation, Rogers and McKim, xvii, 53-55, 126-127. Rogers and McKim are particularly strong in their assertion that salvation is the Bible's true and central function. "The purpose of the Bible is to warn against human sin and offer us God's salvation in Christ. Scripture infallibly achieves that purpose" (ibid., 391, 45). See also Vawter, 162, 169-170.
However, it is clear that proponents of this theory see the human side of the Bible differently from those holding to the plenary-verbal theory. They see it as including errors, inconsistencies, and similar human lapses. As far as they are concerned, there is no such simple equation of the words of men being simultaneously the words of God. Inspiration as a divine method for communication of revelation should therefore be limited only to areas of knowledge that man on his own cannot discover for himself. Man's role in this theory is accordingly one that is less restrained by supernatural power and more free to express himself in matters that are not directly connected with salvation; that is, on those that he himself can know or has already known.

Dynamical Inspiration

In the dynamical theory,\textsuperscript{1} inspiration is the work of God within man's soul, rather

\textsuperscript{1}Charles F. Baker observes that the dynamical theory is commonly held by liberal Protestant theologians. See Charles F. Baker, \textit{A Dispensational Theology}, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College Publications, 1972), 41. In essence, this theory and the one preceding it primarily stress the spiritual-moral function as the main purpose of inspiration. Accordingly, both can be classified as dynamical. However, I choose to place them as two separate heads because some advocates of the limited verbal theory, such as Davis, object to the limiting of the infallibility of the Bible only to the salvific as being too restrictive, for it amounts to providing "insufficient cloth to cover the entire range of Scripture" (Davis, 47). Moreover, in the case of those holding to the limited verbal theory, there is still an emphasis on the importance of paying attention to the words of Scripture as being also the words of God—e.g., Berkouwer (pp. 139, 143, 145).

than a communication of knowledge and information from without.\(^1\) It is a "supernatural influence upon [the] minds"\(^2\) of the sacred writers so that they were enabled to have an insight "into truths . . . far beyond" their natural abilities. The truths enunciated by them, however, are religious and moral in nature.\(^3\) William Sanday, for instance, held that since biblical criticism has shown the Bible to be incorrect in historical, geographical, archaeological, and scientific matters, inspiration should accordingly be limited to the religious or spiritual areas of human knowledge. Based on this limitation, some portions of Scripture are seen to be fully inspired while others are hardly inspired.\(^4\) Moreover, since only religious and ethical truths are infallible, the Bible then no longer is but contains the Word of God.\(^5\)

This theory takes for granted the humanness of the Bible and explicitly correlates it with errors in the historical, geographical, and other human sciences. Unlike the previous theory that recognizes direct divine inspiration, this one prefers to speak of it in terms of a supernatural suggestion. While the limited verbal theory attributes to God as the originator of religious matters of the Bible, including even their verbal formulation, this one gives more credit to man even for origination of the religioethical truths enshrined in Scripture.

\(^1\)Strong, 211.

\(^2\)Trembath observed that Strong was the first among the evangelicals to locate inspiration in contemporary readers instead of in the Bible (Trembath, 97).

\(^3\)Ibid., 215.


\(^5\)Geisler and Nix, 158.
According to C. H. Dodd, inspiration is a Spirit-induced "intense feeling," or an "arousal within," or an "elevation" of the mind to the extent that the writer is able to give expression to a highly creative and ingenious message. Inspiration and illumination are "the same in kind, though the former is greater in degree," because the Holy Spirit is the one who inspired and illumined. In inspiration, there is no communication of truth but only a heightening of the prophet's natural powers and ability. In other words, the prophet "does not communicate objective truth beyond his ability to discover or understand." G. W. H. Lampe, an advocate of the illumination theory of inspiration, says that it is a mental capacity elevated by the Holy Spirit, centered upon the believer's testimony to Jesus Christ, and seen in its most sublime form in the testimony of a martyr. This means that inspiration continues to the present, and for Dewey M. Beegle, it is even found in the

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2 Strong, 204.


4 Strong, 204.

writings of the Fathers, the Apocrypha, and the great inspiring Christian hymns.¹

Similar to the preceding theory, this one too is practically oblivious the transmission of revelational truths from without. Instead, it makes man the basis and source, and attributes to him intellectual and spiritual precocity which, when under divine stirrings of his latent creative powers, is capable of articulating truths and teachings that otherwise would not be possible under normal conditions.

Social or Ecclesial Inspiration

Inspiration is not a one-time event of the prophet writing down Scripture; rather, it is a process continuing over a considerable period of time that culminated in the final text.² Moreover, inspiration does not belong only to a small number of exceptional persons like St. Matthew or St. Paul, but extends over a large number of anonymous persons so that it is proper to consider inspiration as belonging to the community as a whole rather than to a group of quite exceptional individuals who through unique inspiration "gave" the scriptures to the community.³

Inspiration occurs within the community—the custodian and generator of oral traditions out of which evolved the written texts of Scripture. In a way, inspiration is a

¹Dewey M. Beegle, The Inspiration of Scripture (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 139-141; 174, 192, 233. Note: Beegle’s book was later revised and expanded, with a new title, Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility (1973). However, his basic arguments remain unchanged. Beegle’s position seems to imply that inspiration is a continuing experience of God’s people throughout the ages. This view is also supported by Abraham; see Abraham, 71-73, 75.


³Ibid.
"process of reinterpretation" of the traditions by the community of faith, in the face of a new situation.¹ Inspiration and community cannot be separated; neither should Scripture and community be separated. They "develop together, and cannot be understood apart from each other."² Robert Gnuse sees the process of inspiration as follows:

God—Community—Tradition—Scripture.³

This theory, like the one that precedes, shifts the locus of inspiration from God to man and, in this case, to the entire community of faith. This shift creates a distance between God and inspiration and correlates the latter with the community's faith, response, and reformulation of the traditions, pointing to the community (or the church) not only as


²Achtemeier, 115; Barr, Holy Scripture, 26.

³Gnuse, 111. Similar views have also been expressed by Dodd, Authority of the Bible, 17-20, 22, 24-25, 29; and DeWolfe, 76. According to Gnuse (p. 51), Roman Catholics are the primary exponents of the social theory of inspiration. Vawter (pp. 106, 158-59), a Catholic scholar, understands inspiration as a response of the community to the utterance/s of the primary author. Those involved in the creation of the biblical texts—writers, copyists, editors, redactors, and responders and interpreters such as the church Fathers, the doctors and theologians as well as the deliberation of the councils and the dogmatic decisions of the Magisterium—are all "agents of the inspired community." Inspiration should also be attached to the Spirit's continuing direction of the church "in the way of truth." Inspiration is therefore a "collective" phenomenon. See Pierre Benoit, Aspects of Biblical Inspiration, trans. J. Murphy-O'Connor and S. K. Ashe (Chicago: Priory Press, 1965), 31-35, 25-26. John L. McKenzie, a vigorous Roman Catholic exponent of social inspiration, looks at "the community of the people of God, Israel and the Church" as "the vehicle of inspiration." See John L. McKenzie, Myths and Realities: Studies in Biblical Theology (Milwaukee: Bruce Pub. Co., 1963), 68; 59-69; John L. McKenzie, "Inspiration," DB, 1965, 392. See also James Tunstead Burtchaell, "Inspiration," NDCT (1989): 303; idem, Catholic Theories of Inspiration Since 1810: A Review and Critique (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 295, 302, where he also projects a similar social view of inspiration by viewing the Bible as a product of believers of the past era.
the one responsible for the production of Scriptures, but also indirectly pointing to the community as a basis of interpretation and authorization of Scripture.

The Divine Role in Revelation-Inspiration: A Synthesis

The preceding pages have briefly described the various theories of revelation and inspiration and have also shown how each has shifted its focus either to God or man, or, in some cases, to both. In this section and in the one that follows, a synthesis is attempted of the theories of revelation and inspiration based on their portrayal of the divine and human roles. The synthesis in this section combines one or two theories of revelation with one or two theories of inspiration that seem to share an equal degree of interest or disinterest in the divine role. The procedure of beginning with revelation and of tagging to it inspiration is also in line with the traditional understanding that revelation logically and noetically precedes inspiration, and the two are integral to each other.¹ I begin with those theories that maximize the divine role and end with those that minimize that role.

The theory of the Bible as revelation speaks of an initiating, active God who takes the entire responsibility in transmitting revelation to mankind. Not only is he the author of Scripture, but it is also he who determines when, how, and through whom revelation should

¹Revelation is conceived as the "acquirement" of truth and inspiration as the "communication" of that truth. See Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority*, 421. Geisler and Nix (p. 41) describe the relationship between revelation and inspiration as follows: "Revelation is the fact of divine communication; inspiration is the means of divine communication; and interpretation is the process of understanding the divine communication" (italics supplied). Seen from this perspective, revelation refers to that which God discloses to the prophets and apostles, and inspiration, to the method by which God enables the prophets and apostles to articulate and/or record that which has been revealed, so that the rest of mankind can get access to it.
be made available. God determines the content of revelation, chooses the quality as well as quantity of persons through whom revelation is to be relayed, and decides the form in which it is to be made available to mankind. This theory of revelation places a primary emphasis on the transcendence and sovereignty of God. It shows him to be from beyond and above man, who enters the latter's world on his own terms, authority, and choice, and who delivers his will on his own choosing, and holds mankind responsible for the reception or rejection of revelation.

This notion of revelation seems to find a natural/logical correspondence with the dictation theory of inspiration, where we again observe God playing a dominant and active role. In this theory, we see God playing the primary role in writing. He chooses, conditions, and prepares the men so that they do what he bids them do. He converts them into skillful stenographers, dictates the messages, and enables them to take down the dictation with skill and accuracy. He even chooses the literary style in which the message is to be conveyed. A similar depiction of the overwhelming divine role is also presented by the verbal-plenary theory of inspiration. There, too, we see God through his Spirit, actively influencing, elevating the writer's psychical and emotive faculties, and superintending his chosen writers so that they are prevented from any human error in thought or meaning or even the choice of words.

This emphasis on the transcendence and sovereignty of God is also seen in the theory of revelation as encounter. In this view God, by virtue of his own sovereignty, chooses those whom he will encounter, when, and how. In the theory of the Bible as revelation however, revelation exists in propositional truths. But in revelation as encounter
one waits or depends upon God for revelation. It is God who decides when that encounter should take place and through what medium.\(^1\) And when that takes place, it is God's person and not propositional truths that is the essence of revelation.

The other theories, however, seem to limit the emphasis on the divine role. This deemphasis is seen in revelation as event (revelation in history), where God's revealing activity is curtailed only to certain events in history characterized as redemptive. There, God is still portrayed as being wholly active and responsible in setting the stage for the

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One of those who reacted to the excesses of liberalism—especially to its unquestioned faith in the goodness of man and his progress and consequent betterment of this world—was Karl Barth. His reaction became public in 1918, through his publication of *Der Römerbrief* (E.T.: *The Epistle to the Romans*). The commentary not only marked the end of liberal theology but the ascendancy of neoorthodoxy. In fact, according to Hordern (p. 93) neoorthodoxy arose out of the breakdown of liberalism. It rejected the latter's emphasis on the immanence of God, the goodness of man, the authority of religious experience, and the gradual coming of the kingdom of God on earth. Over and against these Barth emphasized the transcendence and holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the saving revelation of the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ, and justification by faith in Jesus Christ. According to Barth, the qualitative difference between God and man is the "theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy." See Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., trans. Edwyn Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 10, 365; see also Van A. Harvey, "Neo-Reformed Theology," *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1964), 162-163, hereafter cited as "Harvey, Theological Terms."
events, causing them to happen, ordaining human personalities for participating in them, and giving the meaning or interpretation of the events by means of certain men who God himself had chosen. But as has been pointed out, this theory has already anticipated a reduced emphasis on the divine role. Accordingly, only those portions of Scripture that are connected with redemptive events are to be accepted as revelatory and hence authoritative and normative. The rest of Scripture is to be regarded as a human product and is accordingly subject to limitations and errors.

A similar limitation of God's role is also hinted at by the limited verbal theory of inspiration. In that theory, God is portrayed not as one who overrules and controls the writers so that they are guarded from any form of error in what they wrote. Rather, he is presented as one who limits his inspirational activities only to those matters of Scripture that have to do with man's salvation and the spiritual-moral well-being of the church. It is only in that sense that the Bible is inspired, hence inerrant. The rest of the Bible need not be without errors because God has not chosen to control the writers as rigidly as is projected by the dictation and verbal-plenary theories of inspiration.

A further limitation of the divine role is seen in revelation as experience—a theory that ultimately ends up deemphasizing both the transcendence and sovereignty of God by stressing his immanence and active presence within man. God no longer is seen working alone from without. Rather, he is portrayed as working from within man and collaborating with him. No more is God seen as "pouring" into man's mind the contents of revelation (e.g., the Bible as revelation), or even controlling the time as well as number of persons who should have that revelation. Neither does God control the content of revelation,
because in this theory it is difficult to make a distinction between divine revelation and human spiritual discovery and enlightenment.

This eclipsing of the role of God in revelation is also seen in the theory of revelation as event theory, particularly one that views revelation as history. This theory does not permit God to occupy a crucial role in revelation, namely, the interpretation of history itself. The theory assumes man's natural ability to interpret history, and so precludes God's part in giving the interpretation. Closely aligned with this theory is the dynamical theory of inspiration that presents the divine role only as an indirect or secondary communicator of truths and which further delimits the divine role in inspiration only to the religious and moral spheres of knowledge. The same can also be said of the illumination theory. In that theory too the divine role is confined to the supernatural removal of the mental and spiritual veil so as to enable man to see and express a highly ingenious and insightful message. In this theory, God is presented as responsible for setting into motion the religious and moral powers of man so that he can discover for himself the truths needed for life.

A further reduction of the divine role is also seen in reason as revelation, where the divine role is completely absent in revelation. God no longer is the author of revelation because all that needs to be known is assigned and ascribed to human reasoning power. The power of reason to discover God's will by itself shows how little need there is for God's involvement. A similar diminution of the divine role is illustrated by the social theory of inspiration. In that theory, God is hardly seen at work. The making of Scripture arose out of the community's faith, need, and response to its religious traditions. The
putting together of the sacred books is seen as an evolutionary process rather than a divine action.

**The Human Role in Revelation-Inspiration: A Synthesis**

This section follows the pattern of the one that precedes. The point of commencement, however, differs. It begins with those theories that minimize or marginalize the human role and ends with those that maximize or centralize that role.

Perhaps the first theory that strikes us with its minimization or even negation of the human role is the theory of revelation as encounter. This theory not only attributes all revelation to God but creates a wide gulf between God and man, so much so that the latter is considered as being completely unable to inform himself about God on the basis of his own natural capacity and power.\(^1\) Man's role in revelation is therefore next to nothing. If there is revelation at all, it has to come from above, not from below. When it does come, man can, at the most reflect upon it, and the Bible is a result of that reflection.\(^2\)


\(^2\)"There is no such thing as revealed truths. There are truths of revelation; that is to say, propositions which express the results of correct thinking concerning revelation. But they are not themselves directly revealed" (Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, 317).
marginalization of the human role is also observed in the theory of the Bible as revelation. This theory, like the preceding one, keeps man out of reach of revelation, making him totally dependent upon God. Man is not in a position that he can claim to know the Divine. He has no natural capacity for that kind of knowledge. Left to himself, he would be forever fumbling in uncertainties about God's will. Man is totally left to the mercy of God; and when God finally revealed his will and purpose, man is again portrayed as one passively receiving and recording it.

A similar depiction of the insignificance of the human role is also presented by the dictation theory of inspiration, where the Bible writer is reduced to a stenographer who faithfully, competently, but passively, records all that God dictated. The verbal-plenary theory of inspiration, however, provides some room for the active human involvement because it credits language and literary style to the human author himself. Nevertheless, in substance, man still plays a peripheral role because in things that really matter, such as the

Similarly, Barth also holds that Scripture is only a witness to God's revelation. It is man's word about God's Word (CD 1/2, 463). What is human is bound to be limited and fallible (CD 1/2, 509-510), and should not therefore be directly equated with revelation itself. But it can, nevertheless, become the Word of God because one does encounter God's Word through it (ibid., 481-83, italics supplied). The Bible is unique because it is a witness of the prophets and apostles who were the first witnesses to the unique and contingent revelation (ibid., 486-490). Scripture should be taken seriously and the church should not be ashamed to call herself a book-religion (ibid., 494-96). In this sense, the Bible is the Word of God—not statically but dynamically—through the action of the Holy Spirit (ibid., 508).

A parallel thinking between Barth and Schleiermacher with respect to Scripture is noted. While the former looks at Scripture as a definitive witness to revelation, the latter views it as "the original translation of the Christian feeling [or] consciousness into public language" (see Richard R. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion [London: SCM Press, 1965], 149, 151; see also Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 593, where a similar thought is expressed, namely, Scripture is a detailed expression of the "feeling of need"; it is an expression of Christian piety by a voluntary act of the apostles [ibid., 598]).
content of inspiration and the words to convey it, man has hardly any control over them because those were divinely inspired.

The scales thus far are tipped in favor of the divine role. But the picture changes when we consider the other theories. We see this change in the theory of revelation as event, where there is a conscious and sustained attempt to take into account the human role in revelation. A recognition of the human role can be seen in this theory when we consider its unwillingness to regard the entire Bible as revelation by limiting revelation only to certain biblical events that are characterized as redemptive in nature. The reason for this limitation is that it sees in the Bible, myths and other unreliable materials that are attributed to man. This theory seeks to explain the human elements in Scripture and to account for

1Note, for instance, Wright and Fuller's account of the origin of the Bible on the basis of the historical-critical school, which is further based on evolutionary presuppositions, resulting in their subscription to late dating for most books of the Old Testament, leading them to reject the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and accept as fact the Graf-Wellhausen theory of the Pentateuch (Wright and Fuller, 40-46). All this naturally detaches the Bible from its divine origin and treats it as a human product that has come about through a long process of redaction and editing. Part of Wright and Fuller's acceptance of the critical position is the denial of the detailed reliability of the Bible and a penchant to speak only in terms of general reliability (ibid., 24).

As far as Pannenberg is concerned, the Bible should be regarded as a record or testimony to the "indirect revelation" of God himself to the Judeo-Christian communities. Since it is a witness to this divine revelation through history, the Bible is not to be taken at its textual level as normative. That is, it is not to be normatively consulted "as a direct source for theology." The Bible is only a link in the chain of traditions concerning God's self-disclosure to mankind, the history of this transmission should then be the proper source for "theological ideas." As such, Scripture should be viewed from the vantage point of "revelation as history." Its origin is to be understood as a "process" and not as one "immediately conceived by its authors." See Frank Michael Hasel, "Scripture in the Theologies of W. Pannenberg and D. G. Bloesch: An Investigation and Assessment of its Origin, Nature, and Use" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1994), 114-18. Approaching from this perspective, Pannenberg sees Scripture as containing contradictions in material details as well as in theological matters. See W. Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 193-94.
them from a human perspective, without explaining them away. Further, there is also the other aspect of this theory of revelation as event that attempts to portray the human role in a positive light. It is the one that attributes to man the interpretation of revelation, as espoused by Wright and Fuller (revelation in history). And much more so is the theory of revelation as history, where we see an implicit confidence in man's mental prowess in reading revelation off universal history.

A similar emphasis on the human role is also presented by the limited verbal theory of inspiration. In this theory, man's role enjoys a larger scope, because except for the soteriological matters, the rest of Scripture reflects a human input. And because it is a human contribution, errors, inconsistencies, and contradictions are not only to be expected, but form as a solid evidence for a genuinely human element of Scripture. The pervasiveness of the human role is also presented by the dynamical theory which not only confines inspiration of the Bible to those areas dealing with the moral and religious principles, but attributes their origination to the human mind that has been triggered by divine influence.

\[1\text{See note 2 of p. 13 above.}\]

\[2\text{Davis said, "I also agree with Fuller that the Bible contains historical and scientific errors. And I agree that such errors have no serious theological or apologetic consequences" (see Davis, 44, 95-107). Pinnock also considers the following as myths: the creation in six literal days, the Flood, Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt, the tower of Babel, Yahweh's fighting with the sea-monster (Ps 74:13-14), the night hags (Isa 34:14), the rock that followed Moses in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:4), the saints being raised at the time of Christ's crucifixion (Matt 27:52), and the sick being healed through contact with pieces of cloth that touched Paul's body (Acts 19:11-12). These are not only mythical, but they all legitimately belong to the literary device called "myth," which was commonly used by the ancients, and which we must accept and treat as such (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle, 119-20, 123-24, 126).}\]
The habitual tendency to view the nature of revelation and inspiration from a human perspective is also illustrated by the theory of revelation as experience. In this case, the human role is cast in a positive light where man's nature is claimed as being transparent to the divine presence. This optimistic attitude toward human nature is also indicated by the enlarging of a possibility for revelation to any man outside of the biblical authors. A similar stress on the primacy of the human role is also indicated by the illumination theory of inspiration, where it plainly exhibits an exalted respect for the human mental and psychical powers by affirming their capacity for generation of divine-like truths.

A maximum reliance on man for revelation is indicated by the theory of reason as revelation. This theory totally rules out the divine role in revelation, or at best considers it redundant. The theory eliminates the divine element in revelation because the human mind is assumed to be tenacious and resourceful enough to arrive at divine principles and formulations. Man at his best, and with sufficient time, can arrive at or infallibly deduce God's existence, nature, and will from the multiplicity of experiences, knowledge bank, and insights. In this theory man's mind is seen as being able to penetrate God's mind; therefore God is not needed for revelation. The social/ecclesial theory of inspiration likewise champions the primacy of the human role in the formation of Scripture. This theory looks at the Bible from an evolutionary perspective and sees its development and formation to be primarily that of a human endeavor.

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1Williams, 190.
Henry's Doctrines of Revelation and Inspiration

During the last few decades, there has been a growing concern over the erosion of the Bible's authority due to a heavy emphasis on the human role in revelation and inspiration.\textsuperscript{1} Strong voices of protest emanated from within a group of conservative American Protestant scholars called evangelicals.\textsuperscript{2} They appealed for a return to classical

\textsuperscript{1}It must be noted that although neoorthodoxy heroically tried to restore the divine role in revelation, yet it did little to restore the authority of the Bible, because it had come to understand revelation differently from the view that has been traditionally held. Consequently, instead of regarding the Bible as revelation, it regarded it only as a human witness to revelation. And since it is a human work, it is pockmarked with errors and inconsistencies. (See Lightner, 14-15; David L. Mueller, \textit{Karl Barth, Makers of the Modern Theological Mind Series}, ed. Bob E. Patterson [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1992], 55; Bloesch, \textit{Holy Scripture}, 102-03).

\textsuperscript{2}Dulles (\textit{Models}, 37-38) calls those American evangelicals "conservative evangelicals"; while Mark A. Noll prefers to term them "postfundamentalists" (Mark A. Noll, \textit{The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind} [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; London: Inter-Varsity, 1994], 213-215). According to Larry Dean Sharp, American evangelicalism is generally characterized by its emphasis on the importance of (1) revivalism; (2) experience of conversion or regeneration as a requisite to salvation; (3) a holy life of worship and service (piety); and more particularly, (4) the apostolic Gospel (\textit{Euangelion}); (5) the Reformation principle of Scriptural authority for faith and practice; (6) a complete system of Christian ethics—individual and social; (7) apologetics; (8) evangelism; (9) education/scholarship; and (10) evangelical unity/fellowship as distinct from the modern ecumenical movement. See Larry Dean Sharp, "Carl Henry: Neo-Evangelical Theologian" (D.Min. diss., Vanderbilt University Divinity School, 1972), 12, 31-35.

Because characteristics nos. 5-10 are seen to be more recent than the rest, those who align themselves with these are also called neoevangelicals. Henry was one of those responsible for bringing neoevangelicalism to public prominence by his publication of \textit{The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism} that soon after became the "manifesto of Neo-evangelicalism" (see Carl F. H. Henry, \textit{The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism} [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947]). His efforts in the evangelical social and political involvement were not only "extraordinary" but made him "the most visible figure" among evangelicals. Others closely connected with the evangelical cause at about the same time with Henry were: Harold J. Ockenga, Edward John Carnell, and Billy Graham. See Noll, 212-215, 221-222; Dirk William Jellema, "Ethics," in \textit{Contemporary Evangelical Thought}, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Great Neck, NY: Channel Press, 1957), 130; see also Bob E. Patterson, \textit{Carl F. H. Henry}, Makers of the Modern Theological Mind

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Christianity as propounded by the Reformers, by which they meant a return to the Bible as the revealed Word of God. They also underscore the reinstatement of the traditional understanding of revelation and inspiration, but in a manner that is consistent and rationally supported. Such heroic attempts epitomize the faith and mission of evangelicals, and foremost among them is Carl F. H. Henry. To him belongs the credit for being the evangelical theologian who has addressed the doctrines of revelation and inspiration with significant depth and length. Since this study focuses on the human role in Henry's Series (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983), 14, 39, hereafter cited as "Patterson, CFH"; Joel A. Carpenter, "Introduction," in Two Reformers of Fundamentalism: Harold John Ockenga and Carl F. H. Henry, ed. Joel A. Carpenter (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1988).


2Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, 20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 288; based on the section titled "Carl F. H. Henry: The Evangelical Alternative to Modernism." This evangelical endeavor is also meant to deal with the crises of modern theology as well as Western civilization itself (ibid., 292, 288, 295-296). According to Hopper, the disagreement between evangelicals and modern theologians over the meaning of revelation, marks a major division within Christendom (Jeffery Hopper, Understanding Modern Theology II: Reinterpreting Christian Faith for Changing Worlds [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], 84); hereafter cited as "Hopper II."

3Grenz and Olson, 288; R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "Foreword," in Carl F. H. Henry, Gods of This Age or . . . God of the Ages? (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), v; hereafter cited as "Henry, Gods or God?"; and Patterson, CFH, 30, 32, 35. Dulles (Models, 212) likewise considers Henry as "a leading representative" of the conservative evangelical idea of identifying revelation with the Bible.

4Consult, for instance, his magnum opus—God, Revelation and Authority, 6 vols. (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976-1983); and in particular, volumes 2-4, with vol. 4 concentrating on biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and interpretation. Hereafter, reference to any of these volumes is cited as GRA, followed by the volume number in Arabic numeral.
doctrines of revelation and inspiration, it is therefore appropriate that I briefly introduce herewith his views on these doctrines in a manner that keeps the human role in sharp focus.

Revelation

Revelation is God's free and voluntary disclosure of himself. This disclosure is primarily meant for mankind's benefit, in order that he may have the privilege of knowing God—his existence, nature, and will—without ambiguity and uncertainty. This knowledge,

These volumes (GRA) are in addition to his major articles and similar presentation on the subjects, that are fully documented in chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation. In brief, however, and in addition to GRA, Henry's major treatment of revelation has been found in the following sources: "Revelation, Special," BDT, 1964, 456-459; this article is reprinted verbatim in EDT, 1984, 945-948; "Divine Revelation and the Bible," in Inspiration and Interpretation, ed. John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 253-278; hereafter cited as "Henry in Walvoord"; various issues of Christianity Today—examples: "Revelation and the Bible," Parts 1, 2, Christianity Today, 9 June 1958, 5-7 and 23 June 1958, 15-17; hereafter cited as "Henry, Revelation and the Bible—1" and "Henry, Revelation and the Bible—2," respectively; "Basic Issues in Modern Theology: Revelation in History," Parts 1, 2, Christianity Today, 20 November 1964, 17-20 and 4 December 1964, 13-15; and in "Seminar on Revelation," Seminar held in Indianapolis, IA, 18-20 July 1969, Special Collections, E. S. Bird Library, Syracuse University Syracuse; sources written by Henry and stored in this library are hereafter cited as "Special Collections." (In this connection, it may also be mentioned that a similar collection of Henry's works, and responses to them, has been made by Rolffing Library, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL 60030, which I visited). Primary sources for Henry's treatment on inspiration include: "Inspiration," BDT, 1964, 286-289; "Inspiration: Honoring the Bible as the Word of God"; "The Authority and Inspiration of the Bible," The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 1:3-35 [hereafter cited as "Henry in Gaebelein"]; "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 1984, 145-148; and "Inspiration," NIDCC, 1974, 512.

1 A presentation of Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration is given in chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation.

2 GRA 2:8.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.
however, is limited only to God's own choosing and determination. That is, revelation does not exhaust his mystery, which means that God "transcends his own revelation." Moreover, since revelation is for humans, it is necessary that every human being gains access to it. Accordingly, God, in his own wisdom, chose to have revelation inscripturated, thus making it available to mankind in the form of Scripture, namely, the Bible.

It is in the Bible that the revelation of God is available to us. The Bible is "the conduit and reservoir" of divine revelation; it is the written revelation. God has revealed himself "in the whole canon of Scripture which objectively communicates in propositional-verbal form the content and meaning of all God's revelation." Furthermore, Henry holds that revelation is rational, because it comes from the divine mind, which is rational in nature. In fact, revelation is defined by him as a rational communication of divine truths.

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1Ibid., 2:9.


4Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 76.

5GRA 2:87.


7As Henry sees it, the significance of the rationality of revelation is that without a rational disclosure of God's nature and ways, religion loses its objective truth. Moreover, only a rational and objective revelation can yield a valid knowledge of the living God.
However, Henry cautions against identifying revelation with reason itself; that is, with the arrival at divine truths and teachings through reasoning. Human reason is neither the source nor the creator of truth;¹ God is the creator and source of truth, and truth is made available through revelation and inspiration.² Revelation, then, is "the only source of truth a man has."³ For that matter, all truth is revelational.⁴ Moreover, since revelation is rational, all men can understand revelation.⁵

The identifying of revelation with the Bible⁶ implies that revelation is objective as

GRA 3:370; 433-438; Mohler, Baptist Theologians, 527.

¹"Human reason is not a source of infallible truth about ultimate reality. Human intelligence is not infinite, and left to itself, man's reasoning all too evidently reflects his finitude." (GRA 1: 91). See also Henry, "Seminar," 36; Kiš, 222; "Theology for the Tent Meeting," Time, 14 February 1977, 82.


⁴Ibid.

⁵GRA 4:250.

⁶The Bible is "an objectively inspired revelation" (GRA 3:206); it is a "proximate revelation" (GRA 1:229). The Bible is "special revelation in its trustworthy form"; it is "the written revelation." See Henry in Walvoord, 256; idem, "Inspiration," NIDCC (1974): 512; see also idem, "The Priority of Divine Revelation: A Review Article," review of Models of Revelation, by Avery Dulles, Journal of Evangelical Theological Society 27 (March 1984): 78, where Henry approvingly quotes Warfield for saying that the Bible is "God's full and final revelation."
well as propositional,\textsuperscript{1} or a concept that is linguistically expressed in a sentence form that is either true or false and therefore can be believed, doubted, denied, or affirmed. This view inevitably brings Henry into conflict with all subjectively-oriented theories of revelation.\textsuperscript{2} In his opinion, any nonobjective theory of revelation will only result in an immunity to revelation, and consequently in a person's excuse for rejecting it.\textsuperscript{3} Henry's repeated criticism of such theories is that they lead to the dangers of subjectivism, mysticism, and skepticism,\textsuperscript{4} from which only an objective revelation can protect us.\textsuperscript{5}

Henry's espousal of the Bible as God's revelation leads him to reject any theory of revelation that undermines the Bible's status as the Word of God, either in part or in whole. Therefore, any selective usage of the Bible "makes a mockery of divine revelation."\textsuperscript{6}

Inspiration

I now turn briefly to Henry's view of inspiration. For him, inspiration has to do

\textsuperscript{1}Henry not only places Christ as God's supreme and climactic revelation, but adds that Christ's words and activities are just as revelatory as is his person. In him revelation manifests itself as being both objective and propositional. His person and words and works belong together (GRA 3:206).

\textsuperscript{2}Patterson observed that Henry's criticism of the subjectively oriented theories of revelation is worked out mostly against neoorthodoxy (see Patterson, CFH, 137).

\textsuperscript{3}Henry, "Inspiration," BDT, 287.

\textsuperscript{4}GRA 3:100, 279; GRA 4:53. See also David Lee Weeks, "The Political Thought of Carl F. H. Henry" (Ph.D. diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 1991), 312.

\textsuperscript{5}GRA 3:431.

\textsuperscript{6}Henry says that we are not to accept as Scriptural or revelational only that which is christological or religious in nature. To do that would mean to compress and limit divine disclosure. The plenary nature of its inspiration precludes us from reducing Scripture to a particular criterion. See GRA 3:208; see also GRA 4:48, 60, 426; and GRA 6:57.
with the direct "activity" and involvement of the Holy Spirit in the prophet's or apostle's communication of revelatory matters through speech and writing. ¹ Since the primary locus of inspiration is the biblical text,² inspiration refers to the Holy Spirit's supervision³ of the Scripture writers so that even the very words used are an outcome of inspiration.⁴ The consequence of this tight supernatural superintendence of the writers is an inerrant, infallible, and trustworthy autographic scriptural text.⁵ Inspiration therefore guarantees the reliableness of the written revelation and becomes for us authoritative and normative.⁶

Henry further says that inspiration does not imply that the Bible is a product of divine dictation.⁷ Such a view, he says, can lead to the acceptance of a set of lifeless dogmas, or a relapse to Catholic ritualism that involves no genuine faith.⁸ Neither does

¹GRA 4:129, 144; Patterson, CFH, 114.
²GRA 4:94, 143-144. Inspiration rests on the writings and not on the writers (GRA 4:74-76). The emphasis on inspiration falls on the text as the authoritative Word of God and not on its modus operandi (Henry in Walvoord, 275-76). For that matter, the mode of inspiration itself is a mystery (GRA 3:11, GRA 4:213, 277; idem, Protestant Dilemma, 77).
⁴Only the words of the autographs were inspired (GRA 4:213). Note: Henry uses interchangeably both "superintendence" and "influence" (ibid., 129).
⁵GRA 4:178, 234, 239-240. It is inspiration that makes the writings trustworthy and guarantees truth (GRA 4:213; idem, "Inspiration," BDT, 286). The difference between inerrancy and infallibility in Henry is treated in the third chapter of this dissertation.
⁶GRA 4:47-48. It is inspiration that distinguishes between canonical and noncanonical writings (GRA 2:13).
⁸Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 80; GRA 4:141.
Henry concur with the dynamical theory, because for him everything that the Bible teaches—including astronomy, botany, geography—is trustworthy, although not necessarily exhaustive or comprehensive. Moreover, it is impractical to separate doctrine from fact, as the scientific and the ethico-religious often permeate each other. Neither is inspiration to be explained only as a human witness to revelation, (against the revelation as encounter theory) and far less is it to be equated with illumination (against the illumination theory of inspiration), because illumination belongs primarily to the readers and hearers of Scripture. Nor is inspiration to be identified with a corporate (or social) process of writing, compiling, and redacting of Scripture (against the social/ecclesial theory of inspiration), because the phenomenon of inspiration was limited only to the prophets and apostles and terminated with them. Consequently, Henry endorses the verbal-plenary theory of inspiration without any reservations, even going to the extent of saying that its rejection renders the normative use of the Bible "quite impossible."

Henry's Doctrines of Revelation-Inspiration: A Synthesis from the Perspective of the Human Role

The preceding sketch of Henry's doctrine of revelation points to the following emphases and implications: if revelation is God's voluntary disclosure of divine will and

1GRA 4:42.


3GRA 2:13; McNeal, 52.


5GRA 4:66-67. For additional defense of plenary inspiration, see ibid., 254-255.
truth, then truth itself has a transcendent source. As such, it is impossible for man to arrive at truth or revelation independent of God's impartation. Revelation as a divine disclosure also indicates that God does not want to leave man to figure out for himself concerning his origin, duty, and destiny. Furthermore, Henry's emphasis on the rational nature of revelation implies that man has a mental capacity to recognize and understand revelation. The fact that revelation is inscripturated and is identical with the Bible also means that revelation is readily and objectively accessible to all, so that everyone can read and rationally comprehend, irrespective of his being a believer or not.¹

Henry's identification of revelation with the Bible also leads him to the emphasis on the objective and propositional nature of revelation. This stress naturally points to the question of the reliability of that which has been written—especially in view of the fact that it was men and not angels who wrote it. Henry answers this by his doctrine of inspiration, where he shows that one can completely be assured of the trustworthiness of inscripturated revelation because its human writers wrote under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit.

The synthesis of Henry's two doctrines can therefore be shown to follow a pattern: God communicates revelation to man. In order for this revelation to be trustworthy he had it humanly recorded in written form under a strict supernatural superintendence

¹"Revelational truth is intelligible, expressible in valid propositions, and universally communicable. Christianity does not profess to communicate a meaning that is significant only within a particular community or culture. It expects men of all cultures and nations to comprehend its claims about God and insists that men everywhere ought to acknowledge and appropriate them. If they reject the truth, or refuse to become Christian, it is not because the truth of revelation is unintelligible, incommunicable, or invalid" (GRA 1:229; see also Carl F. H. Henry, Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief, The Rutherford Lectures [Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990], 105).
(inspiration), down to its every word. In this way we see Henry treating inspiration as a counterpart of revelation. In his own words, "inspiration is a correlative of revelation."¹

Moreover, since the focus of this dissertation is on the human role in Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration, that role needs to be amplified and highlighted.² In Henry's exposition, man has been found to play a significant part in both the phenomena of revelation and inspiration. Since revelation is rational and propositional, man is accordingly portrayed engaging his mind as well as linguistic capacity in receiving revelation.³ That is, man is shown having the mental and verbal capacity to receive and understand God's revelation. This capability to understand revelation is important in order that he may communicate it to the rest of his fellowmen. But in this communication man is shown as one highly dependent upon the Holy Spirit. And because of this supernatural help (inspiration), what he wrote was inerrant, hence trustworthy and normative.

Statement of the Problem

While observing the way Henry presents the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration, it appears that there is a discordance of portrayal of that role. At the level of revelation, man is depicted as naturally competent in using his cognitive and linguistic capabilities for receiving and understanding revelation independent of divine help. This competence and independence, however, seem to vanish during inspiration, as is

¹ Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 145.

² Chapter 5 of this dissertation elaborates on the human role in Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration by means of an analysis of that role.

³ Henry also speaks of revelation in terms of a communication from God's mind to man's mind (see GRA 4:285).
evidenced by the fact that man has to depend heavily upon the Holy Spirit, including even for his choice of words as he writes the content of revelation. We wonder if this sudden change in man's ability is just an apparent disharmony or a case of inconsistency on the part of Henry?

**Justification of the Problem**

We have already noted that as far as Henry is concerned, man has no problem in understanding revelation. The reason is because revelation is both rational and verbal. These characteristics of revelation correspond with man's rationality and linguistic capability. Given the fact that the same man and revelational content are involved at both the events of revelation and inspiration, and assuming that man's memory of the propositional content of revelation does not disappear the moment he begins to put it in written form, it is reasonable to expect that to a certain extent, man should be able to carry out that writing in a somewhat independent fashion. However, Henry's disallowance of such a human capability in inspiration does not correspond with his unreserved emphasis on man's natural capacity to receive and understand revelation.

**Purpose and Scope of the Study**

This dissertation provides a critical study of the human role in Carl F. H. Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration. As stated, his depiction of the human role between the two doctrines seems to point to a problem of inconsistency. This dissertation seeks to conduct an in-depth investigation of this problem. I do this by describing, analyzing, and elevating the human role in both the doctrines of revelation and inspiration.
An investigation of this nature calls for certain limitations. For instance, although it is obvious that one has to study the doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and man, yet it is limited only to Henry's presentation of these doctrines. Moreover, since this research concentrates on the human role in revelation and inspiration, the investigation of Henry's exposition of these doctrines does not take an evaluative and/or critical form regarding these doctrines as a whole. To do that would require a separate dissertation itself. Rather, it is carried out with an intention of exposing the human role or involvement in revelation and inspiration. Accordingly, the treatment of the doctrines is largely descriptive. Nevertheless, the significance of each of the doctrines is also considered in order to enhance understanding of the doctrines from Henry's perspective, and to provide an additional point from which to view the human role.

Furthermore, I also realize that several subjects can legitimately fall within the ambit of this study, such as the Bible, authority, and truth. But in order to reduce this study to a manageable size, a direct or independent consideration of these subjects is not undertaken in this research. With respect to inspiration, two other cognate areas need to be mentioned: the Holy Spirit's role in inspiration and inerrancy. Since either of these can very well constitute a separate study, I therefore treat them only to an extent that they enlarge our understanding of Henry's portrayal of the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration.

Methodology

This research adopts a methodology that combines description, analysis, and evaluation. The description provides a fair and objective representation of each of the
doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and man from Henry's point of view. In so doing, the salient features of the doctrines are taken into account. The analysis is particularly limited to the human role in the doctrines of revelation and inspiration. In this instance, the various elements connected with the human participation are identified and described. This is followed by an evaluation, which adjudicates Henry's portrayal of the human role in terms of consistency or inconsistency. In rounding up, a summary and recommendations of the study are also provided.

Outline of the Research

Based on the preceding considerations and methodological and procedural steps, this dissertation is divided into seven chapters. This first chapter provides a brief survey of the theories of revelation and inspiration with the intention of exposing the human role, followed by a thumbnail sketch of Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration, along with an indication of his portrayal of the human role therein. The chapter also describes the problem of the research, furnishes a justification for the study, delineates its purpose and scope, and outlines the methodology of the investigation.

Chapters 2-4 provide a descriptive study of Henry's doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and man. Each of the chapters not only unfolds the doctrine as Henry sees it, but identifies its main features, and points to its significance from Henry's perspective. Chapter 5 takes an in-depth analysis of the human role in Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration where each of the elements that comprise the human involvement is identified and elucidated. Chapter 6 evaluates Henry’s depiction of the human role. This is done by juxtaposing the human role in revelation with that role in inspiration, where the
roles are compared and contrasted. A critical examination of their similarities and
differences is made and an adjudication on the basis of the examination is also provided.
Since fairness and objectivity are essential ingredients to any research, attempts at
explaining Henry's depiction of the human role are also given within his chapter.
However, because of the need to remain within scope, no evaluation is entertained for the
reasons that are provided as explanation. Finally, chapter 7 brings the study to a close.
This is done by providing a summary as well as some recommendations elicited by the
study. The chapter concludes with a suggestion which hopes to bring a balance between
man's role in revelation and his role in inspiration.
CHAPTER 2

HENRY'S DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

Since the task of this dissertation is to critically ascertain and evaluate the human role in Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration, it inevitably calls for a careful examination and study of his understanding of these two theological foci. It is only as these doctrines are comprehensively treated and understood from Henry's vantage point that one can hope to properly describe and assess his view of the human role. The evaluation of that view, however, is not conducted in this chapter but deferred to chapter 6 where it is possible to juxtapose Henry's portrayal of the human role in revelation and inspiration, and at the same time, examine the consistency of his presentation of that role in these doctrines.

Further, it is also felt that our understanding of Henry's doctrine of revelation is enhanced if we take into consideration some of his presuppositions. With this interest in mind, I begin this chapter by briefly noting those presuppositions pertinent to the doctrine that is currently under discussion.

1In Mohler's estimate, Henry's exposition of the doctrine of revelation is "an awesome evangelical achievement" (Mohler, Baptist Theologians, 526). Likewise, Ramm feels that Henry "has written the broadest, the most learned, and most incisive and comprehensive work on revelation in our current evangelical tradition" (Bernard Ramm, "Good Thinking! Carl Henry's Magnum Opus," review of GRA 1-2, Eternity, March 1977, 63). A similar estimate has also been made by Fackre (see Terry L. Cross, "Cognitive and Non-cognitive Aspects of Revelation: A Comparison of the Views of Karl Barth and Carl F. H. Henry on Propositional Revelation" [M.A. thesis, Ashland Theological Seminary, 1982], 125).
Presuppositions

In Henry's judgment, every system—be it geometrical, theological, philosophical, or otherwise—begins with presuppositions or axioms. Thus, the notion of a presuppositionalism...
tionless observer is "fictional" because such a person is not to be found. Even if empiricists may and do deny it, all systems are based on axioms; without initial axioms nothing can be demonstrated. Natural science is impossible unless one assumes that meaningful correspondence exists between the laws of thought and the order of the external world.

The day is long past when science could claim special honor on the ground that it does not traffic in metaphysical concerns. Without some metaphysical assumptions, science can hardly get on the way. Some of the most noteworthy advances in modern experimental physics have been engendered by imaginative metaphysical theories. Natural selection, gravitational fields, atoms and electrons are among the invisible postulations of science.

In the case of Christian religion, two basic axioms are emphasized: the ontological, which presupposes the living God, and the epistemological, which recognizes divine

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1GRA 5:25.

2GRA 4:388. "No historian or scientist actually proceeds without presuppositions. Empiricists always operate on presuppositions which they cannot prove by their own methodology. Even evolutionary theory would collapse except for certain presuppositions that cannot be scientifically proved. The scientific and historical approaches to meaning thrive on secretly negotiated lend-lease arrangements on which non-Christian scholars arbitrarily refuse to pay overdue interest rates and they ultimately deny any indebtedness to the theistic view" (GRA 1:231; see also Carl F. H. Henry, "Science and Faith," Faith and Thought 104 [1977]: 53-54).

3Henry, Toward a Recovery, 64.

revelation. The two imply each other: Without the living God there can be no divine revelation, and without revelation, we would not know that God exists.

The Ontological Axiom

For Henry, God is the ontological first principle. Christian theism begins with this presupposition, and from it flows all its other principles and concepts. We must therefore begin with God to get to anything. One's concept of the Deity is crucial because it has the

1Henry, Toward a Recovery, 68; italics original; GRA 1:225, 219-220, 396. "That God can be known, that divine revelation is rationally given and is to be rationally understood, is a basic presupposition of biblical theology" (GRA 5:381). "God is not the Great Perhaps, the clueless shadow character in a Scotland Yard mystery. Far less is he a nameless spirit awaiting post-mortem examination in some theological morgue. He is a very particular and specific divinity, known from the beginning solely on the basis of his works and self-declaration as the one living God" (GRA 2:7; see also GRA 5:10).


3"The living God is the original Christian's axiom, both ontically and noetically, for God discloses himself in revelation as the God who is eternally there. He is the eternal living God, nothing less, nothing other." He not only is the God who is, but also the God who stands, and stays." "God . . . stands . . . [on] the ground of his own existence; . . . [and] stays"; that is, he governs through providence and whose governance will be climaxed at the eschatological consummation. His Word likewise, stands; and because he stands, he is therefore able to promise to stand with us. If we are to stand, and not fall on the day of judgment, we should "stand in, with and under him" (GRA 5:10-11, italics original).


5Patterson, JMPL 1, 4.
potential of turning into an "Archimedean lever" with which one can fashion an entire worldview.\(^1\)

While Henry has dealt extensively with the doctrine of God,\(^2\) yet in the context of the doctrine of revelation, two of his emphases on God should be noted, namely: the self-disclosed God\(^3\) and the rational God. The first emphasis points to his self-revelation as a voluntary act, divinely manifested as a testimony of love and grace for mankind;\(^4\) and the second points to his rationality as that which characterizes his nature and will.\(^5\)

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\(^1\)Ibid.; see also Henry, *Remaking*, 215.


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The Epistemological Axiom

Revelation is the "heartbeat of Christian knowledge,"¹ and the foundational principle in any theological investigation and search for truth.² It is "the source of all truth, the truth of Christianity included."³ Only through revelation can we really and authentically know God and his nature.⁴ For Henry, revelation occupies a sure and superior epistemic avenue because of the fact that the empirical method⁵ does not provide any basis for affirming or denying supernatural realities as it deals only with the perceptibles. Neither can the method validate moral norms, nor confirm past historical events with absolute

¹GRA 5:39.
²GRA 5:39; Mohler, Baptist Theologians, 526; GRA 1:215-18.
³GRA 1:215, italics original.
⁴Henry, Confessions, 304; GRA 5:9, 138-140.
certainty. The empirical method consequently leads us to several options, and not to a final certainty about anything.¹

Revelation comes in the form of general and special revelation, both operating "side by side with each other."² But important as it may be, general revelation gives us only an "elementary knowledge" of God and his judgment, whereas special revelation furnishes us with an adequate amount of this knowledge.³ In this connection, four important characteristics of special revelation should be noted: God is both a personal and rational being; revelation is likewise personal and rational. Since he reveals himself intelligibly and objectively to mankind,⁴ revelation is propositional and inscripturated.⁵

Before turning to a fuller description of Henry's view of revelation, we also need to consider briefly his view of man implied within this doctrine. This not only helps us to better understand his exposition of the doctrine, but enables us to discern more clearly the human role in that doctrine.

¹GRA 1:85.


³Henry says that man's sin necessitates special revelation (GRA 1:223; Carl F. H. Henry, The Drift of Western Thought, W. B. Riley Memorial Lectures, Northwestern Schools (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 114.

⁴GRA 3:375.

⁵GRA 3:248.
The Imago Dei-Bearing Man

Man was created for intelligible relationship and fellowship with God. In order to make that relationship possible, God endows him with the *imago Dei*, which is the point of contact with the Deity, the means through which God confronts mankind. The *imago Dei* forms a bridgehead for divine-human relationship. The nature of this relationship, however, is based on divine revelation given in the form of general and special revelation. Since the nature of revelation is conceptual and verbal-propositional, man needs a medium or agency that can recognize and interpret revelation. This agency is the *imago Dei*. Its especially rational and moral nature makes it ideal for dealing with divine revelation in a meaningful and profitable manner. And because of the possession of this *imago* man is

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1 An extended exposition of Henry's doctrine of the *imago Dei* is presented in chapter 4 above.

2 GRA 1:228.

3 GRA 1:409.


5 GRA 1:409; GRA 3:271, 248.

6 GRA 3:271; 248-49.


8 Henry, Toward a Recovery, 109.


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therefore held responsible at the judgment for his misappropriation or ignorance of revelation.¹

Nature of Revelation

Henry conceives revelation in two traditional ways: general revelation and special revelation.² It is important that we look into their respective meanings as well as their relationship to each another. We first begin by defining the term "revelation."

Definition

Henry defines revelation as a breaking of the divine silence,³ a voluntary⁴ divine impartation of the knowledge of God's self and truths pertaining to us.⁵ Revelation is a self-disclosure of the Deity's will for mankind.⁶ It is a divine communication of objective knowledge pertaining to the nature of God as he is, both in his eternal glory and in his

¹GRA 2:31; GRA 6:414, 506-07.
²Henry, A Plea, 77; and idem, "The Ambiguities of Scientific Breakthrough," 100.
³GRA 3:275; 405. "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" (GRA 2:8, italics original).
⁴It is God who initiates and determines the how, why, what, when, where, and who of revelation (Henry, "Seminar," 2, 4; GRA 2:8-9; and GRA 3:405). Revelation is not an "inescapable necessity"; neither is it an "ontological inevitability, but solely because God wills it thus" (GRA 3: 405; GRA 3: 375).
⁵GRA 3:283.
⁶Ibid., 275; GRA 2:77.
relationship to man. In brief, revelation is a supernatural disclosure to man of what was previously hidden. This concept has also been rephrased by Henry in the following lines:

Revelation is that activity of the supernatural God whereby he communicates information essential for man's present and future destiny. In revelation God, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, shares his thoughts with man; in his self-disclosure God unveils his very own mind; he communicates not only the truth about himself and his intentions, but also that concerning man's present plight and future prospects.

General Revelation

General revelation is also called primal or cosmic-anthropological or universal revelation. It is "general" because it is directly accessible to all persons irrespective of their racial or cultural background. General revelation is given through the avenues of nature, history, the human mind, morality, and conscience. Through these avenues God shows his eternal power and glory, and points to himself as the eternal sovereign creator to

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1 GRA 5:98.
2 GRA 4:276.
3 GRA 3:457.

"The terms general and special revelation are preferable to the terms natural and supernatural, since the term natural suggests a type of revelation that is not supernatural in source and content (as all divine revelation must be) and thus implies that revelation in nature, history and mankind is independent of God's initiative" (GRA 2:86).

5 GRA 2:84, 86; GRA 3:460.

6 GRA 3:171; GRA 2:84–87, 133-34, 247-56. The main texts used by Henry in connection with general revelation are Rom 1:17-22; 2:14-16; Acts 14:17. In relation to man, nature and history are external; and reason, conscience, and morality are internal (GRA 1:159; GRA 3:460).

7 GRA 4:111.
whom mankind is morally accountable.¹ By means of general revelation, God "continually bombards man,"² "pervades his thoughts, motives, deeds, and all his goings and comings."³

General revelation is intimately connected with special revelation. Both have the Logos-Christ as their source,⁴ and are therefore rational in nature, and accordingly, do not conflict with one another.⁵ The two are complementary, continuous, and comprehensively united,⁶ standing one behind the other.⁷ Henry further elaborates their relationship in the following remarks:

¹GRA 1:409.
²GRA 2:10; GRA 1:279; McNeal, 52.
³GRA 1:150-151.
⁴"The Logos of God—preincarnate, incarnate, and now glorified—is the mediating agent of all divine disclosure. He is the unique and sole mediator of the revelation of the Living God" (GRA 3:203). "Revelation is given only through and by the Logos of God" (ibid., 205). "In depicting the role of the Logos as God’s revelatory agent, the Bible avoids two costly exaggerations: first, it avoids the notion that divine revelation is given only in Jesus of Nazareth (the nature of revelation being here made exclusively salvific); second, it avoids the notion that the revelation given outside Jesus of Nazareth occurs independently of the Logos. Instead, the Logos-doctrine of Scripture preserves the existence both of a universal and of a particular revelation. In its delineation of the Logos, it maintains a crucial link between the general revelation of the eternal Christ in the cosmos and human history, and the special redemptive revelation in Jesus Christ and Scripture. The divine revelation in Jesus of Nazareth is not to be taken independently of all other divine revelation but stands in an inseparable and intimate relationship to the totality of God’s disclosure" (ibid., 207).
⁵Ibid., 460; Johnson, 99-100; GRA 1:341.
⁶Henry, "Revelation, Special," BDT, 457; GRA 3:433.
The very commandments given to man-in-sin in a "thou shalt not" form suggest as their presupposition a "thou shalt" addressed to man on the basis of creation. Special revelation does not supersede general revelation, but rather republishes the moral knowledge enjoyed by man in the state of integrity. Divine revelation is one. It represents a comprehensive unity. There is but one truth and one good.¹

The above statement shows that without general revelation, special revelation would not be intelligible. Were it not for the former, man would not know that he is a sinner.² In fact, general revelation emphasizes his guilt³ and therefore serves as a precondition of special revelation.⁴ General revelation also provides man with a cognitive guide for wise decision and action.⁵ It makes him aware of the need for meaning, purpose, and value for his life.⁶

¹Henry, CPE, 156. The relationship between general and special revelation is also described by Henry as an "interconnected organic whole" (Henry, Gods or God? 80).
²Henry, Notes, 68.
³Henry, "Revelation, Special," BDT, 457.
⁴Special revelation presupposes general revelation (GRA 2:122).
⁵GRA 3:460.
⁶GRA 1:146.
Special Revelation¹

Although general revelation is important, yet in itself it is incomplete. For instance, it cannot directly reveal God’s purposes,² nor impart to man knowledge concerning Jesus Christ (nature and work) and human destiny.³ Further, man himself, on account of his sinful nature, distorts general revelation, intentionally thwarts it,⁴ and dilutes

¹Henry is aware that the idea of special revelation is not welcomed by moderns because it implies that "God could not be a God of love and justice if he gave a special revelation to one people, and did not give it everywhere. Henry responds by asking: "Where did the Western world get its overpowering conviction of the love of God anyhow? Plato’s God was not a God of love. Aristotle’s God would have by-passed John 3:16. It was from the special disclosure of God, in the Hebrew-Christian tradition that the Western world derived its concept of a God who loves man enough to send his Son into the world, and of a God who takes sin so seriously that his holiness requires atonement for sin. If man is regarded as standing in normal relationship with God, if sin really makes no ultimate difference, God can be regarded as under all kinds of antecedent obligations to universal humanity. But once it is seen, as biblical revelation emphasizes, that God takes sin seriously, that sin and redemption are the issues upon which eternal destiny turn, that man is not on speaking terms with God, that God reacts to sin so violently that there is nothing man can do to save himself, then the significance of a divinely communicated once-for-all revelation is [made clear]" (Carl F. H. Henry, Giving a Reason for Our Hope [Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1949], 32-33; this work is also reprinted as Answers for the Now Generation [Chicago: Moody Press, 1950]; see also idem, The Drift, 108, 110, 114).

²GRA 4:111.

³GRA 3:471.

⁴GRA 3:460; idem, The Drift, 116. Man's revolt against God is due to his pride, which is at the root of sin (ibid., 117), resulting in the dulling or suppressing of general revelation. Consequently, this gives rise to other religious systems like Hinduism, Buddhism, and other great systems of philosophy (see also Carl F. H. Henry, interview by Boxter Kharbteng, 18 April 1994, Kantzer Wing, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL: hereafter cited as "Henry, interview by author"). Because of general revelation, it implies that "all men and all religious traditions have some elements of truth in their competing and quite contradictory viewpoints." In view of this, "it is possible to denominate [nonbiblical religions] . . . as false religions in contrast with Christianity, as the one true religion in which is retained not only what elements of truth exist by virtue of a general revelation, but in which these elements are freed from the distorting and vitiating

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and even suppresses it. He bends towards sin and lacks the moral ability to align himself with the higher sentiments of his conscience. Therefore general revelation needs to be supplemented with special revelation, which intensifies and republishes its content.

**Special Revelation as Scripture**

While general revelation is accessible to all men in general, special revelation is special because God made it available only through the prophets and apostles who sooner or later and with the help of the Holy Spirit, wrote it down for us in the form of Scripture,

reinterpretation of man as a sinner in revolt against the one true God, and in which alone man is told that he is a sinner so at odds with God that man cannot possibly save himself, yet that the holy God is merciful and provides redemption in the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ. (Henry, *Giving a Reason*, 36-37.

1GRA 1:160; GRA 5:405. Sinful man wills down general revelation on account of his pride. See Henry, *The Drift*, 116-17; see also Henry in Walvoord, 253; and Henry, interview by author.

2Henry, CPE, 270; see also Henry, interview by author.


4GRA 1:223; see also GRA 3:460, where Henry says that "special scriptural revelation sets forth the propositional content of general revelation."

5As far as Henry is concerned, 20th-century theology teaches us two important lessons: first, the concept of a personal God is viable only where God makes himself known in self-revelation; and second, only where the divine will is scripturally encapsulated can divine revelation completely escape mystical generality and ambiguity (Henry, "The Christian Scholar's Task," 485).
namely, the Bible,\textsuperscript{6} which is the "proximate and universally accessible form of authoritative divine revelation"\textsuperscript{1} whose finality is to be exerted upon mankind.\textsuperscript{2}

However, Scripture is only a segment of special revelation.\textsuperscript{4} Jesus Christ, the God-man and only Savior of mankind,\textsuperscript{5} is also special revelation. His person, words, and actions likewise constitute revelation.\textsuperscript{6} In fact, he is the Logos who is the eternal Christ, the agent, goal, and climax of special revelation.\textsuperscript{7} In him, "the source and content of

\textsuperscript{1}Henry, "Inspiration," \textit{NIDCC}, 512.
\textsuperscript{2}\textit{GRA 1:229}.
\textsuperscript{4}Henry in Walvoord, 255-56.
\textsuperscript{6}\textit{GRA 3:76}, 181. Jesus Christ is "God acting, and when He speaks, He is, in turn, God speaking with divine authority and divine infallibility" (Kenneth Kantzer, quoted appreciatively in \textit{GRA 3:76}). "The words and works of Jesus Christ are creatively and cohesively interrelated" (ibid., 76). Jesus Christ as revelation is not simply his message, but "more comprehensively, his total self-manifestation—his mind and acts and teaching" (ibid., 181). Note: In this instance, James Daane distorts and misrepresents Henry's position because he makes Henry view Christ only as the means or medium for revelation and not revelation himself (see James Daane, "What Is Truth?" review of \textit{GRA 3}, \textit{The Reformed Journal} 30 [May 1980]: 28).
\textsuperscript{7}\textit{GRA 3:207}, 165, 167. For the identity of the preexistent Christ with the Logos, who later was incarnated in Jesus Christ, see ibid., 205-06.
revelation converge and coincide. Special revelation is therefore "crowned by the incarnation of the living Word and the inscripturation of the spoken word." Viewed in this way, special revelation is then personal, historical, verbal, and redemptive.

Formally speaking, however, special revelation for Henry is "broader" than Scripture and Jesus Christ because God had personally revealed himself to, as well as communicated with, Adam and other biblical patriarchs, and had acted redemptively on behalf of his people. Most of these communications, however, were pre-written or non-written and are therefore no longer accessible to us. The same can also be said about the divine acts that are mute unless divinely interpreted. For this interpretation we are

1GRA 2:11, italics original; see also GRA 3:9, 11, 165, 170, 205, 207; Henry in Walvoord, 254; Henry, "Seminar," 4-5.

2Henry, "Revelation, Special," BDT, 457; see also GRA 3:207.

3Henry in Walvoord, 270; idem, "Revelation, Special," BDT, 457; idem, Protestant Dilemma, 216; GRA 4:276.

4Henry in Walvoord, 255; see also Henry, CPE, 264; and idem, Protestant Dilemma, 86.

5Henry, "Revelation and the Bible—2," 16.

6The OT views God's redemptive acts as a fulfillment of divinely given prophecies (GRA 3:258). God's redemptive acts are always accompanied with "divinely constituted meaning" or "interpretation" (ibid., 259, 267). "The concentration of revelation in divine historical acts, and the deliberate exclusion from such historical manifestation of any divine disclosure of the meaning of such acts, entails many theological difficulties. Not only does it suspend the interpretation of biblical redemptive acts uncertainly upon human reflection and conjecture, but it also expressly contravenes what the prophets say about the God who acts and speaks, and in the end makes biblical acts no less than biblical truths vulnerable to secular erosion" (ibid., 262). "If God acts and leaves the interpretation to us, of what use could this sort of 'revelation' be? What rules could we use to interpret the action, since ex hypothesi no information is ever revealed? We would be as much in the dark about God after this sort of revelation as we were before" (Keith Yandell, quoted approvingly in GRA 3: 266; see also Carl F. H. Henry, Frontiers of Modern Theology [Chicago: Moody Press,
dependent on Scripture.\textsuperscript{1} That is, only in Scripture are we given the true meaning of God's redemptive acts because he himself, through his Spirit, imparted it to the sacred writers.\textsuperscript{2} Events and their scriptural interpretation are therefore not to be separated because both form an indissoluble unity.\textsuperscript{3} With respect to the primacy of Scripture as revelation, Henry goes on to explain it as follows:

The universe is a divine creation, that God proffers forgiveness to fallen mankind, and of much else that we have already indicated about God and his Christ, is available to us only in the Scriptures. The Bible is, in fact, the only knowledge-basis we have for anything we say about the person and work of Christ, about his distinctive authority, and about the authority he conferred upon the apostles.\textsuperscript{4} Without the Bible, we have no other way of knowing him,\textsuperscript{5} and all that Christianity has to say about Jesus Christ would fall on deaf ears and lose all credibility.\textsuperscript{6}

The Bible is an "authorized summary" of all God's revelation whether it be in the universe, or in redemptive history, or in Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{7} Therefore whereas it is true that

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\textsuperscript{1}GRA 2:13.


\textsuperscript{4}GRA 4:27. "Ontologically," Jesus is the "high point" of special revelation, but "epistemologically," the sacred Scriptures are that special revelation (Carl F. H. Henry, "Epistemology," \textit{BDT}, 1964, 198.

\textsuperscript{5}GRA 3:106; GRA 4:27.

\textsuperscript{6}GRA 3:106.

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., 223.

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special revelation had taken place elsewhere outside of the Bible, yet materially, the Bible is
the only special revelation that we have.¹

**Purpose of Special Revelation**

Another way of understanding special revelation in Henry is by looking at it from
the perspective of its purpose,² which, for him, is integral to the overall comprehension of
this doctrine. "Divine revelation," he says "is given for human benefit, offering us

¹Henry in Walvoord, 255-57; see also Alan Richard 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. dissertation, New York University, 1980), 463; hereafter
cited as "Purdy"; and Donald G. Bloesch, review of GRA 3-4, *The Christian Century*, 9
April 1980, 415. Henry maintains that there is no revelation apart from Scriptures
(*Protestant Dilemma*, 82; see also GRA 2:19, 15-16; and Henry, "Revelation and the
Bible—2," 16). He also holds the OT-NT combination as a complete Bible, each and
jointly, as being God's revealed and normative Word, and views their unity as an organism
(GRA 3:101, 103). Perhaps it is for this very reason that he is against the American Bible
Society's inclusion of the Apocrypha the Bible, and sees this as an influence of the Roman
Catholic Church. If the Apocrypha is to be included at all, it must be done under a separate
section, clearly marked, and not by interspersing its books among the inspired writings.
But Henry realizes that this proposal will not be acceptable to those concerned. A better
way is to produce separate editions for both Catholics and Protestants (Carl F. H. Henry,
*Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis* [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1967], 22). For further
comments on their (Old and New Testaments) complementary relationship to each other as
well as their individual uniqueness, see ibid, 30-47, 102, 135; Henry, *The Drift*, 26; GRA
4:34-38; and Carl F. H. Henry, "Is the Bible an Errant Book?" *Capital Baptist*, 28 May
1981, Special Collections; hereafter cited as "Henry, *Capital Baptist*").

Henry also explicitly admits the end of revelation as well as inspiration with the
apostles (GRA 4:147, 242, 259). When asked if reason, or tradition, or canonization, or
mere confession had been responsible for this closure, he said, "All of them enter into it." When asked again if his belief in the end of inspiration with the apostles was more a
question of confession than an outcome of reason, his reply was, "Well, I don't know that I
can really answer that" (Henry, interview by author). However, when Henry says, "The
Spirit of God has vouchsafed one authentic tradition, the inspired prophetic-apostolic
writings" (GRA 4:147) he seems to credit the canon to the work of the Holy Spirit.

²GRA 3:460-461; Johnson, 109-111.
privileged communion with our Creator in the Kingdom of God. In order to make this communion meaningful God, through revelation, discloses information concerning himself as well as his intentions and will for man. In this way, special revelation permits us to know God personally as he is, as well as his provisions such as his forgiveness, the new life, and the final judgment for our sins. This means that it is only through revelation that we come to know God's nature, ways, will, and word. And being special revelation, the Bible serves for us as the epistemological access to God, that is indispensable in our ongoing relationship with him. Consequently, the Bible is the source and ground of all truth and theological investigation. It provides vital answers to questions on ontology,

1GRA 2:8, 31; italics original. In ibid., 31-35, Henry expounds Jesus' various ministries and acts which he undertook on behalf of man, and for his blessing.

2Without special revelation, "God would be not simply Deus absconditus (obscure, hidden), he would be Deus dubitandus (God always in doubt)" (Henry, "Seminar," 3).

3GRA 2:31.

4Carl F. H. Henry, "Reply to Objections to Special Revelation," 1-2, Special Collections, box no. 8, hereafter cited as "Henry, Reply to Objections." No other publication data are provided for this manuscript. Note: Collections of Henry's writings in E. S. Bird Library, Syracuse University are stored in boxes and serially numbered (see also note 4, p. 41 above).


6Henry, Seminary, 7; idem, Protestant Dilemma, 76.

7GRA 5:336; see also Henry, Toward a Recovery, 50.

8Mohler, Baptist Theologians, 526. The Bible is also the basis for verifying truth (ibid.).
epistemology, cosmology, existence, and eschatology, enabling us to settle the myriads of speculative statements about God, and dispelling much (though not erasing all) that is mysterious about him. In this way, we see that special revelation "bridges the epistemic gap" between God and man.

Furthermore, the Bible functions as a divinely fashioned instrument for confronting human beings everywhere with the necessity of personal spiritual decision and dedication. It plays the role of the most penetrating critic by confronting us with "our broken love of God, our dull sense of justice, our shameful moral nakedness, our waning sense of ethical duty, our badly numbed consciences, our clutching anxieties, the ghastly horrors and brutal violence of this era."

Characteristics of Special Revelation

Rational Revelation

In considering the character of special revelation, Henry often qualifies it in terms of two key words: rational and prepositional. By rational he means that "what God reveals

1GRA 1:409.
2GRA 2:8.
4McNeal, 130.
5GRA 3:92.
6Carl F. H. Henry, Carl Henry at His Best: A Lifetime of Quotable Thoughts, foreword by Charles Colson (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1990), 28; hereafter cited as "Henry, Henry at His Best." The efficacy of the Bible is due to the fact "that God himself is pledged to be its invisible and invincible herald; he tolerates no fruitless proclamation of his Word; he has ordained fulfillment of its mandated mission" (GRA 4:493; see also GRA 2:17).
is something that men know, and know as something true. It is true not only in terms of a
decision to take it as true, but true for all men whether they make a decision or not.\textsuperscript{1}

Rational revelation therefore stands for intelligible divine communication given in
conceptual form.\textsuperscript{2} It is God speaking his mind intelligently in human speech to a human
agent.\textsuperscript{3} Regarding the rational character of revelation, we may note the following of
Henry's comments:

In whatever mode God speaks,\textsuperscript{4} his divine revelation is a mental act, for it seeks to
convey to the mind of man the truth about the Creator and Lord of life, and to write
upon the spirit of man God's intelligible holy will. Every mediating alternative not only
sacrifices the cognitive significance of divine revelation, but also dissolves revelation
itself into a vaporous and insignificant concept.\textsuperscript{5}

The Christian faith is a rational faith that rests on revelational fact and truth, a faith
grounded in the self-disclosure of God in Christ as the ultimate reality and the ultimate
reason. It calls therefore for reasonable reflection, reasonable decision, and reasonable
service.\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{1}Henry, "Seminar," 33; Carl F. H. Henry, "Science and Religion," in \textit{Christian
Faith and Modern Theology}, Contemporary Evangelical Thought, ed. Carl F. H. Henry


\textsuperscript{4}Henry does recognize that besides Jesus Christ and Scripture, special revelation
was also given in a variety of modes—dreams, visions, oracles, theophanies, lots, and
historical events (GRA 2:79-81). This means that special revelation is not and cannot be
limited exclusively to Jesus Christ and the Bible (see p. 69 above). However, Henry does
not give much weight to these other modes because they are not available anymore (ibid.,
80). Jesus Christ is no doubt considered supreme revelation, but even this fact too is
available only through Scripture (see p. 68 above). So in revelation what counts most is its
message. That is revelation's "center" (Carl F. H. Henry to Boxter Kharbteng, 30 July
1996).

\textsuperscript{5}GRA 3:271.

\textsuperscript{6}GRA 1:272.
The rationality of revelation is also based on the Logos who is the eternal Reason or Mind of God.\(^1\) In fact, God's essence is itself rational,\(^2\) and this explains the rationality of whatever God reveals.\(^3\) In other words, the rational nature of revelation is entirely dependent upon God's own rational nature.\(^4\) One cannot be maintained without maintaining the other.\(^5\) And because revelation is rational it is therefore reasonable that it address man's mind and will.\(^6\)

Further, a disregard for rational revelation leads to an epistemic eclipse\(^7\) of God, that can have a disastrous result such as was exemplified by the death-of-God-theology.\(^8\) This lesson from history not only teaches the indispensability of rational revelation but also shows that without this revelation, Christianity itself would evaporate,\(^9\) and all theological speech about God would be opaque.\(^10\) Seen in this context, evangelical theology can lay

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\(^1\)GRA 2:203, 302; GRA 3:205, 215-16, 238, 167.


\(^3\)Henry, "Seminar," 36; GRA 3:170.

\(^4\)GRA 1:233.


\(^6\)GRA 3:248, 171. Although revelation has its claim upon the whole man, yet it is his mind that is especially the object of this claim. Elsewhere, Henry says that revelation is addressed to man's reason, and is therefore transcultural (see Henry in Gaebelein, 29).


\(^8\)McNeal, 111.

\(^9\)Johnson, 106.

\(^10\)GRA 3:472.
claim to relevancy only as it boldly proclaims the biblical emphasis of the relationship
between revelation and reason.¹ In further stressing the importance of rational revelation,
Henry makes the following critical comments regarding those who oppose it:

Those who rule out rational revelation as a way of knowing God must concede that their
postulation about God-in-relation-to-us, finds no support in the experience of many
people, nor is it impervious to the possibility of emotive delusion.²

When loosed from the constraints of rational divine revelation, religious imagination
plunges man readily into spiritual idolatry; creative imagination confers an imagined
reality and dynamic power upon the nonexistent to shape and direct cosmic and human

¹Carl F. H. Henry, "Lectures 1957: Christian Reformed Minister's Institute," 30,
Calvin College Campus, Grand Rapids, MI, 4-7 June 1957, Special Collections; hereafter
cited as "Henry, Lectures 1957"; see also GRA 4:101, where Henry regards revelation and
reason as the most effective armory for truth.

As to reason, Henry identifies it with the intellect as distinct from the will,
emotions, and sense experience (Johnson, 2), and is defined by Henry as "the mind of God
or the mind of man, which ideally operates in accordance with the innate, a priori, objective
laws of formal logic" (ibid.). "Reason is man's logical capacity, the mind of man in action;
it is the thinking self. Logic, or the laws of reason, are descriptive statements of how
reason ideally functions" (ibid., 59).

"Reason is a divine attribute, and the laws of reason are definitive of God's nature
and descriptive of his will" (GRA 5:335); see also Henry, "The God of the Bible vs.
Naturalism," 234-37; idem, "The Bible and Modern Science," 1194; and idem, "The God
of the Bible and Moral Foundations," 22). Although God is the "basic structure of the
ultimately real world . . . , yet because of his rationality, it can also be said that "reason is
the essential foundation of ultimate reality" (GRA 5:374) which provides man the basis for
the intelligibility of the universe and human experience (ibid., 337, 352-53, 382, 361, 355),
and serves as an instrument for organizing and drawing inferences (GRA 1:226-27; Henry,
Remaking, 215). The faculty of reason or rationality is given by God as a gift to man
(Johnson, 224), not to create or establish truth—God only can do that—but to use it as an
instrument for testing, recognizing, and elucidating truth (GRA 1:215, 225, 228; GRA
3:12-13; GRA 5: 336; Johnson, 224; GRA 1:232, 226; Patterson, "JMP"—1, 5; idem,
CFH, 65). In other words, reason's role is limited: it cannot create truth, but it can
recognize and comprehend it (Johnson, 224; 141; Mohler, Baptist Theologians, 526;
Henry, Remaking, 215). Reason is neither to be equated nor contrasted with revelation;
rather, reason is the means by which we comprehend revelation (ibid., Remaking, 215).

²Henry, "Science and Religion," 86.
affairs; it becomes the playground of imaginary idolatrous divinities, those sham-gods of both primitive and literate cultures.¹

Only a rational revelation can provide a universally valid knowledge of God.² Without it, all talk about him would be but mere symbol and myth,³ leading ultimately to a moral as well as theoretical agnosticism about God-in-himself,⁴ and to an exclusion of the very possibility of God telling us anything about himself. The absence of rational revelation can also result in Christian theology losing its ability to define God's transcendent relationship to the world and to man,⁵ undermining its effectiveness in confronting the secular forces that grip our generation,⁶ and diminishing its capacity to attack a non-Christian worldview.⁷

Propositional Revelation

For Henry, revelation is not only rational but propositional. In fact, revelation is known to be rational because it is propositional; for no meaningful communication of cognitive elements is possible without propositions.⁸ But what is a `proposition'? Henry

¹GRA 5:77.
²Ibid., 87.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid., 89-90.
⁶Ibid., 93.
⁷Weeks, 75.
⁸GRA 3:449.
says that it is an intelligible or declarative statement that is either true or false; a rational
declaration, capable of being either believed, doubted, or denied.\(^2\)

We mean by propositional revelation that God supernaturally communicated his
revelation to chosen spokesmen in the express form of cognitive truth, and that the
inspired prophetic-apostolic proclamation reliably articulates these truths in sentences
that are not internally contradictory.\(^3\)

Overall, propositional revelation stands for the self-revealing God speaking in intelligible
words, sentences, and syntax, thereby objectively revealing himself and his purposes.\(^4\)

Having made clear what he means by propositional revelation, Henry goes on to
justify this affirmation. According to him, propositional revelation is necessary because its
absence can lead us to doubt what God tells us, or even to question that he intends to tell us
anything.\(^5\) For example, it is only by means of the propositional teaching of Jesus Christ

\(^1\) Henry, *Conversations*, 84.

\(^2\) GRA 3:456, 430. Henry concurs with Gordon Clark, who observed that aside
from imperative senses, and a few exclamations in the Psalms, the Bible is composed of
propositions. These give information about God and his dealings with men. Ibid., 456,
228.

\(^3\) Ibid., 457; Henry, *Conversations*, 84-85.

\(^4\) Carl F. H. Henry, "Boundary Disputes: 'Third Wave' Thinkers Argue for a New
God reveals himself intelligently and truly. Since truth is the property of sentences and not
of words per se, then revelation is necessarily propositional (GRA 3:449, 453). Denial of
propositional revelation leads to reductionistic theology, "to a game of dart-throwing at a
nebulous infinity" (Henry in Gaebelein, 23; idem, in Walvoord, 270; idem, The God of the
Bible vs. Naturalism," 234; and GRA 2:12; GRA 3:248; see also Carl F. H. Henry, "The
Interpretation of the Scriptures: Are We Doomed to Hermeneutical Nihilism?" *Review and
Expositor* 71 (1974): 215; hereafter to be cited as "Henry, Are We Doomed?" (This article
was reprinted verbatim in GRA 4:296-315); Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," *EDT* (1984):
147; idem, *Conversations*, 84-85; GRA 3:453, 455; Carl F. H. Henry, "Trouble at the

\(^5\) GRA 4:198.
and the apostles that we distinguish between members of the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Experience is hardly able to make these distinctions. For that matter, even predictive prophecies are purely dependent upon propositional revelation. Aside from verbal communication, revelation in the full and saving sense cannot take place at all. For no public historical happening, as such (an exodus, a conquest, a captivity, a crucifixion, an empty tomb), can reveal God apart from an accompanying word from God to explain it, or a prior promise which it is seen to confirm or fulfill. Revelation in its basic form is thus of necessity propositional; God reveals Himself by telling us about Himself, and what He is doing, in His Word.

The importance of propositional revelation for Henry is also intimated by means of

1Ibid., 461.

2Henry points to the disadvantages of the crisis theology for its denial of verbal revelation which, in the nature of the case, renders the presence of the predictive elements impossible (see Henry, The Gideon, 17).

3James I. Packer, quoted affirmatively in GRA 3:461. Having made clear what a propositional revelation is, Henry goes on to ward off any possible abuse or misuse of a propositional truth or revelation. He warns that we are not to reduce all search for truth to empirical verification. Nor are we to further "reduce the search to linguistic investigation" and thereby "trivialize truth" as is the case with analytic philosophy (ibid., 3:449). "Unless propositions are rehabilitated to speak not merely of grammatical elements, but of categories of truth, reality, and fact, that is, unless there is some implied commitment to the deeper task of philosophy as an avenue to reality, the inevitable consequences—as in the case of linguistic philosophy—are the absurdity of all expression and the demotion of communication to noises emitted by a human myna-bird" (ibid., 3:449). Furthermore, Henry also cautions against the concentration on a word instead of on a sentence or proposition as the carrier of meaning. Such attempts have led to unfulfilled results (ibid., 453). "The primacy of the sentence over the word is one of the most secure findings of linguistics" (ibid., 447). While recognizing the possibility that a new meaning or special nuance can occasionally be introduced by a particular New Testament Greek word, yet in no way does that justify one to consider the New Testament Greek as the Holy Spirit language (ibid., 453). In this instance, Henry endorses James Barr who insists upon the understanding of the New Testament words and sentences in the same semantic sense as was used and understood by the Hellenistic speakers of that time (James Barr, quoted in ibid., 453; see also ibid., 302).
his criticism against D. E. Nineham,¹ who holds that God, through his Spirit, reveals internally to each believer the meaning of the revelatory events. Henry confronts Nineham on this by stating that the latter's position provides no method by which one can determine the identity between the reader's meaning and that of the biblical author, or to reconcile between the numerous conflicting meanings that individual readers hold. It is only when revelation is propositional that one can determine whether the reader's meaning is biblical or not.² A similar conveyance of the value of propositional revelation is also seen in his reaction to John Marsh who regards divine acts/actions as revelatory in exclusion to words or propositions that explain or interpret those acts. In reply, Henry counters that "without a revealed interpretation of history, we can find no objective meaning in it, since we lack the information necessary for comprehending its meaning normatively."³ In other words, Henry wants to tell us that it is propositional revelation alone that can prevent us from falling into theological uncertainty and skepticism.⁴ To those who reject propositional revelation on the basis of the culturally conditionedness of human language, Henry replies by pointing out that such an assumption, if it were true, could also be doubted because it, too, is culturally conditioned. However, if the assumption is not true, then we need not be

¹In the absence of propositional revelation "even the contention that God is Truth, or that he is personal Subject, has no universal validity, but is merely an assertion of intense individual conviction" (ibid., 432; see also ibid., 430-38, where Henry exposes the weaknesses of a nonpropositional, noncognitive revelation as propounded by Kant, Barth, and Bultmann).

²Ibid., 59-60.

³Ibid., 260-61.

⁴Ibid., 435; GRA 4:128.
Propositional revelation conveys divine information that is vital for man's present and future. To deny the informational character of revelation—which Henry also calls "word-revelation"—in favor of a non-cognitive, non-verbal or subjective revelation as proposed by neoorthodoxy, is to disclaim that God can be known objectively or cognitively. In that case, then, all God-talk is at best only a talk about "God-in-relation-to-us, since we are allegedly cut off from knowledge of God as he objectively is." As Henry sees it, denial of propositional revelation has consequently led recent modern theology to a subsequent replacement of the supernatural divine Self with the human self as the center of revelation. Therefore, only a propositional revelation can be the basis of doctrines and truths, as well as the means for making sense of the divine call for obedience and decision. Without that revelation, such a call can neither be logically analyzed nor answerable to the claims of truth. In the absence of propositional revelation, no rational creature is under

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1GRA 3:436.

2Ibid., 458. "Whatever else may be, revelation is communication" (ibid., 173). See also ibid., 173, 429, 457; and GRA 2:159, where Henry stresses revelation as communication.

3GRA 3:416.

4Henry told Cross that a noncognitive revelation will ultimately lead to "theological suicide" (Cross, 127).

5GRA 3:430. The denial of the cognitive knowledge of God is seen by Henry as a product of Kantian epistemological speculation (ibid., 430-32).

6Ibid., 431.
obligation to obey the call.¹

More importantly, for Henry, the fact that Jesus and the apostles take seriously what is written in the Old Testament Scriptures as God's word, and expect others to do likewise, indicates that they consider revelation to be propositional.² It is to these very Scriptures that Jesus referred to as divinely authoritative teaching when he introduced them with the words, "Truly, truly, I say unto you."³

Other Characteristics of Special Revelation

Besides being rational and propositional, revelation is also personal, historical, progressive, and once-for-all.⁴ When Henry claims that revelation is personal he means

¹Ibid., 433. For Henry's defense of propositional revelation vis-a-vis a non-propositional, subjective form of revelation, see ibid., 429-438. Henry's emphasis on revelation as objective and verbal-conceptual is clearly seen in his survey of contemporary theology where he shows that the weaknesses and consequent deaths of modern theologies are due to their neglect of propositional revelation. This state of affairs in theology now provides a propitious opportunity and advantage for evangelicals to invite the world to "a formidable alternative" in revelation (see Carl F. H. Henry, "Cross-currents in Contemporary Theology," in Jesus of Nazareth: Savior and Lord, ed. Carl F. H. Henry [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966], 19, 21).

²GRA 4:229-230. Some of the passages Henry cited as evidence for propositional revelation are: Matt 4:4; Luke 24:25, 27; Mark 12:24. Henry also points to Brunner (major advocate of the neoorthodox view of revelation) who said that the OT recognizes the words of the prophets as being the words of God (Brunner, cited in GRA 3:461). In support of the verbal nature of revelation, Henry further cites Deut 18:18-20 and Ezek 13:13 which stress (especially the former) that a true prophet spoke only the words that God had put in his mouth. Rom 3:2; Acts 7:38; Heb 5:12; and 1 Pet 4:11 were also used to point out that "the oracles of God" (logia) refer to revelational utterance or revealed truths (see GRA 3:461-462).

³GRA 3:462.

⁴Ibid., 459; GRA 2:87; GRA 4:276; see also Henry, "The Cultural Relativizing of Revelation," 158-59; idem, Twilight of a Great Civilization: The Drift Toward Neo-Paganism (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), 116; idem, The Drift, 108, 114; and
that God as a personal being acts, speaks, and reveals. Revelation comes from a personal God, through a personal Agent (Jesus Christ), to human persons—the prophets and apostles. This personal character of revelation accordingly rules out its identification with "merely a personal confrontation or a subjective stirring on the fringe of history." Such a claim belongs to the cults, not to biblical religion.

Revelation is also historical. It was given at a certain time and place, and to specific individuals, namely, the prophets and apostles. It occurred in the form of deeds and words. It took place in Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and it will happen again at his second coming.

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1GRA 2:151; GRA 5:13.
3Henry, Frontiers, 66.
4GRA 3:431, 434.
5For extended comments on the historical character of revelation see Henry, Frontiers, 41-64.
6Ibid., 73-74; 266, 405-06, 434; see also Henry, A Plea, 53; idem, The God Who Shows Himself, 3-4, 6, 74). "That God accomplishes his sovereign purposes in history is affirmed by the Pentateuch and by the Gospels, by the prophets and the apostles. The Old Testament writers refer repeatedly to God's activity in history, the Gospels speak of God's providential and redemptive involvement in the world. From the Christian standpoint any denial that God is sovereignly active in history reflects a basic departure from the classic texts" (GRA 2: 258).
7Ibid., 260-61.
8GRA 3:300. Henry is an ardent believer in the second coming of Jesus Christ and the consequent future life characterized by the replacement of the present life with the "full manifestation of the kingdom of God" (ibid., 24). Henry believes that day is not far off. It is "soon to break upon us," and "draws ever closer." "The last days are moving toward the
Furthermore, revelation is also progressive. There is a forward direction: a movement from general to special revelation, from the OT to the NT, and on to the *eschaton* ("eschatological revelation"). For Henry, the progressive character of revelation does not imply repeated or ongoing revelation. This progression is only in terms of a movement from promise to fulfillment. It refers to the dynamism between these two points, beginning with the messianic promise in Gen 3:5, and onto the fulfillment of that promise in the history of the OT prophets and the Israelite nation of their time, as well as in its consummation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the subsequent last day, even as the last day will move toward the last hour, before the dawn in consummation of the Lord's return . . . in glory" (ibid., 26, 24, 21-22).

Henry's faith in the soon return of Jesus is graphically illustrated by the way he ended his autobiography: "I had spanned a long lifetime in a short reverie about my anticipated final flight to the Father's house. On that trip there would be no carry-on baggage other than God-given moral and spiritual assets, and with Christ as the pilot I would travel first-class. I could be thankful for a sound mind, for eyes that welcomed trifocal lenses as the world began to fade, and that my time-worn body still slept comfortably at least in one position while it awaited a resurrection replacement without need for quinidine sulphate, Wigraine or extra-strength Bufferin. Suddenly I remembered Vance Havner's Prayer, "Lord, get me safely home before dark." (Confessions, 407; see also Carl F. H. Henry, "Will Christianity Outlive Its Critics?" Modern Age 33 (1990): 127-28; Carl F. H. Henry, "Making Political Decisions: An Evangelical Perspective," in Piety and Politics: Evangelicals and Fundamentalists Confront the World, ed. Richard John Neuhaus and Michael Cromartie [Washington DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1987], 102).


2The progressive nature of revelation is first manifested when God revealed himself redemptively in external history in unique saving acts, particularly in the history of the Hebrews and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the Old Testament, the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt through God's power; and, in the New Testament, the exodus of Jesus from the tomb from death." (Henry, "Seminar," 5). Progressive revelation is also seen in terms of promise, fulfillment, and the future end-time (GRA 2:71; GRA 3:206; GRA 2:16).
inspired interpretation of his ministry by his apostles as is recorded in the New Testament.¹ After this, there is to be no more revelation except at the eschaton when it will finally clarify some matters that are now obscure.² In other words, on this side of eternity, Henry holds that revelation as well as inspiration had ceased with the NT.³ In this sense, revelation is also once-for-all.

By maintaining the traditional view of the closure of the canon with the NT, Henry submits that man had been given adequate instruction and information necessary for his life in his relation to God, himself, and other fellow humans.⁴ This position again confirms the once-for-allness of revelation. Henry elaborates on this concept as follows:

God’s inspiration is vouchsafed only in a special time and special place and special way, and not always and everywhere. Least of all is it available to twentieth-century man in a command performance that aims to satisfy an experimental scientific approach to God. According to the evangelical view, special revelation and divine inspiration pertain only to prophetic and apostolic proclamation; the phenomenon of inspiration does not continue into the present day, even on a sporadic basis.⁵

Besides, when God makes his final eschatological revelation, it is no longer for redemption but judgment of man’s use of the previous revelations. At that time

¹GRA 3:104, 126.

²Ibid., 459. "God transcends his own revelation. There is more to the truth [about him] than what he has revealed and there is more to the meaning of God than is exhausted in his disclosure. [For] we know only what God has chosen to reveal" (Henry, "Seminar," 3).

³GRA 4:154, 259, 409.

⁴Ibid., 409; see also Henry, "The Cultural Relativizing of Revelation," 158.

⁵GRA 4:154; see also Henry, "The Cultural Relativizing of Revelation," 158.
history will be consummated, and all of sin and evil will be "subjugated by righteousness."1

The Significance of Revelation

To speak of the significance of revelation is to ask, Why is Henry so much concerned with revelation? What implications or justifications does he see in crusading for this doctrine? From an investigation of Henry’s doctrine of revelation, it appears that the crusade arises out of his desire to underscore the importance of the following: the indispensability of biblical theism; the need for a sure foundation of religious epistemology; and the necessity of a fixed knowledge.

The Indispensability of Biblical Theism

Revelation implies God—his existence, or reality as Creator, Sustainer, Revealer, Redeemer, and Judge2—a concept that Henry describes variously as biblical supernaturalism, biblical theism, or Christian theism.3 Without biblical theism one is likely to come up with many options such as polytheism, atheism, or anything in between.4 The loss of


2GRA 6: 35; Henry, "Revelation, Special," BDT, 457; GRA 2:121. In Henry’s view, the Thomistic arguments for the existence of God produce the probability that God exists, whereas the existence of God based on revelation leads to the certainty of his existence (Henry, Remaking, 196-99; see also idem, "The Reality and Identity of God," Part 2, Christianity Today, 28 March 1969, 12-13; hereafter cited as "Henry, The Reality and Identity"—2."

3GRA 6:8, 31-33; GRA 5: 32-33.

4Henry in Gaebelein, 5.
biblical theism can result in an imminent decay and destruction of Western civilization; the inability of comprehending a transcendent revelation; skepticism with regard to the possibility for a positive identification of certain events as supernatural; doubt concerning Scripture's power in unveiling the eternal world and the misfortune of having to make oneself do only with "private mystical experiences that can exert no validity-claim over against other contrary and contradictory views."  

1It is Henry's firm conviction that whatever cultural and material achievement and/or greatness Western civilization has been able to experience so far is due to its original alignment with biblical or Christian theism. Any straying from it is bound to spell doom (see GRA 4:23; Carl F. H. Henry, "Metaphysics and Ethics," *BDCE* (1973): 73-74; idem, "The Christian Scholar's Task," 474). Henry warns: "Take warning, America: to lose this Book is not simply to lose a light, but the Light, God's lamp to our feet, God's light on our pathway" (see Carl F. H. Henry, *Faith at the Frontiers* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1969], 73; see also Eric J. Miller, "Carl F. H. Henry and Christianity Today: Responding to the Crisis of the West, 1956-1968" [M. A. thesis, Deerfield, IL: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1994], iii). Miller also pointed out that Henry joined Christopher Dawson, Richard Weaver, and Reinhold Niebuhr in a "cultural critique that views the societal rejection of Christian theology and ethics as disastrous" for the future of America as well as Western civilization as a whole (Miller, ibid.). According to James Emery White's observation, Henry's thesis of the dependence of Western civilization's well-being on biblical theism is a perpetuation of the conviction of Peter Marshall, David Manuel, and Francis A. Schaeffer (see James Emery White, "The Concept of Truth in Contemporary American Evangelical Theology [Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991], 29-30). White's study is based on five American evangelical authors: Van Til, Francis A. Schaeffer, Carl F. H. Henry (White, 131-161), Millard J. Erickson, and Donald G. Bloesch. Henry feels that because biblical theism has been replaced with naturalism, Western society has actually entered a "new dark age." Right now, Western civilization is "somewhere between high noon and midnight"; to be precise, it is in the twilight zone, and sunset is sure to come upon American or Western society, and for that matter, upon the rest of human civilization. However, Henry exhorts believing Christians that they should do something about it, as there is yet some hope. The future of the Western culture should be our concern, and battle. See Henry, *Gods or God?* 288; 12-15; 138-39; 284; 92. In this context, Henry readily agrees with Brunner, who said: "If the Bible goes, the best of the West goes also" (Emil Brunner, quoted in ibid., 136, 183; see also Henry, *CPE*, 13-17).

2GRA 6:35.
Perhaps one of the persuasive ways Henry tries to impress the indispensability of biblical theism is by means of his bold, unsparing attack against any atheistically based worldviews such as naturalism and secular humanism, to name but two. In Henry's viewpoint, naturalism, which now dominates virtually the entire Western intellectual world, is "the reigning monarch" and the most formidable foe of biblical religion. Naturalism holds that nature is ultimate because it is the only reality that there is. Man is an animal, and therefore is accountable to no one. Truth and right are intrinsically time-bound and changing, and human life as well as the cosmos has no intrinsic meaning and 

1Henry said that it was the rejection of Christian supernaturalism that brought in the reign of Nazism and Communism (ibid., 8).


4Henry, Gods or God? 45.

5GRA 6:32-33.


7Henry, CPE, 23.
pervasive. Accordingly, naturalism dismisses the otherworldly stance of Christianity as a
grand delusion. Because of these presuppositions, naturalism is therefore regarded by
Henry as the Western world's (as well as Christianity's) number one enemy since it
"launches the deepest, most thorough and logically most consistent denial of
supernaturalism," regards divine revelation and authority retrogressive, and demotes the
Bible to a book of legends and myths. Consequently, naturalism advocates human
autonomy.

In a similar vein, Henry sees secular humanism just as dangerous and considers it a
ubiquitous adversary of America. In fact, it should be observed that Henry's criticism of

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2 The danger of naturalism to Christian theism is again cogently expressed by
Henry in the following words: "Naturalism's mindset and willset is hostile to the entire
body of miracles and supernatural. It disputes the Hebrew-Christian view in its totality. It
teaches that empirical scientific method alone gives us reliable information. It categorizes
the supernatural as legend and myth. It reduces ultimate reality to impersonal processes
and quantum events. It limits knowledge to tentative inferences. It denies the very
possibility of ever knowing ultimate and abiding truth" (Henry, Gods or God? 80; see also
idem, Christian Countermoves, 11). Secular naturalism denies revelation, "exposes man
and the world to wide reaches of chance and change, . . . deluges reality with
comprehensive contingency, total transiency, radical relativity and absolute autonomy"
(GRA 1:137, italics original).

3 GRA 6:32-33.

4 Henry, Gods or God? 2.

5 Ibid., 47. It was self-autonomy that led to Hitler's extermination of 6 million
Jews, Stalin's murder of 15 million Russians, and Mao's killing of 30 million Chinese
(ibid.).

6 Henry, Gods or God? 25. Some of the basic premises of secular humanism are:
"Reality is reducible to impersonal processes and quantum events; all existence is time-
secular humanism often overlaps with his criticism of naturalism, and perhaps it is for this reason that he usually keeps them together. However, since Henry has also addressed them separately, I likewise maintain this procedure.

Secular humanism, in Henry's viewpoint, has become the covert and beguiling metaphysical framework of Western university learning and politics, and has infiltrated even the church. Secular humanism's genius is to disavow the transcendent as an intolerable barrier to human freedom, and to reduce reality to "impersonal processes and quantum events" that are time-bound and dated.

bound and perishable; theological, philosophical, and moral principles are culture-relative and subject to revision; human beings autonomously and creatively impose whatever values history and the cosmos bear " (ibid., 197).

1Sometimes Henry uses the terms "naturalism" and "secular humanism" synonymously (see ibid., 15, 280; GRA 2:32-33).

2Henry lists four "key concepts" that arise out of naturalism and have also become the "masked metaphysics, the covert conceptuality of modern liberal learning." They are: diffuse dependence, total transiency, radical relativity, and absolute autonomy. It short, modern education is antitheistic, and repudiates "a divinely given truth and morality, and . . . rejects a supernatural purpose in nature and history. . . ." See Henry, The Christian Mindset, 84-86, 90. See also idem, Christian Countermoves, 39 where Henry points to the Enlightenment as being the cause for the above-mentioned situation in modern education.

3Henry, Gods or God? 15, 28, 181, 197, 288.

4Ibid., 283; see also GRA 2:123.

5"If indeed all truth and meaning are culturally conditioned, no basis remains for selectively exempting certain preferred biblical specifics. If we elevate culture-conditioning into a formative principle, and insist that biblical theology falls within a culture-relative context, then the principle of relativity to culture applies not only to this or that isolated passage—whether about the seriousness of sexual sins or the role of women in the church; it extends also to the scriptural teaching that 'in Christ there is neither male nor female' or that we are to love God with our whole being and our neighbors as ourselves, or that it is sinful to covet a neighbor's wife or possessions. It will not do to exhibit certain doctrines as the special strength of biblical religion if we simultaneously dismiss other teachings on
Because human life is regarded as only animal flesh, secular humanism has been responsible for the decline of human values shown by the 50 million fetuses that are aborted by Americans in a single decade. In other words, Henry sees secular humanism as "channelling" into raw naturalism. Viewing the above reasons as dangerous and subversive to the well-being of society, he accordingly presses for the acceptance of biblical theism as the best alternative to naturalism and secular humanism.

A Sure Foundation for Religious Epistemology

If revelation, as has already been pointed out, is the intelligent self-disclosure of God concerning his nature, will, and purpose for man, then this means that his knowledge of God is no more a question of guesswork or mere inference from nature and history. The fact that sinful man, in order to serve his own comfort and convenience, constantly

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1Henry, *Gods or God?* 198.


3Henry, *Gods or God?* 284.

4Ibid., 81; see also Henry, *Giving a Reason*, 15-16, 84-85; idem, *Twilight of Civilization*, 126-128, 177, 169, 138. In Henry's view, the recovery of interest in special revelation is one of the gracious providences of our century. It is this recovery that checks Western Christianity from sliding into natural theology and ultimately to humanism and naturalism (Carl F. H. Henry, *Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957], 64-65; see also idem, "American Evangelicals in a Turning Time," 41-49).


avoids and distorts or even suppresses his awareness of God through general revelation
(Rom 1:18ff.), shows his need for another form of revelation—namely, special redemptive
revelation, so that through it, man can be restored to the true knowledge of and fellowship
with God. This redemptive knowledge is held out to man epistemologically in the sacred
Scriptures. Accordingly, it also implies that "as systems of thought, the great religions
and philosophies must be viewed not simply as inadequate but false." Furthermore, since
this knowledge has been conveyed by the omniscient God, it means that Scripture, as "the
content of revelation, has a genuine knowledge-status."

1Ibid., 185.

2See Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 94, 97; and idem, "Inspiration," NIDCC, 512, where Henry says that the basic purpose of revelation is soteriological.

3Ibid. Our knowledge of God's nature and attributes is based upon Scripture. Any
claim for knowledge of God outside of Scripture can lead to "some god other than the one
living God" (GRA 5:49-50, 99). Henry also points out that in Scripture, this kind of a
knowledge comes from the Hebrew word "yādā" and the Greek ginōskō, which is
knowledge of the "most intimate" kind such as "in sexual intercourse between man and
wife" (Gen 4:1, 17, 23; Matt 1:25), and in personal communion with God (John 14:7;
17:3; Henry, "Epistemology," BDT, 185).

4Henry, "Epistemology," BDT, 185. In Henry's opinion, nonbiblical religions are
logically inconsistent (Purdy, Handbook, 262), or at least assumed to be inconsistent. The
Christian's duty is then to show this inconsistency in a nonbeliever's religion and
consistency in his own (GRA 1:237-38, 264, 401). This implies rational consistency as the
criteria for judging true and false systems (Henry, "Epistemology," BDT, 185). Pinnock,
however, criticizes Henry on this point, stating that in order to succeed in that endeavor,
one "would first have to show the inconsistency of every system humankind has known to
eliminate the possibility of a rival, and then he would have to show the logical consistency
of the Bible axiom. Think of the learning that would be needed to master all extant systems
and the problem of showing the Bible's logical consistency given its pluriform character"
(Clark H. Pinnock, Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way Through Modern Theology from

5Henry, "Epistemology," BDT, 185.
The Necessity of a Fixed Objective Knowledge

Henry emphasizes the significance of revelation as an alternative to overcoming subjectivism. His reaction to nonrational, nonverbal revelation is especially seen via his strong and unsparing criticism of neoorthodoxy (in the person of Karl Barth) and existentialism.

1GRA 1:95.

2In Henry's view, it was Barth and not Bultmann who posed a greater danger to evangelical theology (Mohler, Baptist Theologians, 524). For some of Henry's major criticisms against Barth, see GRA 3:225-29; 466-69; GRA 4:156, 158, 199, 261-67, 271; Carl F. H. Henry, Fifty Years of Protestant Theology (Boston: W. A. Wilde, 1950), 59-60, 101-102; idem, The Drift, 119-122; and for his criticism of Brunner, see Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 10-115. Bultmann's theological downfall is briefly recounted in Henry, Frontiers, 22-24, 26-28.

3According to Johnson (p. 210), neoorthodoxy and existentialism have been the main targets of criticism for Henry throughout his literary career. In the case of neoorthodoxy, Henry often picks upon its initiator, Karl Barth, and reacts to him intensively and extensively (Garbriel Fackre, "Carl F. H. Henry," in A Handbook of Christian Theologians, ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 592, note 14; hereafter cited as "Fackre, Handbook"; Patterson, CFH, 137). In Henry's observation, neoorthodoxy's greatest impact was in the modernist seminaries and least in the secular academic campuses (Gods or God? 197, 307). However, its lifespan was short. By the 1950s, it had already collapsed in America. Its downfall was due to its failure "to honor Scripture as authoritative conceptual-verbal revelation" (Patterson, CFH, 100). For a continuation of his criticism of neoorthodox or dialectical theology, see Henry, Fifty Years, 80-82, 103-04; idem, CPE, 257-258. See also David F. Wells, "Word and World: Biblical Authority and the Quandary of Modernity," in Evangelical Affirmations, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1990), 158. For Henry's criticism of contemporary existentialism, see Henry, Remaking, as well as his follow-up volumes, Protestant Dilemma and Giving a Reason.
Against Henry's contention for propositional revelation, neoorthodoxy argues for a nonpropositional, nonobjective, and personal character of revelation. Revelation in this sense is a wordless divine event within a person. It is neither rational nor propositional, and hence does not communicate divine truths and purposes. The Bible is only a "fallible witness" to revelation and therefore not normative for Christians. The errors and contradictions in the Bible only confirm its fallibility.

In reaction to Barth, Henry regards the former's doctrine of revelation and the Word of God as "troublesome," because it leads to skepticism and subjectivism. If one follows the implications of Barth's argument, no one could know that God intends to tell us anything. Barth's rejection of propositional revelation would mean that even Jesus Christ

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1GRA 4:200, 468. In Henry's estimation, of all 20th-century theologians, Barth has been the most influential in rejecting the propositional form of revelation (GRA 3:466). The Barthian alternative either means that "God gives us only unshareable gobbledygook or that the Bible is just a book of human guesses" (Henry, "Concerns and Considerations," 20).

2GRA 4: 200.

3GRA 3:164, 282-283. Perhaps it is because of Barth's denial of the rational-propositional character of revelation that he is also against natural theology (ibid., 3:208).

4Henry, "Concerns and Considerations," 20.

5GRA 3:100. The Bible, in neoorthodoxy's view, has only a functional and not cognitive authority. It becomes or is the Word of God when revelation takes place or when God's voice is heard within the person of faith (Henry, "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," 44).

6GRA 4:200.

7Ibid., 199.

8GRA 3:225, 435, 466; 261, 459. Henry points the finger at Kant for laying the foundation of subjectivism (see Purdy, Handbook, 265-66).

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ceases to speak to us as God as soon as he addresses us in intelligible sentences. Such a position would destroy intelligible religion, and Christianity would lose objective criteria as the basis for knowledge. Consequently, it would disable a person from distinguishing between religions or "between the one and the all," or even in making sense of one's own experience. A subjective or noncognitive revelation leads to "theological relativism," because no opinion can be more significant than another. Consequently, it would incapacitate Christianity for competing with secular views of life and history. A subjective revelation also unwittingly encourages an atheistic trend because it nurtures the seeds of prejudice against objectively revealed truths in theology.


2GRA 3:468. Henry points out that a nonintellective revelation totally contradicts what any reader of the Gospels can easily discover. Jesus identified Peter's affirmation of his messianic divine sonship—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—as an explicitly supernatural revelation: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Farther which is in heaven" (Matt 16:16-17, KJV; ibid., 3:434).

3GRA 3:100.


5Ibid., 434. Henry also says that it is the rejection of Scripture as God's authoritative Word that has "spawned" confusion concerning the nature of the Christian religion and has made "What is Christianity?" such a vexing question (Henry, "What Is Christianity?" 114).

6GRA 3: 459.


8GRA 6:52.
Henry also sees a similar problem with existentialism, which views revelation as an internal decision and subjective response.¹ Such an idea of revelation not only does away with objectively ordered structures and universal meaning, but tends to rely on human emotions and will. Besides, existentialism regards as virtuous whatever makes one feel good, and reduces religious doctrines to mere verbalizations of inner experience.² The consequence of such a view of revelation is that it dispenses with man's answerability for his personal rejection of the light of revelation, and renders him impervious to revelation itself.³ Such a revelation is apt to lead to a "situational theology,"⁴ and to the danger of identifying one's subjective impressions and personal decisions with divine disclosure and demand.⁵ Therefore only a fixed and objective revelation can save us from the dangers of neoorthodoxy and existentialism.

Summary and Conclusion

We have seen that Henry's doctrine of revelation arises from his assumption that God is the self-revealing God—not that he cannot help revealing himself, but because he voluntarily chooses to do so for his own glory, purpose, and will.⁶ That is, Henry wants to

¹GRA 3:220-221.
²Henry, Gods or God? 4.
³GRA 3:220.
⁴Ibid., 3:222.
⁵GRA 3:433.
⁶"If one believes in a sovereign mind and will, in God who personally speaks and conveys information and instruction, then the propositions of scriptural inspiration lie near at hand" (GRA 3:428).
especially underscore the supernatural origin of revelation. Initially, God reveals himself, his power, and deity through general revelation. However, after the Fall, this revelation was incorrectly or even wrongly used by sinful man, so that God saw the necessity of supplementing it with another, namely, special revelation. The latter is more significant because it is redemptive in its purpose.\(^1\) Moreover, special revelation is rational because it comes from God’s mind, which is rational, and is directed towards man’s mind, which is also rational by virtue of his bearing the *imago Dei*.\(^2\) Such a rationality assures meaningfulness and intelligibility of divine revelation.

Further, since revelation is meant for man, it is also given in the form that is familiar to him, namely, in propositional human language. The combination of these two

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\(^{1}\)Carl F. H. Henry, "Inspiration," *NIDCC* (1974), 512; idem, *Gods or God?* 321. According to Henry, the basic purpose of special revelation is redemption. As such, its content is accordingly redemptive in character (GRA 2:86-87; Henry, *Protestant Dilemma*, 94, 97). Special revelation is redemptive because it publishes the good news that the holy and merciful God promises salvation as a divine gift to man, who cannot save himself (OT). This promise has now been fulfilled in the gift of his Son in whom all men are called to believe (NT). "The gospel is news that the incarnate Logos has borne the sins of doomed men, has died in their stead, and has risen for their justification. This is the fixed center of special redemptive revelation" (idem, "Revelation, Special," *BDT*, 457). In redemptive revelation, God discloses himself in the once-for-all saving acts of Judeo-Christian history, particularly in Israel’s exodus from Egypt and the consequent founding of the Hebrew nation, and in Jesus’ resurrection from the tomb and the consequent founding of the Christian church. And he is disclosed in Jesus Christ the incarnate Logos. He is revealed, moreover, in the prophetic-apostolic Word, in the whole canon of Scripture which objectively communicates in propositional-verbal form the content and meaning of all God’s revelation" (GRA 2:87).

\(^{2}\)GRA 2:248. For Henry’s stress on God as one "who establishes and undergirds the cosmic significance of reason and logic" and "the logicality of faith," see Carl F. H. Henry, "What Is Man on Earth For?" in *Quest for Reality: Christianity and the Counter Culture*, by Carl F. H. Henry and others (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 159. For his emphasis on the rational God and subsequent rational revelation, see also Henry, "The God of the Bible vs. Naturalism," 234-37.
forms—rational and propositional—is again significant for Henry because it means that revelation is objective and universally shareable.\(^1\) In addition, a revelation that is both rational and propositional is the best antidote against subjective or noncognitive forms of revelation, which Henry feels are not publicly useful as they cannot be shared, lending themselves to religious pluralism, relativism, contradictions, and "theological suicide."\(^2\)

Finally, there is another aspect to special revelation that Henry eloquently defends—namely, the written dimension, or Scripture/Bible. Henry states that although revelation is not identical with the Bible, yet the Bible is identical with revelation.\(^3\) The Bible is the "conduit and reservoir" of divine revelation.\(^4\) It is God's Word. And because it originates from him, it is therefore the highest authority and ultimate norm by which all things are to be judged and measured, including the church's actions and teachings.\(^5\)

The following chapter conducts a similar study of Henry's doctrine of inspiration. A proper understanding of his ideas on revelation and inspiration is mandatory if we are to come to grasp with his depiction of the human role in them.

\(^1\)The shareableness of revelation is crucial for Henry especially when he holds that evangelism is the "primary duty" of the church without which it will face "extinction." See Carl F. H. Henry, "America's Future: Can We Salvage the Republic?" Christianity Today, 3 March 1958, 7; idem, "The Road to Eternity," 32.

\(^2\)Cross, 127.

\(^3\)Henry, The Gideon, 19.

\(^4\)See p. 43 above.

\(^5\)Henry, Gods or God? 248; idem, Conversations, 3, 189; idem, Evangelical Responsibility, 67-68; idem, Christian Countermoves, 113.
CHAPTE R 3

HENRY’S DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

The aim of this chapter is to conduct a careful study of Henry’s doctrine of inspiration so as to provide a wide exposure of the human role portrayed therein. The form of presentation of the doctrine is broadly similar to the one adopted in chapter 2 and is done with the primary intention of providing a logical setting for a proper understanding of the human dimension in Henry’s doctrine of inspiration.

Presuppositions

Chapter 2 began with a synopsis of Henry’s presuppositions in the context of revelation. This chapter likewise calls for a further look into his presuppositions, the consideration of which is also expected to deepen our comprehension of his doctrine of inspiration. It may also be noted that, since there is a close correlation between revelation and inspiration,1 their presuppositions are similar and, in some ways, are an elaboration of those already presented in the preceding chapter.

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1Henry says that inspiration is the correlative of revelation. Both often converge (Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 145; GRA 4:160). Inspiration rises out of revelation and is an intrinsic ground for positing revelation (GRA 4:70; see also GRA 3:12).
The Triune God

God is that eternal supernatural Being, three persons in one essence, containing in him all the perfections and attributes of infinity, immutability, omnipotence, omniscience, immortality, truth, love, goodness, justice, light, righteousness, mercy, wrath, and

1"It is God who makes himself known in self-revelation, who authorizes us to speak of what neither the nonbiblical religions nor secular philosophy discerned, namely, that three eternal personal distinctions coexist in the one living Godhead" (GRA 5:213; see also Henry, The Identity of Jesus, 78. "No fact more directly establishes the uniqueness of the Christian view of God than that of the Trinity. It is God seen as triune and yet one—the doctrine of Trinitarian theism—which by a single declaration sets off the Christian view of God from all others" (Henry, Notes, 114). "Some critics consider orthodox representations of the Trinity a mathematical monstrosity; the doctrine, they contend, is as fallacious in its claim for the three-in-one God as is the formula \( 3 \times 1 = x \). But this description patently distorts the doctrine. Christian theology affirms neither that three gods are one God nor that three isolated persons are one God. Rather, it affirms three eternal personal distinctions in the one God, in short, \( 3 \times 1 \). Such a formulation is both intelligible and noncontradictory. It is, moreover, far less complex than most mathematical formulas that engage modern-day scientists" (GRA 5:165). For a further discussion on the Trinity, including its significance, see ibid., 167-170, 186, 188-89, 191, 195, 210, 212-13, 215. "The Bible is monotheistic from core to circumference. From its beginnings Christianity is no less irreducible monotheistic than Judaism. It unwaveringly joins the Old Testament in insisting that the living God reveals himself as the one and only God" (ibid., 169).

2"God's essence and attributes are identical." The attributes constitute God's essence. God is "a living unity of perfections that coordinately manifests the divine essence. To explicate the attributes is to explicate the nature of God. The attributes may [also] be thought of as divine activities. [And] the activities are God's divine qualities or attributes. [God is therefore] "a living personal unity of properties and activities" (ibid., 130, 127). Similarly, the substance of God is, in the primary sense, nothing other than God himself; the divine substance is not an essence distinguishable from divine personality or from the divine attributes but is the very living God. God is therefore substance as existent reality, as opposed to nonbeing or mere appearance and shadow" (ibid., 11).

3Henry sees no reason for making a distinction between "perfections" and "attributes." Both can be used interchangeably. However, according to him, there are two categories of divine perfections or attributes: those that God shares with his creatures (communicable) and those that belong only to himself (incommunicable) (ibid., 99).
judgment. These attributes indicate him to be the truly sovereign one who also created all things out of his own sovereign free will. In his sovereignty he predestines and/or foreordains. But this foreordination does not preclude man's free will. For instance, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was both a divine foreordination and a human responsibility (Acts 2:23). Because God is sovereign, all nations, rulers, heavenly spirits, and angels are answerable to him; for it is he who decides their fate. Therefore he alone is to be worshipped, because he alone is worthy of that.

As a triune God, he is Father, Son, and Spirit. As God the Father, he is the

\[\text{Ibid., 135-136, 13, 81-82.}\]

\[\text{Henry, The Drift, 133; GRA 5:167. } \]
\[\text{"[God is] free to create if and as he wills, free to provide or not to provide salvation for fallen creatures, free to covenant or not to covenant with the Hebrews or any other peoples or with none at all. He is free also, if he wills, to graft Gentiles into the plan of redemption, to call out a penitent church for global witness concerning his ready forgiveness in Christ, and even to consummate history by final judgment on all men and nations" (GRA 6:76).}\]

\[\text{GRA 5:284.}\]

\[\text{Henry, Twilight, 119-20; GRA 6:21, 72, 110, 422; GRA 5:17; Henry, The God Who Shows, 10; GRA 3:22, 65-66, 12.}\]

\[\text{GRA 5:168, 187, 191. God's name [not names] is Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and yet that name is also his "inmost being" (Henry, Notes, 114, 116, italics original). These three personal distinctions within the divine essence, however, should not be confused with polytheism, or tritheism, or unipersonalism. The Christian concept of God is a "trinitarian monotheism" (ibid., 116). Christian theism "is three-fold in his oneness" (ibid., italics original). Knowledge of this triune God, however, came only after the incarnation of the Logos as Son, but the OT does provide hints of the trinity (ibid., 117). \"Eliminate [the] incarnation—as Judaism and Mohammedanism refuse to acknowledge it—and the case for trinitarian theism is not inevitable for faith; because triunity becomes the insight of faith only when God is seen as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—that in Him God has come in person" (ibid., 118).}\]
independent, transcendent creator, and preserver; as God the Son, he is the sole agent of creation, mediator of revelation and redemption, the final judge of mankind, and the accomplisher of creation's goal. As God the Holy Spirit, he is the personal instrumentality by whom God, through the Logos, inspires the prophetic-apostolic oral and written proclamation. The Holy Spirit is the communicator and conveyor of divine knowledge and/or truths, the author of Scriptures as well as their illuminator and interpreter. It is he

\[1^{\text{GRA 1:34; GRA 5:11-12, 17, 67. "Were it not for his staying power, man and the world would crumble into dust and disappear into nothingness" (GRA 5:17).}}\]

\[2^{\text{[At the judgment,] he will finally vindicate eternal righteousness throughout the cosmic and creaturely world, and transform it into a new heavens [sic] and a new earth. Someday the righteous Lord will summon us into his presence and never will God stand taller than when the impenitent wicked stand trial and he acquits the penitent on the ground of Christ's substitutionary death alone, while he condemns the perverse who have spurned the proffer of redemption. God will reign in full and final triumph when death is conquered and Christ the Victor restores all things to the Father's authority (1 Cor 15:28); righteousness will once again prevail throughout the created sphere, and evil will meet its decisive doom. Only that which has its stay in God who stands, stoops and stays will abide, and abide forever" (GRA 5:17; GRA 3:65-66; GRA 4:213. For a fuller exposition of Christ's second coming and the ensuing final judgement, see Carl F. H. Henry, "Jesus Christ and the Last Days," in Prophecy in the Making: Messages Prepared for the Jerusalem Conference and Biblical Prophecy, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971), 169-183.}}\]

\[3^{\text{GRA 3:16, 67.}}\]

\[4^{\text{GRA 4:272; 276.}}\]

\[5^{\text{GRA 2:13; GRA 4:272; GRA 4:280. Scripture is the "product of the Holy Spirit" (ibid., 419). He is the inspirer of the originals (ibid., 250).}}\]

\[6^{\text{In Henry, illumination refers to the "ever-increasing Christian enlightenment in the inspired prophetic-apostolic revelation." The Spirit illumines the truth, not by unveiling some hidden inner mystical content behind the revelation . . . , but by focussing on the truth of revelation as it is. The Spirit illumines and interprets by repeating the grammatical sense of Scripture; and by leading us to the expressed teaching of the text (GRA 4:129, 252, 276; GRA 3:203). But in so doing he in no way alters or expands the truth of revelation (GRA 4:283). However, Henry does also acknowledge that there is more to}}\]
also who regenerates, indwells, sanctifies, and guides believers.¹

Fallen Man

Man is the crown of creation,² endowed with moral righteousness,³ and especially created for spiritual and rational-verbal relationship with God.⁴ This exceptional status provides him with a unique prospect for eternal fellowship with the Deity.⁵ But a disaster struck him when he fell into sin. This fall, however, was not due to any inherent flaw in his nature but rather to his own choice.⁶ Since he revolted against God, man is now a sinner, and powerless to save himself.⁷

illumination than what he has said; but that is something which Scripture itself has not informed us any more than it has about the how of inspiration and divine incarnation in Jesus Christ (GRA 4:277). On the mystery of the modus operandi of inspiration, see also ibid., 213; 277; and Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 77.

¹GRA 4:272.
³Henry, The Uneasy Conscience, 68.
⁴GRA 3:376.
⁶Henry, The Uneasy Conscience, 69; GRA 1:34; and Carl F. H. Henry, "Man's Dilemma: Sin," in The Word for This Century, ed. Merrill C. Tenney (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 16-17. "Man's transgression . . . was . . . not an inevitable con­comitant of human finiteness but rather as issuing from an act of voluntary rebellion. In such a framework there was little room for a philosophy of the inherent goodness of man" (idem, Remaking, 59; see also idem, Protestant Dilemma, 219, where Henry says that man's fall was an abnormal rather than a normal happening and in no way was it based on his nature).
⁷Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 97, italics original; idem, Remaking, 69; idem, CPE, 105, 191, 392-93. In contrast to the biblical teaching about the condition of man after the Fall, the evolutionary philosophies furnished the modern mind with a cosmic guarantee of
The Fall brings about a "radical defect" in man's nature. It deprives his original righteousness and enslaves him to a perverted will, which inevitably results in the undermining of the realization of his ideals and distorting of his moral insights. Man is the problem of problems, and the most "frustrated species." As sinner, he is hopelessly doomed to death—and would have had no chance of escape had it not been for God who, out of his own freewill and holy love, delivered him through Jesus Christ, who is the only human perfectibility (Henry, Remaking, 62). "To consider man potentially or essentially good unbends the biblical view of sin" (GRA 6:259). Henry, "John," 157; GRA 2:526. Henry pointed to the debate between Brunner and Barth on the effects of the Fall upon the imago Dei and natural theology. Briefly, Henry is on the side of Brunner who is against Barth for advocating a complete eradication of the imago by the Fall. He is also on the side of Brunner for espousing general revelation, but differs with his reduction of this revelation to conscience. However, Henry agrees with both Barth and Brunner for their rejection of natural theology; but disagrees with their view of revelation as nonobjective, nonrational, and nonpropositional (see GRA 1:396-99; GRA 2:127-28; GRA 3:164; 282-283, 431, 496; and Henry in Gaebelein, 6). For a complete account of the debate between Brunner and Barth, see Brunner and Barth, Natural Theology.

1Henry speaks of "the fierce sinfulness of man" (GRA 2:26).

2Henry, CPE, 181; idem, Protestant Dilemma, 19; idem, Remaking, 59, 265.


4GRA 1:143.

5Henry, Notes, 111; idem, "John," 157, 159; idem, "Reply to Objections," 1-2; GRA 1:34. God's love stands for his "tender concern for man" despite his sinful ways. It refers to his desire to rescue man from death to immortality, and in providing him a higher quality of life fit for eternity. Further, God's love is also to be understood as his grace, which is "unmerited divine favor." It is only when love is understood in that way that it is understood aright. Moreover, Henry also holds that God's love does not stand by itself without his holiness. The two should therefore be emphasized side by side (idem, Notes, 108-11).
means of salvation. However, it is only at the eschaton that man will be completely regenerated, conformed to Christ's image, redeemed, and adopted into divine sonship.

The Inscripturated Revelation

The holy Scriptures are God's special revelation and a "unique mode of divine disclosure," given to chosen men through the medium of human language. The Scriptures bring us not only astonishing information about God's dealings and salvation, but require a decision that encompasses the whole self. The comprehension of revelation, however, is not to be confused with the appropriation of salvation. Revelation per se, and even a knowledge of it, does not bring man salvation. It is what he does with the knowledge of Scripture that determines the verdict at the judgment day.

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1Henry, "The Road to Eternity," 38; GRA 3:16; GRA 1:265. "While the classic moral philosophers and founders of other world religions teach that man may and should achieve moral perfection by the gradual improvement of his present nature, Christianity teaches, to the contrary, that only through the atoning death of Christ and the regeneration and sanctification of the Holy Spirit is fallen man restored to fellowship with his righteous Creator and to holiness. The sinner's plight is such, says the Christian religion, that he needs supernatural rescue; in the terms of Scripture, he requires nothing less than justification, regeneration and sanctification" (idem, The God Who Shows, 78-79).


5Henry says that the regard for Scripture as God's special revelation (or Word) is an indisputable character of Christian faith and commitment (see Henry in Gaebelein, 26; Henry, CPE, 264-265).

6GRA 2:44-45.

7Ibid., 44.
The Nature of Biblical Inspiration

Chapter 2 indicates that Henry’s exposition of revelation follows a traditional understanding. His presentation of the doctrine of inspiration has likewise not deviated from that understanding. This observation becomes more obvious as the discussion proceeds. I begin this investigation by looking at Henry’s definition of inspiration.

Definition

Henry provides the meaning of inspiration in both negative and positive ways. Negatively, Inspiration is not God’s heightening of the psychic powers or creative energies of prophets and apostles. Neither is it the striking manifestation of artistic, literary, or poetic genius of the writer.¹ Nor does it refer merely to mental concepts in distinction from words.² Rather, inspiration is a supernatural influence upon divinely chosen prophets and apostles whereby the Spirit of God guarantees the truth and trustworthiness of their oral and written proclamation.³ More specifically,

Inspiration is that supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit whereby the sacred writers were divinely supervised in their production of Scripture, being restrained from error and guided in the choice of words they used, consistently with their disparate personalities and stylistic peculiarities.⁴

¹GRA 4:142.
²Ibid., 143.
³GRA 4:129, caps original; see also Henry, “Bible, Inspiration of,” EDT, 145; idem, “Inspiration,” NIDCC, 512. Fackre’s study of Henry also yields a similar definition: “Inspiration means the ever-present concursive operation of the Holy Spirit in the writing process and the superintendence of the same, so that what is produced is always what God intends and as such is errorless” (Fackre, Handbook, 591; see also GRA 4:213).
⁴Henry in Gaebelein, 25; italics original.
Verbal-Plenary Inspiration

Henry is a subscriber to verbal inspiration, which he also calls the orthodox, evangelical, or biblical view.¹ For him, verbal expression is an integral part of inspiration because thoughts cannot be expressed without words. Regarding this inspiration, Henry says:

The text of Scripture is divinely inspired as an objective deposit of language. The attack on verbal inspiration in the orthodox sense is always an assault on the Bible as a linguistic revelatory deposit. The biblical and evangelical view does not limit divine inspiration as an activity internal to the psyche of the writers, but recognizes its importance beyond the subjective psychology of the chosen prophets and apostles. The non-biblical notions of inspiration obscure the nature of biblical inspiration by asserting the inspiration of only the writers, and not of the written truths they enunciate. The biblical doctrine of inspiration, on the other hand, connects God’s activity with the expressed truths and words of Scripture. The New Testament teaching correlates inspiration with the sacred writings and their verbal statements. Evangelicals emphasize revealed truths and verbal inspiration side by side.²

For Henry, the espousal of verbal inspiration not only points to the text (instead of the writer) as the locus of inspiration, but implies a rejection of non-verbal and subjective theories of inspiration. What Henry is saying is that we are not to accept the idea of inspiration that sees it as a Spirit-induced, internal, psychological state of the writer because such an anthropologically-oriented concept of inspiration is nonbiblical, antibiblical, and paganistic, and it indicates God’s relationship to Scripture as being only “before, above, or behind the Bible, and hence is prior or superior to the writings.” To hold to this nonevan-

¹GRA 4:144, 162, 66.

²GRA 4:144; see also Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 120; and Patterson, CFH, 112-13.
gelical theory of inspiration is to confuse prophetic-apostolic experience with inspiration.¹

Henry also says that a subjectively-oriented theory of inspiration leads to the rejection of objective truth in favor of subjective truth, predisposes one to believe in the infallibility of the modern worldview,² limits truth to personal preferences, and betrays a prejudice against objective transcendently given truths.³ Such a theory rules out universally valid truth. To hold that all assertions about history and reality reflect the creative contribution of the knower, is to ask: By what special revelational prerogative was this profoundly important information, if valid, vouchsafed to its advocates like Heidegger and Bultmann?⁴ If one can rely on the exclusive validity of subjective truth as against objective truth, without revelation and with one's own historical and cultural limitations, then why cannot the other rely on the objective truths vouchsafed through divine revelation? Therefore such claims about subjective truth as being the only truth not only betrays a prejudice against objective truths transcendently given through revelation and inspiration, but harbors the prejudice that treats the modern worldview as infallible. What is important to know is that although the prophets and apostles were limited by their culture and times, yet "they did not teach as doctrine the doubtful views of the cultures in which they lived."⁵

¹GRA 4:142-143.

²Because of this dignification of the modern view, Henry maintains that even if the prophet were to possess the knowledge of the twentieth century, that would not make him any more infallible than anyone else (ibid., 152).

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.
In addition to being verbal, inspiration for Henry is also plenary. That is, inspiration extends to the writings in their totality, in the whole and in the parts,\(^1\) including the very words themselves.\(^2\) For this reason it can be said that the word of God and those of the prophets are coextensive, interchangeable, and identical.\(^3\) That is the historic evangelical teaching.\(^4\) Further, "plenary inspiration guarantees the trustworthiness of biblical teaching in all its parts and minutiae, as well as in the whole. When personal salvation and eternal destiny are at stake, even the details of Jesus' and the apostles' teaching are indisputably important."\(^5\) Thus, plenary inspiration renders the Scriptures final and complete.\(^6\)

Henry also asserts that verbal-plenary inspiration rules out the following theories: dictation, degree, and thought inspiration. Regarding his denial of the first theory of inspiration, Henry makes the following remarks:

[The idea] that the Holy Scriptures are a product of mechanical dictation [is] untrue to the Scriptures, unrepresentative of evangelical doctrine, and prejudicial to theological understanding. Neither the Bible nor standard evangelical theological works teach this extreme view. . . . Inspiration did not occur *ex machina* but crowned a long period of providential preparation involving diverse experiences.\(^7\)

\(^{1}\)Ibid., 162, see also ibid., 160.


\(^{3}\)GRA 4:159, 49-50.

\(^{4}\)Ibid., 160.

\(^{5}\)Henry's allusion to Warfield, in GRA 4:71.

\(^{6}\)Henry, *Protestant Dilemma*, 77.

\(^{7}\)GRA 4:138; 140; 146. For amplification of Henry's rejection of dictation theory, see ibid., 138-142.
Moreover, the differing authorial personalities and stylistic peculiarities attested in the Scriptures also rule out supernatural dictation.¹

The evangelical teaching on inspiration likewise precludes the unbiblical notion of "degrees" of inspiration where some parts of Scripture are held to be more inspired than others and some not inspired at all.² To limit inspiration only to certain portions of Scripture is to pay respect to a philosophical or culturalregnancy in their own time.³ "The idea of degrees of inspiration, a notion found in Philo and borrowed from Plato, has no support in the biblical narratives."⁴ Similarly, verbal-plenary inspiration also wards off the notion that only thoughts and ideas were inspired, while the language in which these ideas are verbalized is left to the unaided faculties of the sacred penman. Such a position is both theologically and philosophically unsound because "thought of necessity takes shape and is

¹Ibid., 138, 150. Though Henry admits that some parts of the Bible are a result of divine dictation, such as the Decalogue and the words of Jesus, yet he makes it clear that this is only an exception to the rule (ibid., 348; Henry, "The Chicago Statement," 45). That is, Henry does not subscribe to the mechanical dictation theory of inspiration (see GRA 3:411, 415; GRA 4:141, 206; Fackre, Handbook, 591; Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 75).

²GRA 4:160. Henry maintains that no theologian has adduced objective criteria for discriminating that which he presumes to be errant in Scripture from that which he contends to be trustworthy. If one assumes that the biblical writers are to be trusted only where their assertions can be presently validated, one distrusts the writers, finding them credible on grounds other than their supposed divine inspiration (Henry, "Inspiration," NIDCC, 512). For the implications of a selective usage of Scripture on the basis of the degree concept of inspiration, see GRA 4:253-255; see also Carl F. H. Henry, "Biblical Authority and the Social Crisis," in Authority and Interpretation: A Baptist Perspective, ed. Duane A. Garrett and Richard R. Melick [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987], 204).

³GRA 4:251.

⁴Ibid., 160. Logically, Henry's acceptance of plenary inspiration would of itself rule out degree inspiration.
expressed in words. If there is inspiration at all, it must penetrate words as well as thoughts, must mold the expression, and make the language amply the living medium of the idea to be conveyed.  

In order to emphasize the importance or significance of verbal inspiration for the church, Henry points out that even Barr himself sees the danger in ignoring it. Such an attitude can lead from the loss of priority for divine revelation and authority, to the loss also of validity for the teaching of Jesus, and finally to a welcome for the fallible teaching of contemporary critics as a divine voice within the church. [In view of this,] it will be well to probe anew the evangelical insistence on verbal-plenary inspiration on its own terms.  

Henry further stresses the indispensability of verbal inspiration by pointing out that a non-verbal revelation/inspiration predisposes one to the dangers of gnosticism, irrationalism, skepticism, and mysticism.  

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1James Orr quoted approvingly in Henry, *Protestant Dilemma*, 120, n. 145.

2GRA 4:151; see also 139-40.

3Henry, *Protestant Dilemma*, 115; see also GRA 4:158, 267. In support of the verbal-plenary inspiration of Scripture, Henry indicates that it is also the historic doctrine of all major Christian denominations (GRA 4:160). In this connection he points to two major Christian bodies that have taken an exception: the United Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Roman Catholic Church. The former, at the 179th General Assembly (1967), abandoned the view of the Westminster Confession that the Bible is the Word of God written, in favor of the modern critical view. The latter (i.e., Roman Catholic Church), while still holding to the Bible as the Word of God, yet "nullifies" its (Scripture/Bible) authority on account of its correlation with oral tradition and particularly with the teaching authority of the church (ibid., 160-161).
Inerrant Inspiration

In addition to being verbal-plenary, Henry also maintains that biblical inspiration necessitates the acceptance of inerrancy of that which has been written. Thus, inspiration and inerrancy are inseparable because the latter is logically deducible from, and a necessary correlative of, the former. If one is uncomfortable with the one, he is equally uncomfortable with the other. Henry's justification for this position is that revelation's purity needs to be preserved if its effectiveness for mankind is to be guaranteed. To do that, God had to safeguard the human writers of revelation so that they would not introduce

1Mohler noted that Henry's study of biblical inerrancy is "one of the most thorough treatments in the evangelical literature" (Mohler, Baptist Theologians, 528). Perhaps Henry's prolonged interest in the subject (inerrancy) is understandable when one considers Rice's observation that "inerrancy is the single most-debated issue among evangelicals" (Richard Rice, review of GRA 1-4, in Religious Studies Review 7 (April 1981): 112; hereafter cited as "Rice, review, GRA1-4." According to Henry, inerrancy is an ancient doctrine of the church, having its origin in the NT period; and has been part of the church's life and faith. It was held by the 17th century orthodox Christianity, the Reformers, the schoolmen, the church fathers, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself who said: "Scripture cannot be broken"; "Thy Word is truth" (GRA 4:368). Inerrancy, as an issue, has therefore been a recent phenomenon, no longer than 150 years old (ibid., 367, 369).

2Though Henry admits that inerrancy is not explicitly taught in the Bible, yet the concept can be shown to be rationally defensible (Carl F. H. Henry, review of The Battle for the Bible, by Harold Lindsell, The Scribe, 1 June 1976, 3; hereafter to be cited as "Henry, review of The Battle"; idem, Conversations, 25; GRA 4:367-68). Henry maintains that there are neither biblical, philosophical, nor theological criteria to distinguish between what constitutes errant and inerrant statements in Scripture so that a rejection of inerrancy has little justification. Moreover, the demand for producing the inerrant autographs is as difficult as it is to produce the errant ones. In fact, it is more difficult to produce errant than inerrant originals (GRA 4:208; idem, Henry at His Best, 29).

3GRA 4:194. Henry also argues that "if the originals were errant, then textual criticism would expect to give us no more truthful reading, but only ancient ones" (ibid., 209). In fact, textual criticism attempts to arrive at the best possible text by assuming the normativeness and inerrancy of the originals (ibid., 245).
any form of error in both thought and word. The method God chose to accomplish that was divine inspiration which resulted in an inerrant written revelation or Scripture.¹

But what is inerrancy? It means being completely "free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions."² This is another way of stating that inspiration renders what is written error-free.³

Henry also defines inerrancy in two other ways: negative and positive; or what is not and what is inerrancy. Negatively,

1. Inerrancy does not refer to the modern, scientific, or technological type of accuracy by which we are to verify the biblical data on statistics, measurements, historical data, or cosmological matters.⁴

2. It does not mean that the NT quotes the OT verbatim.

3. It does not mean that religious truth is conveyable only in a non-metaphorical or non-symbolic language.

¹GRA 4:188, 240, 249.
²Ibid., 217.
³GRA 2:14; see also Henry in Gaebelein, 35; and GRA 4:206-07, 244, 249.
⁴Although "the Bible is not intended to be a textbook on scientific and historical matters, [yet] it does give scientifically and historically relevant information." The Genesis account of the origin of life, the Exodus, the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are all historically and literally true (Patterson, CFH, 118). If we cannot rely on them (the Gospels and Epistles) to tell the truth then "we can say little or nothing about Jesus Christ whom they present" (GRA 4:366). "The Bible is conditioned by its environment, but this does not make it unscientific. The Bible is expressed in the idiom of its age, but it has important things to say about origins, nature, history and the future" (Patterson, CFH, 118).
4. Verbal inerrancy does entail the replacing of Christ as the object of one's faith with the trustworthy Bible.

5. It does not imply that evangelical orthodoxy is a result or consequence of accepting inerrancy.¹

Positively, however, inerrancy means that

1. "Truth attaches not only to the theological and ethical teachings, but also to historical and scientific matters insofar as they are part of the expressed message of the inspired writings."²

2. God's truth inheres in the very words of the Bible; that is, in the propositions, and not merely in the concepts and thoughts of its authors.³

3. The original writings or prophetic-apostolic autographs alone are inerrant.

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 pursue and honor the best text."⁴

¹GRA 4:201-204.

²Ibid., 205.

³Ibid., 205. Inerrancy is not a personal property of the prophets and apostles. It does not reside in them, nor in their intentions as authors, but only in what they have written under inspiration (ibid., 175, 224).

⁴Ibid., 205-10; see also ibid., 178; 210; GRA 2:14; Patterson, CFH, 118-119. In this connection, Joseph Karanja sums up into 3 points Henry's criteria or conditions for establishing an apparent error as actual error. The criteria, however, are those advanced by A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, which are as follows: (1) that the error in question actually occurred in the autographs; (2) that the interpretation which occasions the apparent discrepancy is the one which the passage was evidently intended to bear; (3) that the true sense of the original is directly and necessarily inconsistent with some certainly known fact of history or truth of science (see Joseph Karanja, "Inerrancy and Sovereignty: A Case
From the foregoing discussion, inerrancy points to three significant notions for Henry: (1) that inspiration is the guarantee as well as causal factor of inerrancy; (2) that inerrancy extends to theological, ethical, historical, and scientific matters, along with thoughts and words; and (3) that inspiration is an exclusive experience of the prophets and apostles and therefore only what they originally wrote was inspired and, hence, inerrant.

Elaborating on this exclusivism of inspiration, Henry goes on to state that inspiration is a one-time occurrence and limited only to "a small company of messengers who were divinely chosen to authoritatively communicate the Word of God to mankind," and not to certain men/women at all times. In other words, inspiration terminated with the apostles and their immediate writings. For that matter, even the prophets and apostles themselves did not always remain under inspiration. And when out of it, they were like any other men, prone to errors, and in fact "frequently made them." This means that

Study on Carl F. H. Henry" [M.Th. thesis, Andrews University, 1990], 43; Warfield concluded that, so far, these conditions have not been successfully met (Hodge and Warfield, 36). Nevertheless, this does not mean that there are no difficulties in the Bible (see two examples in Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 74). But whenever one encounters such a difficulty, one is asked to recognize the tentativeness of empirical tests; exercise patience with the assumption that the biblical record would be validated at some future time; and exercise confidence in archaeological discoveries that might help in the resolution (Fackre, Handbook, 594). Because of this, Henry is rather optimistic about the possibilities of resolving any remaining biblical difficulties. But as for now, he does recognize that the scriptural phenomena are not always compatible with inerrancy. Accordingly, he feels that it is better to leave some passages unharmonized than to forge them into an artificial or forced harmony (GRA 4:172; 174-75).

1GRA 4:152.

2Ibid., 244.

3Ibid., 151. "Inspiration does not put "an end to their [prophets and apostles] human fallibility" (Henry, "Inspiration," NIDCC, 512).
"God's inspiration is vouchsafed only in a special time and special place and special way, and not always and everywhere."¹ That is, the phenomena of revelation and inspiration do not continue into the present day, even on a sporadic basis.²

This limitation of inspiration to the Bible writers also implies a preclusion of inspiration outside the Bible. Henry gives the following reasons:

[To extend inspiration] to prescriptural tradition and to postbiblical tradition in effect undermines the historic Jewish and historic Christian insistence on a unique canon of books distinguished from all others by their divine inspiration. Moreover, it operatively substitutes a fluid canon of tradition, suspended in turn upon the changing valuational assessment of the momentarily regnant critical school, which tends to dignify its preferred views as contemporary church tradition and as the authentic distillation of the biblical tradition. The writings which are then readily viewed as exceptionally inspired are those containing the novel constructions of contemporary critical scholars.³

Moreover, to identify as inspiration anything that a person wills—including even that which is antibiblical—is to make "pointless" the teaching that Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16).⁴

It should be pointed out, however, that although Henry emphasizes the importance of inerrancy, yet he also realizes the need to state its status among the rest of the doctrines of the church. Although he admits that inerrancy is clearly implied and logically deduced

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¹GRA 4:154.
²Ibid.
³Ibid., 148.
⁴Ibid., 153. The tendency to attribute inspiration to pre- and post- and even anti-Scripture arises out of the philosophy of exaggerated divine immanence which puts all men and history in the same plane, and raises the modernist to the plane of superior religious insight because he comes at the end of the evolutionary development (ibid., 153-54).
from inspiration, yet he also acknowledges that it is not explicitly taught in the Bible. As such, inerrancy is not the first thing to be declared of Scripture. One is not to wholly rest Christian theism on this doctrine; neither should it be made a primary issue in the discussion of Scripture; nor is it to be used as an identifying badge of evangelical authenticity. Furthermore, rejecting inerrancy does not lead one to repudiate other evangelical doctrines. However, as far as Henry is concerned, those who repudiate the doctrine are not consistent evangelicals, and their holding to the rest of the doctrines no longer can be sustained on the basis of epistemic principle but by an act of the will.

1Henry, review of The Battle, 3.

2GRA 4:366. Patterson (CFH, 116) pointed out that Henry is not militant on inerrancy; but wanted "to strike a balance between overbelief (which seeks to protect the Bible from its own humanity) and underbelief (which expects too little from the biblical text)."


6Henry, Conversations, 23-25; italics supplied.

7Henry, review of The Battle, 3. "A volitional faith may also affirm that God can and does use poor grammar and may equally use errant statements and resort therefore to a theology of paradox" (idem, Evangelicals in Search, 55). To correlate errancy with inspiration is to opt for illogicality (GRA 4:154). Rejection of the doctrine of inerrancy is likely to lead to other concessions and compromises and an unstable epistemology (Henry, review of The Battle, 3). That is, one cannot simply hold to the doctrine on the basis of confession alone. It must be supported with theologically reasoned arguments. As evangelicals, we have the duty of exhibiting "the doctrine's rational roots and openly display its intellectual fruits" (Henry, Evangelicals in Search, 56).

It should be noted that despite his clarifications with respect to the status of the
is, how can they assume the errorless of those doctrines when at the same time they deny the inerrancy of Scripture which is the source of the doctrines?

Autographs and Copies: Their Relationship

Because inerrancy is strictly the resulting effect of inspiration, whatever degree of identity the copies may have with the originals is due to the painstaking expertise and skills of the copyists and not the Holy Spirit's special action upon them. This degree of identity is further reduced when copies are translated to another language. Depending on the extent of reduction, Henry accordingly assigns varying degrees of value to all families of doctrine of inerrancy, yet Henry seems to fall back into a defensive position when he says that one is tempted to ask how often God can err and be God (cf. Heb 6:18; Titus 1:2) (GRA 4:192). Henry firmly upholds the doctrine's indispensability when he states that the inerrancy of the autographs is essential because Scripture has to do with the destiny of the human soul. Only a flawless Scripture can "get at the truth in the clearest possible affirmation" (Henry, interview by author).

Henry is on the side of Westcott and Hort who maintain that the copies are 999/1000 continuous with the originals (Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 73; see also GRA 4:235). This implies that copies do have errors (GRA 4:218, 253). Henry says that copies are errant because God has nowhere promised the inerrant transmission of the originals (ibid., 218). Therefore claims for inerrancy are not in principle to be extended beyond the originally inspired scriptural writings, even if the extant ancient copies, despite minor textual variations, give the impression of comprehensive identity even in details. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all copies from the first necessarily contain errors (ibid., 244). Nothing requires or demands that such reproductions of the inspired originals be errant, in view of the care exercised in copying important manuscripts, particularly in copying Scripture (ibid., 220). However, Henry does admit the errancy of copies but only in the minutiae, not involving any doctrinal faith (Henry, interview with author; see also GRA 4:225, and 241, where Henry speaks of "errant copies").

The extension of inspiration to copies would imply confusion because it opens the probability of having everyone staking his claim to inspiration (Henry, interview with author).

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2GRA 4:220. The extension of inspiration to copies would imply confusion because it opens the probability of having everyone staking his claim to inspiration (Henry, interview with author).

3Ibid., 178, 210, 218.
texts, versions, and translations. The copies and translations, however, are still the Word of God because they maintain the epistemic and verbal continuity with the autographs, including the KJV, which is based on inferior manuscripts. Moreover, since the autographs are no longer available to us, one is completely dependent upon the copies for knowledge of God's provision, including his Son, Jesus Christ.

**Infallible Copies**

On the one hand, it is noticed that Henry does not consider copies inerrant because they were not produced under inspiration. On the other hand, it has also been observed that he insists upon their verbal and epistemic continuity with the originals. Consequently, the copies are held by him to be infallible; that is, not prone to error. Infallibility for Henry also denotes that "quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide.

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1 Patterson, *CFH*, 120.
2 *GRA* 4:210, 218-19, 244, 249.
5 Henry says that there is no biblical basis for the inerrancy of the copies (*GRA* 4:242). He also observes that infallibility is not a biblical term. Like the word "inspiration," it entered theological discussion through medieval Latin (*ibid.*, 222). Except for the KJV rendering of Acts 1:3 as "infallible proofs," later versions do not use the word because it does not occur in the Greek; nor does it figure significantly in Reformation theology as a dogmatic concept. It is in the church of Rome that the term (infallibility) is used with dogmatic status, which can further be traced to Thomas Aquinas who correlated it with papal infallibility in dogmatic theology (*ibid.*, 222-223).
6 *GRA* 4:246, 249, 204, 253.
in all matters."¹ Although copies are subject to "incidental verbal variation and linguistic deviation,"² yet we can trust them because they faithfully convey the propositional truth of the original,³ and infallibly lead the penitent sinner to salvation.⁴

Moreover, just as inerrancy has both negative and positive implications, so also does infallibility.⁵ On the negative side,

1. Infallibility does not mean that it be identified with inspiration which belongs only to the originals.⁶

2. Infallibility is not to be used as a synonym for inerrancy.

3. Infallibility is not a personal property of the copyists and translators anymore than inerrancy is a personal property of the prophet or apostles; and

4. That all families of texts, versions, and translations are equally adequate.⁷ On the positive side, however,

¹Ibid., 217.
²Ibid.
³Ibid., 220.
⁴GRA 2:14.
⁵The points that follow are based on GRA 4:246-253.
⁶"If there are no inerrant autographs then no objective textual basis exists for distinguishing fact from fancy, as the confusion of the critics abundantly attests" (ibid., 234).
⁷Ibid., 245. Henry refers to Bruce M. Metzger's observation that one's language cannot fully convey the features of another (ibid.).
1. Infallibility implies that copies do "reliably and authoritatively communicate" God's truths and purposes to mankind—especially those that faithfully and accurately follow the autographs.¹

2. Copies "unfailingly direct mankind to God's proffer of redemption" (2 Tim 3:15; Isa 55:11).

3. Copies are the adequate "conceptual framework" by means of which the Holy Spirit "impresses upon human beings their created dignity and duty, their ongoing answerability for moral revolt, and the differing destinies of believers and unbelievers."²

4. Copies expound God's will, purpose, and truth with clarity so that even the unlearned can understand.³

5. Copies preserve the only sufficient divine rule of faith and conduct both for the individual and the church.⁴

¹Ibid., 246-447.
²Ibid., 250.
³The New Testament was written for the masses (ibid., 251-252).
⁴Ibid., 252.
Evidences for Biblical Inspiration

The Teaching of Scripture

For Henry, Scripture is the proper starting point for the teaching of inspiration because, there, the doctrine is explicitly taught.¹ The 3800 times where the prophets declare "Thus saith the Lord" are indicative of inspiration.² In this connection, Henry especially refers to two passages as having a direct scriptural testimony to inspiration: 2 Tim 3:14-16 and 2 Pet 1:19-21.³ Let us take a look at the way Henry understands these texts.

2 Tim 3:14-16

Henry considers 2 Tim 3:14-16⁴ a classic NT verse on inspiration,⁵ and rejects the distinction made by some between "every" and "all" Scripture. For him, a portion of Scripture is no less inspired than all portions taken together as a whole. However, what is more significant for Henry is the word theopneustos (vs. 16), translated by some versions

¹Henry, The Gideon, 13; idem, "Inspiration," BDT, 286; idem, review of The Battle, 3. Henry admits that although inspiration is as clearly taught in Scripture as the virgin birth, yet "it lies rather in the hinterland" (Henry, review of The Battle, 3).

²Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 82.

³GRA 4:131.

⁴"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (NRSV).

⁵GRA 3:424.
as "inspired" or "inspiration"—either of which is a doubtful or unsatisfactory rendering. The word is actually to be understood not as "breathing into" but "breathing out," or better, "God-breathed."\(^1\) The difference between "breathing into" and "breathing out" is significant. The first "merely approximates the Scriptures to revelation, whereas the second identifies Scripture with revelation;\(^2\) that is, God is identified as the author of Scripture, or the "product of his creative breath."\(^3\) Because of this, Henry prefers that theopneustos be translated as "spirated" instead of "inspired."\(^4\)

In the same vein, he also prefers "inspiredness" to "inspirating," because the latter points to "the subjective psychological mood of the writer overmastered by the divine afflatus,"\(^5\) and suggests the inspiration of the writer rather than the text, thus contrasting between the inspired writer and his text. Henry does not allow such a contrast, because both writer and text were equally inspired.\(^6\) For him, however, holding to the inspiration of the text is particularly significant because it is only then that one can speak of the text as the Word of God, authoritative and normative.\(^7\) It is this divine "breathing out" that

\(^1\)GRA 4:130-32, 94; GRA 3:37.

\(^2\)GRA 4:162.

\(^3\)Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," *EDT*, 145.

\(^4\)Ibid., 145; GRA 3:37; GRA 4:94.

\(^5\)Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," *EDT*, 146.

\(^6\)GRA 4:406; see also Henry to Kharbteng, 30 August 1993.

\(^7\)GRA 4:93-94. "Inspiration is primarily a statement about God’s relationship to Scripture, and only secondarily about the relationship of God to the writers" (GRA 4:143). Quoting Gordon H. Clark approvingly: "The Bible puts more emphasis on the inspiration of the words than on the inspiration of the apostles and prophets" (Gordon H. Clark,
constitutes Scripture as the living Word of God, just as his breathing out of his life's breath into a lifeless form of dust resulted in a living and real man, Adam (Gen 2:7).  

2 Pet 1:19-21

In 2 Pet 1:19-21 Henry seems to be in favor of extending the phrases "every prophecy of Scripture" and "the prophetic word" to the entirety of Scripture, irrespective of their being predictive in nature or not. In his observation, this passage (vss. 20-21) conveys two basic points. Negatively, it disavows the purported human origin of Scripture, because it is not derived from human inquiry and investigation or philosophical reflection, but from God. It also implies that the prophet or apostle is not a manipulator of divine powers but simply a divinely chosen spokesman moved and possessed by the Holy Spirit. Positively, the passage affirms the divine origin of Scripture (vs. 21). Furthermore, this quoted in Henry, ibid.).

1Ibid., 131.

2“So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (NRSV).

3GRA 4:132.

4Ibid.

5GRA 2:52.

6GRA 4: 132. Henry objects to the KJV phrasing, "holy men of God spoke," and favors the NEB, "men spoke from God," because the former does not contrast the divine over the human origin as does the context of the passage itself, which unmistakably emphasizes the divine origination of Scripture (ibid.).
passage provides an additional point that the preceding one (2 Tim 3:14-16) does not; namely, the special and unique operation of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Scripture writers, conveyed by the word *phero*, meaning "to bring, bear or carry, to drive as by the wind, to produce, to utter (as a word) or to make (as a speech)."¹ This "*phero*-experience" is therefore significant for Henry because it underscores two important ideas: the divine origin of Scripture and the certainty of the words of Scripture.²

The Witness of Jesus Christ and the Apostles

Henry stresses that Jesus regarded Scripture (OT) as the Word of God.³ Jesus's oft-repeated formula, "It is written" (Matt 4:4-10; Luke 4:8), is evident of this high regard for Scripture.⁴ Similarly, his assertion that "everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44) is an indication of his endorsement of Scripture's inspiration.⁵ Henry also points to John 10:34-35 as Jesus's testimony to verbal-plenary inspiration because he took note of the significance of a rather "incidental" statement such as "ye are gods," saying that even such a statement is also Scripture and therefore "cannot be broken" (John 10:34; cf. Ps 82:6) or "annulled"

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Henry, "Revelation, Special," *EDT*, 459; idem, "Inspiration," *BDT*, 287. For Henry, there is no contrast between Jesus' authority and that of Scripture. Jesus ranked his own supreme authority side by side with that of Scripture—not as if they were two independent authorities, but as identical, Matt 5:17; John 10:35 (ibid.; see also GRA 4:257-58).
⁴Henry, "Inspiration," *BDT*, 287.
⁵GRA 4:75.
(NRSV). By so doing, he indicates that no word or line or phrase of Scripture is to be ignored, marginalized, or set aside because each has been given under inspiration and therefore Christ rightfully concluded that "Scripture cannot be broken." In view of this, Jesus took every OT messianic prophecy seriously, and sought to fulfill it in his own life and ministry (Luke 24:44). Therefore, no word, line, or phrase of Scripture should be taken lightly, or "presumptively exempted from divine authority." None can be ignored because every word has been inspired and is therefore "of irrefragable authority."

Moreover, Henry also refers to what he calls the "prophetic tradition," which stresses the inviolable nature of the prophets' utterances because they were the mediators and promulgators of God's word and will. Consequently, what they spoke is to be considered as God's speaking. It is for this reason that God is at times identified with the prophet's mouth (Exod 4:14ff.).

Henry also makes similar comments about the apostles. Like their Lord and Master, they too considered the OT as the very Word of God and, hence, "completely authoritative." Their prefixing of a scriptural word with the phrase "It is written" (Acts 126

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1 Henry also cited the following texts that show Christ's affirmation of verbal inspiration of Scripture: Matt 26:31; 26:54; Mark 9:12-13; 14:19, 27; John 13:18; 17:12 (see Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 147).

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 146; GRA 4:133, 160.

4 Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 147.

5 GRA 4:33-34. For a further elaboration of the apostles' attitude toward as well as their use of the OT as Scripture and divine authority, see ibid., 135, 137, and 52. Scriptural passages are also furnished therein.
(1:10; 1 Cor 9:9; 14:21) is indicative of their high esteem for the OT as the Word of God.\textsuperscript{1}

Paul, for instance, regarded the OT as the "oracles of God" (Rom 3:2).\textsuperscript{2}

According to Henry, Jesus also expected us to accord a similar attitude of reverence for the words of the apostles, because the same Spirit that was with the prophets was also at work with the apostles (John 14:26; 16:13). Jesus himself as their resurrected Lord and possessor of all authority under heaven and earth, commissioned them to be the authorized representatives and interpreters of his ministry and mission.\textsuperscript{3} Accordingly, the apostles expected the believers to obey their teaching and exposition of the Gospel (1 Cor 14:37), because their teaching is authorized by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:13). What they said or wrote is likewise Scripture (1 Tim 5:18; 2 Pet 3:16; 1 Thess 2:13). Therefore, "a divinely given word mediated by the Logos of God through prophets and apostles is just as authoritative as that spoken directly by the incarnate Logos himself."\textsuperscript{4} We should accept that word as God's Word.\textsuperscript{5}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., 34.
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\textsuperscript{2}Henry, "Revelation, Special," \textit{BDT}, 459.
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\textsuperscript{3}GRA 4:36.
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\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 36-37. Jesus Christ the incarnate Word was later on inscripturated as the Word of God (Henry, \textit{Confessions}, 325).
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{5}Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," \textit{EDT}, 147; idem, "Revelation, Special," \textit{BDT}, 458.
\end{flushright}
The Witness of the Holy Spirit

The third evidence for the inspiration of Scripture is the inner persuasion and testimony of the Holy Spirit through the Bible whereby its readers and hearers are lifted beyond the mere letter to the plane of spiritual life, and to the very presence of God himself. Thus, the Bible becomes not only the means of grace but also affirms itself for us as the Word of God. Further, the internal testimony of the Spirit regarding Scripture as the Word of God is also necessitated by the fact that he was primarily responsible for its production. For this reason he is also its proper interpreter for us. But this interpretative or expositing activity of the Holy Spirit (in the church and the believer's life) does not bypass or supersede the Holy Scriptures. Neither does it include the communication of new truths. The Spirit's interpretation is always based upon the divine authority of Scripture.

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1Henry is aware of the need to balance between the role of the Holy Spirit and that of Scripture. An exaggeration of the Holy Spirit "leads to the dangerous mysticism in Christian experience; a neglect of the Holy Spirit may content itself with an outward and legalistic conformity to spiritual realities without vital regeneration." The evangelical view calls for holding the two together. The Holy Spirit is the "source of the Scriptures," and yet he always works and regenerates men through Scripture. The rest of the article is an exposition of the integral relationship between the Spirit and Scripture, and Henry does this by means of surveying the Book of Acts to that effect (see Carl F. H. Henry, "The Spirit and the Written Word," Bibliotheca Sacra 111 [October 1954]: 302-316.


3GRA 4:258.

4Ibid., 259, 262; 275. The Spirit persuades us of the truthfulness of Scripture, but it does not replace the objective authority of the written Word (Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 82-83).
The final evidence for the inspiration of Scripture is the absence of "self-contradiction or incoherence, or unreconcilable affirmations within the Bible. If there were, its high claims would have been dismissed." The critics' accusation that "the Bible is a hotchpot of contradictions is due to the fact that it clashed with their own naturalistic philosophies under which they smarted, and not any inner disunity of the scriptural revelation of God and man and the world."

Henry's conviction of the consistency of Scripture seems also to arise from his antecedent assumption of the rationality and logical consistency of divine revelation (which is a consequence of the rational nature of God's own mind). Since Scripture is "inscripturated revelation," it cannot therefore be expected to have any inconsistency or contradiction. "What is logically contradictory cannot be true. A denial of the law of contradiction would make truth and error equivalent; hence in effect it destroys truth." 

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1For Henry, consistency is also the hallmark of a true worldview. Consistency is one of those indispensable tests of a true worldview (see Patterson, *JMPL-1*, 4).


3Ibid.

4GRA 1:232. Henry claims that "logical consistency is a negative test of truth and coherence a subordinate test" (ibid., 232-34; Henry, *Toward a Recovery*, 53, 81, 87). Accordingly, one does not have to sacrifice his intellect in order to become a Christian (ibid., 400). And "no philosophy and no religion presses the concern for intellectual and moral integrity more consistently than does the Bible" (ibid., 264).

5GRA 4:424.

6GRA 1:233. Henry's conviction of the truthfulness of the Christian faith and the inadequacy of non-Christian religions leads him to advocate an apologetic strategy which
Without logical consistency, Scripture's epistemological value would suffer and a vital means of testing truth would have been lost.¹

Other Evidences for Inspiration

Fulfilled Prophecies

As Henry sees it, if God is the author of Scripture, then whatever prophecy recorded in it "logically necessitates" a fulfillment.² Thus, the fulfillment of predictive prophecies indicates that the God of the Bible, unlike the postulated god of philosophy, knows the future.³ The consummation of biblical prophecies is therefore another "compelling evidence" for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.⁴ For Henry, however, begins by first showing the inconsistency of the non-Christian faith, followed by the consistency of the Christian truth (ibid., 233-34; Henry, Toward a Recovery, 87). Further, although Henry does recognize the possibility of consistency among a variety of mutually exclusive systems based on their own respective a prioris, yet he also believes that through several theorems later, any system other than Christianity will ultimately exhibit contradictions (Henry, Toward a Recovery, 81; GRA 1:233-37; see also ibid., 237-38, 264, 401). If the true system is comprehensive, every false system must contain contradictions (Henry, Toward a Recovery, 88; see also GRA 1:237). Moreover, since God is the only source of truth (GRA 1:228), it is reasonable to believe that there can be but one comprehensive system of truth. In the case of Christianity, Henry is convinced that its assumptions are true, and that it can be demonstrated to this effect without any problem for the nonbeliever to see it with his mind's eye (Henry, Toward a Recovery, 105). Nevertheless, Henry does admit that "final verification or demonstrative proof of the truth of any metaphysical overview is presently impossible" (ibid., 88).

¹Henry, Toward a Recovery, 81.

²Ibid., 75; see also Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 146.

³GRA 4:348.

⁴Ibid., 17. For Henry's reply against Barr's denial of predictive prophecies in Scripture, see ibid., 347-48. In this connection Henry also points out that fulfillment of prophecies goes against liberalism because of its bias against the supernatural, and also against neoorthodoxy because of its opposition to propositional revelation (ibid., 17).
the fulfillment of scriptural prophecies is not so much because God controls and determines the course of history,¹ but because "we are dealing with what the Holy Spirit tells and foretells, with divinely inspired data, with what is known by special revelation, with what the Spirit communicates in a definitive way."²

**Testimony of Church Fathers and Reformers**

According to Henry, the verbal inspiration of Scripture is testified to by the church fathers like Origen, Irenaeus, Polycarp, and Augustine. For that matter, even the early fathers maintained the complete inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. These men held to a high view of Scripture and "knew no other doctrine than that of an inspired and trustworthy Scripture."³ However, evangelical theology does not accept the Bible's inspiration merely on account of the church fathers. It did that strictly on the strength of the Bible's claim about itself, and the fathers are only witnesses to this claim.⁴

The Protestant Reformers likewise held a similar view of inspiration. While Henry acknowledges their christocentric approach to the Bible, along with their emphasis on the dynamic relationship of the Spirit and the Word of God, yet he also maintains that both

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¹GRA 4:75.

²Ibid.

³Henry, *The Gideon*, 15-16. In this instance, Henry not only enlists the church fathers as witnesses to the inspiration of Scripture, but uses their names for support of inerrancy (see GRA 4:370-373).

Luther and Calvin understood Scripture as the "objectively given linguistic statement of the divine mind and intention."\(^1\)

**The Significance of Inspiration**

**The Means of Access to Revelation**

Henry says that revelation and inspiration are to be emphasized side by side.\(^2\) He shows the intimate relationship between these two doctrines by pointing out that inspiration is the means through which revelation is made available to mankind. This point is clearly underscored by his identifying revelation with the Bible, and by making the latter the product and/or achievement of inspiration.\(^3\) Further, based on Henry's arguments in favor of propositional revelation, the question of its accurate transmission—not excluding its preservation—is also crucial. This is brought about only by means of inspiration.

Inspiration is therefore part of the revelatory process.\(^4\)


\(^2\) GRA 4:144.

\(^3\) Ibid., 256, 262.

\(^4\) GRA 4:233. It is only by means of inspiration that the prophets and apostles can "articulate faithfully" God's revelation without "misrepresenting neither truth nor fact, but instead preserve us from the accretions of legend and myth to which both oral tradition and an unfixed literary tradition are prone" (GRA 3:96); Kiš, 260.
The Means of Access to Jesus Christ

The preceding chapter shows that Henry regards Jesus Christ as the goal, theme, content, and climax of revelation. It is in him that revelation converges and coincides. But one’s knowledge of Jesus Christ, however, is available only through the inscripturated revelation or the Bible. "We have no way of returning to the historical Jesus except through the Bible."

The Spirit reveals the Christ of the Book through the Book, there is no revelation of Christ apart from the Scriptures. All that we know of Christ is conveyed to us through the Scriptures which interpret to us the Living Christ whom the Spirit discloses; we know nothing about Christ beyond the Written Word except the living experience of Him, and our conviction that it is he depends not alone upon the testimony of the Spirit, but also the witness of the written Word which the Spirit enlivens.

The above point becomes obvious when one recollects the primary arguments of Henry regarding revelation and inspiration, namely: (1) the indispensable role of revelation; (2) the soteriological—hence, christological—motif as being the primary feature of revelation; and (3) the cruciality of inspiration as the supernaturally chosen means of inscripturating revelation.

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2See p. 69 above.

3GRA 4:27; GRA 3:95.

4GRA 3:95.

5Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 82-83.

6In Henry, all revelation is christological and, hence, soteriological (Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 9; see also idem, "Revelation, Special," BDT, 457; GRA 3:46, 460; Johnson, 100; see also note 1, p. 97 above).
The Guarantee of Reliableness of Biblical Authority

William E. Hordern pointed out that authority lies at the heart of Henry's doctrines of revelation-inspiration.\(^1\) A similar observation was also made by Mohler when he said that "Henry's theological system has given scriptural authority more attention than any doctrinal issue."\(^2\) Indeed, one sees this to be the case with Henry when he says that the first affirmation of the Bible about itself is its authority.\(^3\) The prophets and apostles likewise directed their "first and foremost" attention to scriptural authority—not inspiration or inerrancy.\(^4\) The authority of the Bible should be central, or else it would spell the death of Christianity and the decay of Western civilization.\(^5\)

After having emphasized the importance of biblical authority, Henry goes on to point out that authority is ultimately based on the reality of God in his revelation.\(^6\) But Henry has also shown that God's revelation is available only by means of inspiration. As such, although the two—authority and inspiration—are distinguishable doctrines, they are nonetheless correlative. The Bible is authoritative because God, the revealer of divine truth and redemptive grace authorized selected spokesmen to communicate his specially disclosed word to mankind. These

\(^1\)Referred to in Sharp, 76; Patterson, *CFH*, 106.

\(^2\)Mohler, *Baptist Theologians*, 524.

\(^3\)Henry, *Conversations*, 24.

\(^4\)GRA 4:41.

\(^5\)Ibid., 23.

\(^6\)Henry, *Conversations*, 37.
authoritative spokesmen, however, affirm their message to be God-breathed [theopneustos], that is, given by the Spirit through them. Moreover, although Henry maintains that the doctrine of authority of Scripture should receive priority over that of inspiration, yet he doubts biblical authority "will long survive if the doctrine of scriptural inspiration is truncated or dismissed." After all, it is from inspiration that scriptural authority derives its credibility.

Summary and Conclusion

Inspiration is that special supernatural influence and superintendence of the Holy Spirit over the prophets and apostles during their preaching and writing of the divinely revealed truths. This supervision was so comprehensive that whatever they said or wrote, including the very words, was divinely selected or approved, resulting in a flawless or errorless Scripture. The inerrant nature of their speech or writing, however, was true only when acting under inspiration. Otherwise, and outside of it, the prophets and apostles were just as fallible and erring as any human being, and subject to all the cultural and historical

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1GRA 4:71.
2Ibid.
3Ibid., 68, 75.
4See also ibid., 256.
5With reference to the Holy Spirit's role in inspiration, Henry, like his predecessors, namely, B. B. Warfield and A. A. Hodge, uses the term "superintendence" to refer to the meaning of inspiration (GRA 4:129, 141, 233). Hodge and Warfield also stated that the essence of inspiration is superintendence (Hodge and Warfield, 6).
6GRA 4:144-145.
limitations of their time. In other words, inspiration did not occur to them throughout their lives; nor did it continue after them. Hence, of all men, only the Bible's prophets and apostles had the privilege of the experience of inspiration.

The locus of inspiration, however, falls more on what the prophets and apostles wrote than on what they experienced. In other words, inspiration refers essentially to a linguistic revelatory deposit identified with the text of Scripture. It is "primarily a statement about God's relationship to Scripture, and only secondarily about the relationship of God to the writers." Moreover, since what they wrote is available to us in the form of the Old and New Testaments, only the books belonging to these two Testaments are accordingly inspired. However, the Bible we now have is based only on copies (and perhaps a copy of copies) of the originals (autographs). Technically understood, one cannot therefore regard any of our version as inerrant, for inspiration quality belongs only to the autographs. Nevertheless, the copies are highly reliable and trustworthy because of

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1Henry is aware of the objection against verbal inspiration on the basis of cultural limitations of the prophets and apostles. His reply is that the objection is "self-refuting nonsense" because it would mean that even what the objector says or adjudicates is not worthy of trust because he too is limited by his own culture. "In fact, the most sophisticated moderns have shown themselves capable of believing amazing and even incredible myths such as the Nordic superiority, Negro inferiority, evolutionary utopianism, technocratic scientism, the coming Communist kingdom and so on" (Henry in Gaebelein, 28, 19; see also GRA 4:151; Henry, Twilight of Civilization, 115).

2GRA 4:151.

3Ibid., 144.

4GRA 4:143.

5GRA 2:14-15; GRA 4:220, 225, 236.

6GRA 4:241.
the fact that they are 99.9 percent continuous with the originals. As such, we can still consider the extant copies inspired (theopneutos), though only in a derivative sense. Like the originals, the copies too are "cognitively dependable carriers of objectively inspired truths. "Copies reliably and authoritatively communicate the specially revealed truth and purposes of God to mankind." They "retain the epistemic consequences of divine inspiration of the inerrant prophetic-apostolic autographs." In view of this, they, along with the translations, are also the Word of God. Because of this, the copies are not only to be honored as the Word of God, but are just as normative as the autographs. Copies are binding upon believers at personal as well as corporate levels.

Thus far, we have familiarized ourselves with Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration. Their study is important because they provide the primary environment for viewing Henry's portrayal of the human role in these doctrines, as well as material for

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1Ibid., 235. Henry credits the infallibility of the copies to a "special providence of God" (ibid., 241).

2The existing copies of Scripture, while not inerrant, nonetheless bear an authority and trustworthiness superior to that of the pope of Rome even when he speaks in his office, and substantially and principally the copies reflect the theopneustic quality of the prophetic-apostolic autographs (ibid., 225, 253). The derivative theopneustic quality that the copies have also points to the nature of their authority, which is likewise derivative (ibid., 253).

3Ibid., 253.


5"Copies reliably and authoritatively communicate the specially revealed truth and purposes of God to mankind." They "retain the epistemic consequences of divine inspiration of the inerrant prophetic-apostolic autographs." In view of this, they, along with the translations, are also the Word of God (ibid., 246, 248, 218-19).

6GRA 4:242, 75.
evaluating that role. In order to ensure a correct understanding of the human role, there is also a need to address Henry's doctrine of man. After all, if revelation and inspiration are given for man's sake, then it should be assumed that Henry must already have certain presuppositions about human nature which he then relates them to his description of the human role in revelation and inspiration. The following chapter accordingly provides his view of man.
CHAPTER 4

THE DIVINE-HUMAN POINT OF CONTACT

IN HENRY'S DOCTRINE OF MAN

Henry's Portrayal of Man in Aquinas and Barth

Although the focus of this chapter is on the point of contact between God and man, yet the rationale for this contact point is evident only by looking at the doctrine of man in Henry. This can be done by a combination of two approaches: (1) Henry's reactions to those anthropological views that contradict his; and (2) his direct and independent description of man. The first approach is just as relevant as the second because Henry's own views are often given a clearer presentation in the light of his apologetic reactions to those views that undermine his. In this case, Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth are chosen as the media through which Henry depicts his view of man. The reason for choosing these authors is that Henry has reacted to them in an extended fashion. Moreover, Aquinas's concept of man is contrary to Barth's concept, and Henry's reaction to them exposes his own view of man with greater precision and clarity.

The presentation begins by looking at Aquinas's and Barth's views of man respectively, followed by Henry's reaction to them. A summary of his portrayal of man follows each of his reactions. The portrayal is then supplemented with a sketch of Henry's direct presentation of his view of man. This approach is expected not only to yield a fairly
clear and balanced picture of the man whom Henry visualizes, but also see more clearly Henry’s justification concerning his view of the divine-human point of contact. Further, the examination of Henry’s doctrine of man is also mandatory for the thesis of this dissertation. It is only as one has a clear understanding of the man Henry has in mind that one can truly appreciate the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration.

A Brief Sketch of Thomas Aquinas’s View of Man

Since the goal in this section is to obtain a clearer picture of Henry’s view of man via his reaction to Aquinas, the scope of the presentation of Aquinas’s view of man is accordingly limited to those points that Henry interacts with him.

Man is a "compound of soul and body."¹ This makeup, however, is not to be thought of as two unrelated parts held together by force; rather, they are an organic unity.

The soul, which is divinely created, incorporeal, subsisting,² hence imperishable,³ has been

¹Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologicae, Latin Text and English Translation; Introductions, Notes, Appendices and Glossaries (Leicester, England: Blackfriars; New York: McGraw-Hill; London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), Ia. 75, 4. The style of citation ("Ia. 75, 4") is one adopted internationally for Aquinas’s Summa. Each entry indicates part, question, and article, in that order. Thus, "Ia" stands for prima pars, "75," the question number, and "4" the article number. Other parts of the Summa are likewise indicated as prima secundae (Ia2ae), and secunda secundae (Ila2ae).

²A subsisting soul means that it has an "existence completely its own, unshared with any other" (Summa, vol. 11, Glossary, s.v. "Subsistence, subsistent").

³Ia2ae. 83, 1; Ia. 75, 2. For Aquinas’s persuasive argumentation regarding the incorruptibility or imperishability of the soul, see Ia. 75, 6. In his view, there is a difference between the animal soul and that of man. The animal soul is not subsisting, that is, not having an independent mode of existence, whereas the human soul is subsisting (Ia. 75, 6; Summa, vol. 11, Glossary, s.v. "Subsistence, subsistent"). The souls of brutes are produced by a certain material force, whereas those of humans are produced by God (Ia. 75, 6).
"infused into" the body, constituting the latter's "formative principle," and "the root principle of life in living things." It is the soul that gives form to the body. In fact, the soul "is the form of the body. Its substance is the form of the body." It "is the one and only 'form' in which the 'body' exists," so that it is improper to treat the soul and body separately. Thus, man is neither "mere soul" nor mere body but a psycho-physical unity.

The soul is also the "intellective principle" of man; or "the principle of the art of understanding." As such, man is also a "rational" being. It is the soul that furnishes him the faculties of reason and will by means of which he performs voluntary actions from

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1 Ia2ae. 83, 1.
2 Ia. 75, 1.
4 'Substance' points to "a being that exists in itself rather than in another" (Kreeft, Glossary, "substance," 30).
5 Ia2ae. 83, 2; see also Ia. 76, 1, 4, 6.
6 Ia. 75, 4.
7 Ia. 75, Introduction, xvi.
8 Ia. 75, 6; 4; Ia. 79, 4.
9 Ia. 75, 2.
10 Ia2ae. 85, 2.
11 Ia2ae. 1, 1; Ia2ae. 6, 3; Ia. 85, 1.
whence arise moral acts.1 By virtue of being a rational creature, man accordingly has the
capacity for knowledge. Actually, it is innate in him; he is born with that capacity.2
However, since man is an embodied soul, he knows only through the avenues of the senses.
In other words, although the soul is the "intellective principle"3 in man, yet because of its
organic unity with the body, it understands only through the senses in the form of images,4
and the effects of God.5 This means that "the soul understands nothing without imagery,
and there is no imagery apart from the body."6 This understanding, also called "natural"
understanding, "extends just so far as it can be led by sensible things; from these, however,
our understanding cannot reach to the divine essence."7

Aquinas provides a reason why man's knowledge, including his knowledge of God,
is not a knowledge of the essences. As far as he is concerned,
sensible creatures are effects of God which are less than typical of the power of their
cause, so knowing them does not lead us to understand the whole power of God and
thus we do not see his essence. They are nevertheless effects depending from a cause,

1Ia2ae. 6, 4, ad. 2; Ia2ae. 1, 3.
2Ia2ae. 17, 7; see also GRA 2:135.
3Ia. 75, 6.
4Ibid.; see also GRA 2:119. "The proper activity of the soul . . . is to understand
by means of images" (ibid.). Knowledge by natural reason "depends on two things: images
derived from the sensible world and the natural intellectual light by which we make abstract
intelligible concepts for these images" (Ia. 12, 13).
5Ia. 12, 12.
6Ia. 75, 6.
7Ia. 12, 12.
and so we can at least be led from them to know of God that he exists.¹
This is another way of stating that as natural creatures, and on the basis of natural reason, we can know only that God is, but not what he is.² This form of knowledge is what Aquinas called analogical. For in his view, "it is impossible" to predicate anything univocally (wholly the same) of God and creatures,³ because "every effect that falls short of what is typical of the power of its cause represents it inadequately."⁴ However, this does not mean that Aquinas supported equivocal (wholly different) knowledge of God as is in the difference between the propositions: "milk is good" and "God is good." The reason why "it is impossible for the soul, as it is in this life, to see the essence of God is because the soul has its "being in corporeal matter, . . . hence, . . . cannot by nature know anything except what has its form in matter or what can be known through such things."⁵

Aquinas also held that this analogical knowledge of God exists universally in "a general and somewhat confused manner."⁶ Accordingly, it cannot provide an absolute proof that God exists anymore than one's knowledge of a man coming to one's house is

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.; italics original; see also GRA 2:55, 105; GRA 1:184.
³Ia. 13, 5.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ia, 12, 11. Aquinas also adds that there is such a thing as the knowledge of God's essence, but this can come only by means of grace (Ia. 12, 13) and is limited to the "blessed" (Ia. 12, 1). This is also called "a more perfect knowledge" of God than the one that is obtained by natural reason (Ia. 12, 13).
really that of Peter, though the latter is the one expected.\textsuperscript{1} And so to the question whether God's existence can be demonstrated, Aquinas replied by pointing to "two kinds of demonstration"—through the cause and by means of its effects.\textsuperscript{2} "When an effect is more apparent to us than its cause, we reach a knowledge of the cause through its effects." Since an effect "always" depends "on some cause . . . , a cause must exist if its effect exists. We can demonstrate God's existence in this way, from his effects which are known to us, even though we do not know his essence."\textsuperscript{3} Accordingly, Aquinas submitted the following five proofs or ways:

1. Man perceives things in motion. Since that which moves presupposes a mover, it means that behind innumerable movers there should be a first mover.

2. We perceive an effect as well as its cause. Behind all the causes there should be an efficient cause.

3. We perceive not only a thing in existence, but also the possibility for its nonexistence. Behind all contingent existents, there should be a necessary external and eternal existent.

4. We perceive good and perfection in nature. Behind them all there should be one that is infinite in goodness and perfection.

5. It appears that all things seem to move toward certain respective ends or goals. Behind these ends, there should be one supreme intelligent being who is guiding and

\textsuperscript{1} Ia. 2, 1 (Fairweather).

\textsuperscript{2} Ia. 2, 2 (Fairweather).

\textsuperscript{3} Ia 2, 3. For proofs of God's existence based on the cause-effect relationship, see Ia. 2, 3.
controlling them with his wisdom.¹

Aquinas had pointed out that this kind of knowledge cannot avail for man all that needs to be known. For this reason God had to supplement it with divine revelation.² But even "revelation does not tell us what God is."³ Nevertheless it is indispensable for mankind because only through revelation can certain truths of Christianity (e.g., the Trinity) be known.⁴ Divine revelation therefore provides us with divine light that assists our natural light of reason to attain a more profound understanding "from the images."⁵ The implication here is that while faith and reason are independent, yet reason is of service to the Christian faith—especially for those who do not believe in the authority of Scripture.⁶ For example, besides ascertaining God's existence, reason also can tell us his oneness.⁷ Moreover, since no one would "believe unless he saw that they are worthy of belief,"⁸ reason with its ensuing natural theology is therefore useful in serving as a praeparatio for belief in the Christian faith. In other words, although reason does not produce faith—for

¹Ia. 2, 3. For Henry's criticism of Thomas's Five Proofs, see GRA 2:104-123; for a historical background of the proofs, see GRA 1:184, 78.

²Ia. 1, 1, 3. The human soul has "imperfect understanding" (Ia. 79, 4).

³Ia. 12, 13.

⁴Ia. 12, 13; see also GRA 1:184-85, where Henry criticizes Aquinas for not making revelation the only source for knowledge of God and his ways, including knowledge of his existence and immortality of the soul.

⁵Ia. 12, 13.

⁶Ia. 2, 2.

⁷Ia. 3, 2.

⁸2a2ae. 1, 4, ad. 2.
faith is God's gift—yet it does play an important role prior to faith.2

The rational nature of man also renders him with a capacity for sin.3 When he sins (actual sin), which he does, including Adam (original sin),5 the soul is deranged.6 Consequently, through the sin of his first parent, Adam, man completely lost the original or primordial justice.7 However, his natural good—"the good of nature" that "consists of being, living, and understanding,"8 is not destroyed or diminished by sin;9 rather, it is the "natural inclination to virtue that is diminished."10 Sin issues from the will (which is one of the powers of the soul), just as an inordinate appetite for food "results from the will


22a2ae. 1. 5, ads. 2-4; see also GRA 1:331, where Henry says that Aquinas regarded natural theology as "the vestibule of revealed theology," or the praeparatio revelatio (GRA 2:105).

3Ia2ae. 85, 2.

4Sin is a privation, but "it is more than mere privation." As it is inherited from Adam, sin has the character of guilt and a habit, and a "corrupt habit" at that (Ia2ae. 82, 1 [Fairweather]).

5Original sin is passed on through the semen as its "instrumental cause" (Ia2ae. 83, 1).

6Ia2ae. 83, 1 (Fairweather). The essence of sin is constituted in a "disordered disposition which has resulted from the dissolution of the harmony which was once the essence of original justice, just as bodily sickness is the disordered disposition of a body which has lost the equilibrium which is the essence of health" (Ia2ae. 82, 1; Fairweather).

7Original justice stands for man's original rightness with God, or man's rightness as his primordial condition (Summa, vol. 8, Glossary, s.v. "Justice, Justitia").

8Ia2ae. 83, 1 (Fairweather)

9Ia2ae. 85, 2 (Fairweather); Ia2ae. 83, 1 (Fairweather)

10Ia2ae. 85, 2 (Fairweather); ibid., 83, 1 (Fairweather).
consenting to gluttony."\(^1\) Only that part of the soul "which can be moved by the will is the subject of sin."\(^2\) The body however bears its penalty of sin.\(^3\)

**Henry's Reaction to Aquinas**

Though Aquinas's view of man is that of a unified body and soul, yet it is the soul that receives focus and emphasis. The soul, as an intellective principle, provides man with a capacity for understanding and cognition. With its aid man is able to know God's existence and attributes, though indirectly. Such knowledge, analogical as it may be, is a necessary aid and preparation for man in receiving special revelation. This activity of reason continues despite human sin.

In responding to Aquinas, Henry points out that acceptance of his epistemological position can be a "costly error."\(^4\) After showing the limitations as well as untenability of Aquinas's fivefold proofs for God's existence,\(^5\) Henry goes on to state that

\[\text{the attempt to concentrate the case for theism upon observations from the not-God, while neglecting the reality of God in his revelation, has led to more than the erosion of the power of God in modern life; it has also betrayed modern philosophy and theology into a time of intellectual sterility. . . . Over and against empirical philosophy, which presumes to derive the knowledge of God from an examination of nature or from an analysis of the cosmos or of history, the Reformers insisted on the basis of Holy Scripture that Christian theology has a wholly different foundation, namely, divine revelation. Affirmation of the living God, they insisted, rests not on inferences from}\]

\[^1\]Ia2ae. 83, 1, 2; Ia2ae. 83, 3.
\[^2\]Ia2ae. 83, 2-4; ibid., 81, 1-3.
\[^3\]Ia2ae. 83, 1, 2.
\[^4\]Ibid., 89.
\[^5\]See ibid., 105-113; see also GRA 5:84-90; and Henry, *Notes*, 46-53.
man and the world but on God's supernatural disclosure.¹

Aquinas's proofs can, at the most, point to the probability of God's existence. It is only as God chooses to reveal himself that we can know that he exists.² Observations from the not-God cannot lead us to God. It is like "venturing to hatch a live chicken from an empty eggshell."³ Accordingly, Henry holds that fallen man cannot "translate general divine revelation into a natural theology that builds a secure bridge to special revelation."⁴ That is, Henry does not believe that man can construct an epistemic link to God by starting with himself in the way Aquinas suggested through his proofs. The acceptance of man's inherent ability in showing God's existence demotes divine initiative in revelation,⁵ makes man as the theological starting point, and, in effect, deifies man himself.⁶

From this reaction it seems apparent that Henry seriously objects to Aquinas's correlating natural theology with general revelation. For Henry, this correlation is not legitimate and/or possible because of (1) the express nature of supernatural revelation; (2) the epistemic predicament of finite man; and (3) the invalidity of the empirically based

¹GRA 2:119.
³GRA 2:119; 24; GRA 1:274.
⁴GRA 2:117.
⁵Ibid.
⁶Ibid., 120. In Henry's observation, modernist Protestantism follows Thomism to the extent that it presupposes man's inherent or natural capacity to generate theology on the basis of his own experience and inner resources, independent of revelation. Thus, modernist Protestantism forsakes "theology for anthropology and for humanism" (ibid., 121; 120).
arguments for theism.¹ More important, natural theology should be rejected because "man volitionally—and invariably so—distorts the disclosure of God in the cosmos and in history."² "Man in sin . . . deflects and caricatures general revelation in terms of polytheism, atheism, or some other perverse alternatives" and even "turns aside from it."³ Moreover, the fallen nature of man has so affected his epistemic capacity that apart from special revelation, he "can no longer be psychologically sure . . . which intellectual representations [of God] are authentic or corrupt. Man's rebellion dilutes the content of general revelation."⁴ For a further clarification of his position, Henry makes the following statement:

Evangelical theology does not repudiate universal divine revelation in nature and man; rather, it insists on its indispensable importance and priority. But nature and man are not the decisive referents through which we are to characterize the transcendent supernatural. The projection of God from nature and man leads to false gods rather than to the self-revealed God of the Bible."⁵

Moreover, man's finitude as well as his corrupted nature deprives him of his ability "to expound general revelation accurately, even if he has the logical competency to do so."

And yet this in no wise rules out general revelation; neither does it question the relevance

¹GRA 2: 123. The Thomistic notion that there is a fundamental likeness of man to his Creator cannot be demonstrated by philosophical reasoning apart from transcendent divine revelation. "But once intelligible divine revelation is admitted, a methodology other than empirical analogy is available for arriving at knowledge of God's attributes" (GRA 5:86). Henry also denies the possibility of knowing from human experience that God perfectly possesses all the attributes. Such knowledge depends on revelation (ibid., 87).

²GRA 2:122-23.

³GRA 3:460; see also GRA 2:122.

⁴GRA 5:93.

⁵Ibid., 90; see also GRA 2:117.
of reason to theological realities. That is, although man has the rational capacity to do theology, yet because of his finiteness and fallen, rebellious nature, his theology is bound to be a distorting and unauthentic one. Besides, the acceptance of natural theology would also imply an undermining of the uniqueness and significance of special revelation because it would then act only as "a crown that caps natural theology elaborated by man in sin." Henry also rejects Thomism because in his view, it places an unquestioned trust in reason and experience as sources of truth. As far as he is concerned,

apart from divine revelation neither human reason nor human experience as a whole is a source of divine truth. Neither mankind nor the world is a source of the knowledge of divine realities. Human reason is an instrument for knowing the truth of God, but it is not the originating source of divine truth. The Bible acknowledges only God and God alone as the giver and source of divine revelation.

A Summary of Henry's Portrayal of Man in Aquinas

We have seen that Aquinas's presentation of man is that of a confident, self-assured, and fairly independent being, who correctly uses reason along with the senses in enabling him to arrive at the knowledge of God's existence and attributes. On his own, man capably uses natural revelation as an overpass to natural theology, and converts the latter into an effective praeperatio for special revelation. Put in other words, Aquinas is quite sure that there is a permanent point of contact in man for God. By virtue of the light of reason, man can, to a reasonable extent, ascertain God's reality.

1GRA 2:122-23.
2Ibid., 123.
3Ibid., 117.
4Ibid., 73; 133.
While agreeing with Aquinas that man has not lost his gift of reason, Henry holds that its competency lies not in finding out God or truth, but in understanding his revelation. Such is the case because reason has been affected (by the Fall) to the extent that man no longer uses it correctly in finding out God's existence, will, and plan for him. Despite his "logical competency," finite sinner does not have the "disposition and ability to expound general revelation accurately." For this reason man needs special revelation whereby his apprehension of God in general revelation is supplemented and corrected. Moreover, when it comes to man's response to the knowledge of God, his situation is worsened by his rebellious and inordinate will that constantly acts like an irritant distractor of reason, preventing it from moving on the right path. Man's perverted will so affects his reason that he ends up in frustration, uncertainty, and distortion of what he knows regarding God and truth. Besides, man's very finiteness—including pre-fall Adam—rules out the possibility of rising from his own reason and experience to a knowledge of God who is a "living, personal, ethical and infinite God," who is at the same time the "Law-giver and Judge." So instead of the active role that Aquinas attributes to reason, Henry casts it in a passive role, making reason depend on God for knowledge of himself. But once a divine disclosure is made, reason can and does become active either by rejecting or distorting revelation, or even accepting it.

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1Ibid., 135.
2Ibid., 123.
3See pp. 66-67, 148-49.
4GRA 2:117.
So on the question of the point of contact between God and man, Henry is neither in total agreement with Aquinas nor in total disagreement with him. While Henry agrees with Aquinas on the significance of reason as a point of divine-human contact, he disagrees with him that man has an active, initiative reason, capable of positively ascertaining God's existence and attributes. As Henry sees it, man is constantly rebelling and distorting God's revelation in the universe.

A Brief Sketch of Karl Barth's View of Man

The preceding section shows Henry's reaction to Aquinas's optimistic and high view of man. This section, on the other hand, looks at Henry's reaction to Barth's pessimistic and low view of man. The approach of presentation is similar to the one adopted for Aquinas. The limits of the sketch are likewise determined by the issues Henry raises against Barth, especially those related to human nature. The following first few pages provide a sketch of Barth's view of man, followed by Henry's reaction to that view, and a subsequent consideration of the divine-human point of contact in the context of that reaction.

Man is God's creation, created not because God needs him but out of his own free will and sheer grace. In fact, "the ground of creation [itself] is God's grace." Man's origin also issued from a covenant that preceded creation—a covenant that "God is man's

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1For an exhaustive exposition of Barth's doctrine of man, see Karl Barth, CD III/2.

2Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 62-63; see also CD III/1, 185.

3CD III/2, 13; Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 57, italics original.
God and man is God's man.¹ This covenant forms the basis of meaning and goal of creation.² Further, a covenant implies that man has to be fashioned with the capacity for relationship.³ For this reason God created him in his own image, or in God's likeness.⁴ Now the term "image of God" does not refer to a particular quality of man. Hence there is no point in asking in which of man's peculiar attributes and attitudes it consists. It does not consist in anything that man is or does. It consists as man himself consists as the creature of God. He would not be man if he were not the image of God. He is the image of God in the fact that he is man. [The image of God does not refer to the] intellectual and moral talents and possibilities of man, to his reason and its determination and exercise. It is not something which distinguishes him from the beasts, but in that which formally he is in common with them, viz. that God has created him male and female, that he is this being in differentiation and relationship, and therefore in natural fellowship with God. The only thing that we are told about the creation of man, apart from the fact that it was accomplished by the Word of God in and after the image of God, is that 'God created male and female.'⁵

The term 'image of God' is therefore an analogy of relationship between man and woman on the one hand, and between man and God on the other. It is a relationship that "is reflected both in the relationship of God to the man whom He has created, and also in the relationship between the I and the Thou, between male and female, in human existence itself."⁶

²Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, 63.
³CD III/1, 184.
⁴Ibid., 184.
⁵Ibid., 185.
⁶Ibid., 196.
Man was also gifted with "a good gift" of ratio (reason) and freedom. Because of his freedom man can make choices. And tragically, he chose to rebel against God, and thereby sinned. As a result of this rebellion, man has turned into "a sinner, a real sinner before God;" "a sinner through and through." "Man has now become a tarnished mirror in which the glory of God can no longer be reflected." "The image of God [is] utterlie [sic] defaced in man." He is totally and radically corrupt. Man's sin, however, is not inherited from Adam.

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2Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 63; CD IV/2, 511.

3Barth, *Table Talk*, 31.

4Barth, *Table Talk*, 92. "Sin [is] man's strife with God" (CD I/2, 40). Sin also consists in his "aberration from the grace of God and its command, his refusal to show the gratitude he owes to God and the concomitant freedom and obligation, his arrogant attempt to be his own master, provider and comforter, his unhallowed lust for what is not his own [as well as his] falsehood, hatred and pride" (CD II/1, 305; see also Barth, *Knowledge and Service of God*, 50).


6Karl Barth, in Brunner and Barth, *Natural Theology*, 87.

7Barth, *Knowledge and Service of God*, 50; see also CD III/2, 26-27.

8From the Scottish Confession of 1560, quoted in Barth, *Knowledge and Service of God*, 50; see also GRA 1:397.

9CD IV/1, 510; see also CD III/2, 29; CD I/1, 51.

10Barth treated the story of Adam as a legend or a saga (Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 54; CD I/2, 509). Accordingly, his interpretation of what he called "the biblical tradition" (ibid., 510) is far from the traditional version. For instance, he said that Adam's fall had nothing to do with our fall. He has not "bequeathed" it to us. "He has not
the truth concerning us as it is known to God and told to us.\(^1\)

Man as sinner is helpless. He cannot find his way to God. There is no point of contact between him and God except in Christ, or through the Spirit.\(^2\) In fact, when Paul said that he is crucified with Christ and the life he now lives is a life of faith in Christ (Gal 2:15-21), he thereby points up that there is no "continuity but . . . discontinuity between God and man."\(^3\) Since the life in the flesh has no continuity with God, it is therefore crucified and what has been destroyed can no longer be repaired.\(^4\) Thus all "attempts to rise from the human to the divine" are futile.\(^5\) Man can "never" discover revelation that way.\(^6\) Moreover, the nature of revelation itself precludes him from having access to it, for revelation is an unveiling of God's own person as Word who later was incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ.\(^7\) Accordingly, revelation is "a happening, not a thing." It is an poisoned us or passed on a disease" (CD IV/1, 509). "No one has to be Adam. We are so freely and on our own responsibility. Although the guilt of Adam is like ours, it is just as little our excuse as our guilt is his." We are like Adam just as Adam was like us (ibid., 509-10).

\(^1\)CD IV/1, 511.

\(^2\)Barth, "No!" in Barth and Brunner, *Natural Theology*, 90.

\(^3\)Ibid., 92.

\(^4\)Ibid., 93.

\(^5\)CD I/2, 2, 50.

\(^6\)Ibid., 2.

This radically personalistic idea of revelation places man in a perpetual waiting posture. Further, since traditional theology identifies Scripture or the Bible with revelation, Barth found it necessary to spell out his position with respect to Scripture. For him the Bible is the Word of God or revelation only in a derivative or mediated sense (CD 1/1, 131). Prophets and apostles were witnesses to revelation. What they wrote—the Bible—is likewise "the witness of divine revelation" (CD I/2, 462-63), and that is the way it "wished to be regarded." Accordingly, it should not be treated as "a book of oracles; it is not an instrument of direct impartation." Its truths should not be identified with revelation itself. "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?" Since it is a witness, the Bible is therefore "not identical with that to which it witnesses, but it sets it before us" (CD I/2, 463). The Bible is "only a human word" about revelation and yet it is united with revelation because the latter is the "basis, object and content of the Bible" (ibid.). Scripture is the Word of God "so far as God lets it be His Word, so far as God speaks through it" (CD I/1, 123). Through the operation of God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit the Bible can—and "must"—"from time to time, become God's Word" (Barth, Table Talk, 26; CD I/1, 131; for Barth's extensive treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures see also CD I/2, 457-740; for a good summary of the same see Barth, Evangelical Theology, 26-36).

As a human witness, the Bible is also pockmarked with human limitations and weaknesses. In fact, the prophets and apostles "whom we hear as witnesses speak as fallible, erring men like ourselves" (CD I/2, 507, 528-29; see also GRA 4:198, 156, 196-97; GRA 2:145; and Carl F. H. Henry, "The Dilemma Facing Karl Barth," Christianity Today, 4 January 1963, 28). The prophets and apostles "shared the outlook and spoke the language of their own day." They were men of their times, "historically related and conditioned." Therefore what they say may offend us either in terms of philosophical, historical, ethical, religious, or theological matters. In the Bible "we can establish lacunae, inconsistencies and overemphases." These consequently rob Scripture of its character as witness to revelation (CD I/2, 509). It is "only the miracle of faith and the Word," and of God's grace that overcomes this offense (ibid., 507, 509, 528-29).

Concerning Barth's view of the Bible in relation to revelation see also GRA 2:143-44; Henry, Evangelical Responsibility, 57; GRA 4:157-58; Henry, Fifty Years, 101; idem, The Drift, 122, 132; GRA 2:145. If Barth credited the fallibility of Scripture to the deficiency of human propositions, Henry wonders how Barth can hold a fallible witness to be at the same time an indispensable witness. Henry's conclusion is that Barth is guilty of contradiction by trying to develop a theology "in terms of irreconcilable axioms" (GRA 4:200; see also GRA 3:285). It is like trying to simultaneously ride "two uncoordinated moving horses on a merry-go-round" (GRA 4:199). Henry also charges Barth with "colossal inconsistency" that ends up in burdening his Dogmatics with confusion. For example, at times Barth seemed to identify Scripture with revelation (CD I/1, 304), and yet at other times he denied that identity (CD I/2, 499; GRA 3:466-67). As Henry sees it, that puts Barth on the horns of a dilemma for it is one thing to charge the prophets and apostles
"encounter" where God reveals himself "for man." Man's knowledge of God likewise comes only as God is willing to initiate it; only as he makes himself apprehensible in Christ. He alone has to create the "conditions" for that knowledge in man; that is, he no

with errors and contradictions, and quite another thing to take what they have written as "categorical authority." In view of this situation, Barth will have to make a choice: "If independent apologetics and natural theology are to be consistently abandoned, Barth must accept the Reformation view of verbal and plenary inspiration; but if the prophets and apostles are guilty of error, Barth must use some historical, scientific, or other secular criterion and sit in judgement over the Word of God" (Henry, "The Dilemma Facing Karl Barth," 28).

Barth, Table Talk, 26. Henry's presentation of Barth's view of revelation is found in several places of GRA and others of his writings. See, for instance GRA 2:127-28, 143-44, 159; GRA 4:264; see also Carl F. H. Henry, "God as a Problem," Christianity Today, 13 February 1970, 32, where Henry provides a similar version of Barth's idea of revelation as "God's personal self-communication to man, consummated internally by responsible trust. Revelation occurs only in person to person confrontation; it includes no communication of concepts or truths about God, but is the self-impartation of divine love, issuing in responsive faith and fellowship." Although Henry complains about the vagueness of Barth's notion of revelation (GRA 2:144; GRA 4:158, 197, 199), yet this definition frequently occurs in Henry as the Barthian meaning of revelation (see GRA 2:145; GRA 1:190; see also Henry, "Are We Doomed?" 199, 204; idem, Evangelical Responsibility, 57; idem, Protestant Dilemma, 53-54, 79-80; idem, The Drift, 122).

Barth's subjective and personalistic nature of revelation points up that it does not occur in history and nature (GRA 1:191; GRA 2:144). However, it does occur throughout history because men experience it now and in the future (GRA 2:159, 277; GRA 4:158, 198). Furthermore, since revelation does not occur in objective secular history, Barth accordingly rejected the identification of revelation with either Scripture or Jesus of Nazareth (GRA 4:158, 156; GRA 2:144), because revelation is neither objectified nor possessed, but experienced and remembered (GRA 2:277, 311; CD I/2, 3, 59, 28).

CD II/1, 199, 207; see also CD I/1, 223-24. To claim that man on his own can understand the Word of God is to negate the role of grace, for "God's Word ceases to be grace or grace itself ceases to be grace when we ascribe to man a disposition toward this Word, a possibility of knowledge independent of it and peculiar in itself, over against this Word" (CD I/1, 221). "Men can know the Word of God . . . so far as God wills that they should know it." Without this divine will there is only human disobedience. It is only in the presence of God's will that this "disobedience is removed" (ibid., 223-24).
longer has within himself the natural capacity for God.¹

From this it also follows that even God's existence is known only as he alone determines that man should know him.² So in order for man to know God's Word, he should be ready for it, be open to divine grace and faith. It is only in the presence of faith that this knowledge takes place and/or is made possible.³ And faith arises from the Word of God.⁴ General revelation, reason, and natural theology cannot deliver man this knowledge. Whatever knowledge claim this theology makes concerning God is bound to be unauthentic and, hence, untrue.⁵ In fact, natural theology is man's encroachment on God.⁶ On his own, he cannot know God as Lord, Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer.⁷ Furthermore, although we are totally dependent on God's revelation in Jesus Christ for any knowledge of God,⁸ yet this knowledge is not one that has "parity" with God's knowledge. Neither does it imply "disparity."⁹ Rather, both similarity and dissimilarity are involved,

¹Barth, "No!" 89; CD I/1, 273; CD I/2, 265; see also GRA 1:397; GRA 5:369.
²CD I/1, 75.
³Ibid., 261; see also GRA 5:51, 369.
⁴CD I/1, 271.
⁵CD II/1, 103-05; 109-10.
⁷CD II/1, 75-79.
⁸Barth, "No!" 71.
⁹CD II/1, 224.
and at best it is analogical. It is necessarily so because human language is a product of the "creaturely nature of this world . . . [and] conditioned by the limitations of humanity." In fact, man's language about God "is the language of the per se faithless and antifait reason of man." Moreover, although the analogies are very much human in origin, yet it was God who taught us to use terms like father, son, arm, mouth, and ear when talking about him. While such analogies provide only a partial knowledge of God, they are nevertheless truly effective because of the operation of divine grace in us.

In addition to being our only source of knowledge about God, Christ is also the true man, because in the incarnation he, the Word, "became flesh, flesh of my flesh," but without sin. Christ is "the real, genuine, true man, man placed before God." In fact, the real man is not found anywhere else other than in Christ. He is the key to understanding

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1 Ibid., 225; see also GRA 5:369, GRA 3:186, 226, 228-29.
2 CD I/1, 390; 51.
3 Ibid., 30.
4 CD II/1, 230-31.
5 Ibid., 231-36; CD III/4, 41. "Grace is . . . no spiritual power residing in the man of this world; no physical energy residing in Nature; no cosmic power in this earth. Grace is . . . the Power of God (i.16). Grace is altogether "Yes"; it is salvation, comfort, and edification" (Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, 103).
7 CD I/2, 40, 90.
8 Ibid., 40; see also ibid., 109; CD III/3, 306.
9 CD II/2, 43.
man. Hence, Christology is the basis for anthropology. Jesus Christ is also the election man and the elect man. "Election' means that man is plucked like a brand from the burning. "And because God looks at man in Jesus Christ, His election of man to fellowship with Him" is therefore made possible.

Henry's Reaction to Karl Barth

At first sight it seems as if Barth's version of revelation is in accord with Henry's because both describe the concept as a divine self-revelation. A similarity is also seen in the fact that both stress the transcendent nature of revelation: that it comes only from God and not from man is Henry's constant emphasis as much as it was for Barth. Henry is also

1CD III/2, 23, 41, 43, 46.


3Barth, Knowledge and Service of God, 74; italics original.

4Ibid., 74-75.

5Ibid., 76; italics original. Barth's stress on God's sovereignty, the sovereignty of his grace, divine election, and Jesus Christ's substitutionary life and death are so strong that he seems to convey the idea of universalism of some sort (see for instance, ibid., 69-87). In fact, for Henry, Barth is certainly a universalist (see GRA 4:198; 259; GRA 6:412; 507; Henry, Evangelicals at the Brink, 26; idem, Aspects of Christian Social Ethics, 148-150).

6When Henry speaks of revelation he often refers to it as God's "self-revelation" or "self-disclosure" (Henry, The Drift, 114; idem, Christian Countermoves, 9-10; 15; see also n. 5, p. 58 above).

7Revelation issues "from the mind and will of God," says Henry (GRA 3:248; GRA 2:86; see also Henry, "Evangelicals in a Turning Time," 49; idem, Protestant Dilemma, 80).
on the side of Barth when he rejects natural theology,\(^1\) although for a different reason.\(^2\)

However, as far as Henry's theological relationship to Barth is concerned, there are more 
disagreements than agreements so that the two stand opposed to each other. For although 
Henry stresses revelation as God's self-revelation/disclosure, yet he also holds that this 
disclosure is an objective, cognitive, and/or a rational-verbal phenomenon that conveys true 
information about God and man,\(^3\) and is universally available.\(^4\) Because of the rationality of 
revelation, no "astronomer, biologist, chemist, philosopher, or physicist [is required] to 
check his mind at the door" in order to avail revelation.\(^5\)

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\(^1\) Since Henry's reaction to natural theology has already been treated in the section 
dealing with Aquinas, no further treatment is deemed necessary at this juncture.

\(^2\) Henry calls attention to the debate between Brunner and Barth over the question of 
the effects of the Fall upon the *imago Dei* and natural theology. Briefly, Henry is on the 
side of Brunner who is against Barth for holding to the complete eradication of the *imago* 
by the Fall. Henry is also with Brunner for the latter's espousal of general revelation, but 
disagrees with his reduction of this revelation to conscience. However, Henry agrees with 
both Brunner and Barth in their rejection of natural theology; but disagrees with them for 
their view of revelation as nonobjective, nonrational, and nonpropositional (see GRA 
1:396-99; GRA 2:127-28; GRA 3:164; 282-283, 431, 496; and Henry in Gaebelein, 6). 
For the debate between Brunner and Barth on natural theology, see Brunner and Barth, 
*Natural Theology*.

\(^3\) See pp. 43, 62-63, 57, 59, 80-82, and 108 above; Henry, "Are We Doomed?" 215; 
"In revelation God speaks out his mind, the truths about himself as well as his intentions for 
man (GRA 3:457). "Revelation in the Bible is essentially a mental conception: God's 
disclosure is rational and intelligible communication. [It] is addressed to the mind and will 
of human beings. As such it involves primarily an activity of consciousness that enlists the 
thoughts and bears on the beliefs and actions of its recipients" (ibid., 248).

14 March 1969, 3; idem, "Evangelicals in a Turning Time," 49; GRA 4:300. Barth limited 
revelation to believers (GRA 1:396-97).

\(^5\) GRA 1:264.
In further contrasting his own view of revelation with that of Barth's, Henry says that the former "replaces the God who has spoken by the speaking God."¹ That is, Barth's idea of revelation does away with the Bible as God's revealed Word, and reduces revelation to a personal experience. Whereas Henry says that revelation is changeless, once-for-all, and limited to the prophets and apostles, Barth said that it continues today and in the future.² For Henry, revelation is objective and independent of our response; but for Barth it is subjective, and dependent upon our response.³

Henry is also in discord with Barth because the latter limited revelation only to the transcendent Word and made a disjunction between Jesus of Nazareth (i.e., Jesus Christ) and revelation,⁴ and between Scripture and revelation.⁵ For Henry, Jesus of Nazareth is revelation; his "words and works together embody the creative Word of God. In him the Word of God is both audible and visible."⁶ He is "the zenith of divine revelation."⁷

¹In this instance, Henry refers to Jude 3: "The faith once delivered to the saints" (Henry, The Drift, 119).

²"In Barth's view, divine revelation has no extension in time but occurs afresh each time" (GRA 2:277).


⁴For Barth, revelation and the transcendent Word of God are identical; so is the Logos Christ; but Jesus of Nazareth is not identical with revelation or Christ (Henry, Frontiers in Modern Theology, 54). He is only a witness to Christ (idem, Evangelical Responsibility, 60); only a "pointer" or "witness" to revelation (idem, The Drift, 121; see also note 1, p. 154 above).


⁶GRA 3:178; 206.

⁷Henry, Evangelical Responsibility, 60.
Scripture likewise is revelation. It is "written revelation." 1 Barth's concept of revelation is therefore a disservice to Christianity because it dissolves the authority of Scripture "into a vague mysticism," 2 or "revelation-mysticism, or gnosticism." 3

Henry likewise disagrees with Barth's repudiation of general revelation and regards it as a "costly error" 4 because God is known everywhere through general revelation "even where special redemptive revelation is unknown" (with Aquinas). 5

Men have inescapable knowledge of God on the basis of God's self-revelation through nature (Rom. 1:20), and God is, moreover, nowhere in the external course of things without a witness (Acts 14:17). Mankind, to whom the revelation is addressed, is lighted by the Logos (John 1:9) and the moral law is "written on their hearts" (Rom. 2:15, RSV) so that men know that the self-revealed God justly punishes those who flaunt his will (Rom. 1:32). The revelation of God invades and penetrates the very mind and conscience of every man, despite the fact that, in face of this very revelation, men do not choose to know God (Rom. 1:28). 6

Because general revelation provides the elementary knowledge of God's reality, every

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1Henry, Fifty Years, 101-02. Henry observes that during Barth's last years he began giving importance to the rationality, objectivity, and historicity of revelation. But that effort (CD I/1, 234; 150-53; CD II/2, 210) was too halting, too little, and too late (Carl F. Henry, "Chaos in European Theology: The Deterioration of Barth's Defenses," part 2, Christianity Today, 9 October 1964, 19; idem, "Justification by Ignorance: A Neo-Protestant Motif?" Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 13, Part 1 [Winter 1970]: 4; GRA 2:180; GRA 3:285; 466).

2Henry, "Man's Dilemma: Sin," 15; 20; idem, Fifty Years, 101-02; see also GRA 4:157, where Henry points out that Barth's disjunction between Scripture and Word of God destroys "any significant view of Scripture [as well as] the revelation of the Word of God attested by Scripture."

3GRA 4:158.

4GRA 2:89.

5Ibid., 129-30; 143.

6Ibid., 130; italics original; see also GRA 4:12; and Henry, Toward a Recovery, 57.

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human person is answerable at the judgment day for the way he relates himself to it either positively or negatively.\(^1\) In Henry's understanding, special revelation presupposes general revelation.\(^2\) Though different, yet the two forms of revelation operate side by side; one cannot be subordinated to the other.\(^3\) They are interdependent.\(^4\) Special revelation enables human beings to "assess fully" general revelation,\(^5\) and general revelation furnishes the requisite "intelligibility" for special revelation,\(^6\) as well as provides man an "occasion for revolt and estrangement."\(^7\)

Henry also disagrees with Barth's analogical knowledge of God just as much as he disagrees with Aquinas. Human language should not be made a hindrance to a univocal knowledge of God. For if it is, then "there arises the question whether God himself would or could use it."\(^8\) In that case it would imply "the inability of Jesus of Nazareth to communicate God's truth and Word in any but a broken way."\(^9\) Moreover, if human language cannot put us in direct contact with reality, then even this very statement itself

\(^1\)GRA 2:89; GRA 4:12. Henry says that it is through reason and conscience that man comes to know God's reality—his divinity and power (GRA 4:12).

\(^2\)GRA 2:90.

\(^3\)See also p. 60 above.


\(^5\)GRA 2:90.

\(^6\)Ibid., 122. For Henry's exposition of general revelation see ibid., 91-103.

\(^7\)Ibid., 86.

\(^8\)Gordon Clark, quoted in GRA 3:287.

\(^9\)GRA 3:287.
would have to be rejected. If knowledge is to be perceived only in terms of an image or representation and not in terms of "a truth or proposition," then how is one to explain "the knowledge of a tree or a song?" In other words, there is "a point of identity with what God and man know."2

If one begins with the basic presupposition that knowledge is possible (if it is not, we could not affirm even this), then our minds must grasp what is known. If what is known is not Reality, then we do not know anything . . . ; the mind must have the Reality itself. If it does not, we could not know that an image resembles it.3

For "if truth is not the same for God and man then it is humanly impossible for man to possess truth about God."4 Moreover, in the end, the Barthian theory of knowledge results

1Ibid., 225.

2GRA 2:54. "The fact that we know only `in part,' however, does not destroy the validity and trustworthiness of the portion of knowledge we have through divine disclosure. That God does not reveal himself to man exhaustively does not mean that he does not reveal himself truly. To say that man cannot fathom fully all the depths of God's being is not to assert divine unknowability." "We know God's hiddenness only through his revealedness; apart from his revelation no basis would exist for speaking of God as hidden, or for speaking of God at all. There might be a hidden possibility of God, perhaps, but certainly not a hidden God, not a God who transcends his revelation. God's hiddenness is the obverse side of his free sovereign self-disclosure; revelation is the presence and activity of the hidden One in an unveiling.

It is impossible therefore to erect either God's revealedness or his hiddenness into a speculative principle that expounds God's nature and ways whether rationalistically or agnostically. The hiddenness of God is not a premise to which a biblical theologian may appeal in order to relativize revelation. Man `lives and moves and has his being' in God from the beginning of his life. The Bible begins with the self-revealing God. Only on the basis of God's own disclosure, in fact, can we affirm God's transcendence even of his revelation. There is no support for the hiddenness of God in the familiar passage, `For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts' (Isa. 55:9, RSV), inasmuch as in context this passage appeals for receiving and appropriating God's truth" (ibid., 54; italics original).

3Ibid., 225.

4GRA 2:54.
in skepticism\(^1\) and a capitulation to Kantian epistemology.\(^2\)

Barth’s rejection of general revelation and natural theology also goes against Henry’s anthropology who, contrary to Barth’s insistence upon the total destruction of the \textit{imago Dei}, holds to its survival,\(^3\) which he usually sees as comprising the rational and moral aspects of man,\(^4\) and through which agency he apprehends general revelation.\(^5\)

**A Summary of Henry’s Portrayal of Man in Karl Barth**

From the foregoing presentation of Barth’s thoughts on man and his relationship with God, it is obvious that Barth’s view of man is a low and negative one. This pessimistic view is a result of his belief in the doctrine of man’s total corruption on account of sin, and a subsequent loss of all permanent point of contact with God. Therefore any relationship and knowledge of God can be made possible only as God in his grace, through man’s openness to faith and obedience, chooses to do so. However, the knowledge of God brought about by this divine confrontation is personal, nonintellective, and subjective. It is an experiential knowledge that can only be remembered but not possessed.\(^6\) Such

\(^1\)GRA 3:229.

\(^2\)Henry, \textit{Remaking}, 301. For Henry’s rejection of Kantian epistemology see GRA 2:131-33; and for his affirmation of univocal knowledge as opposed to analogical knowledge (see GRA 1:237-38; 388).


\(^4\)Henry, \textit{Toward a Recovery}, 109; GRA 2:133; 160.

\(^5\)Henry, \textit{Toward a Recovery}, 57; GRA 1:388.

\(^6\)“God’s revelation has no extension in time, no worldly history, it is never . . . a possession. It is never ‘being’, but always an expected or remembered ‘act’” (Barth, according to Henry in GRA 2:277).
knowledge is indirect and analogical.

Against this Barthian anthropological scenario, Henry says No! Man is not that totally destitute and helpless. Barth's position is a demeaning exaggeration of man's real situation. To the extent that man is a sinner, Henry agrees with Barth. That man needs divine help, grace, and forgiveness, Henry does not deny. His doctrines of sin, Christ, and atonement testify to this. However Henry does not agree with Barth that man is totally deprived of the capacity for God as well as for comprehending and believing divine truth. Such a situation would be true only if the *imago Dei* were completely obliterated, which is not the case. Though sullied by the Fall, the *imago* still survives—especially in its rational and moral dimensions (with Aquinas). Because of the *imago Dei*, man has a permanent point of contact with God externally in nature and history, and internally in reason, conscience, and morality. Through these avenues he comes to know God, his eternal power, and divinity. Therefore man is held answerable before God's judgment day for revolting against the knowledge of God in general revelation.

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1 See Henry, "Man's Dilemma: Sin," 3-20; on the atonement, see ibid., 16; idem, *Christian Countermoves*, 22; idem, "Who Are the Evangelicals?" 77; 94; idem, "Justification by Ignorance?" 6; GRA 5:80; 233; GRA 6:334-35; 413; 434.

2 See pp. 150-51 above.

3 The image is sullied but not "totally shattered" (GRA 2:136; Henry, "The God of the Bible and Moral Foundations," 8).

4 GRA 2:135.

5 Henry, *Toward a Recovery*. 57; GRA 4:12; see also pp. 63-64, 163 above. Human reason though "not a source of divine revelation," is "a divinely-ordered instrument for the recognition of revelation" (Henry, *Gods or God?* 227).
Furthermore, although the *imago Dei* does not make man a part of God, yet it is nevertheless the channel through which God communicates with him directly, conceptually, and rationally. Since the image is God's and not man's image of God, it implies that there is a genuine and direct correspondence between man's knowledge of God and God's knowledge of himself. The only difference is that whereas man knows only by means of divine revelation and in a limited scope, God knows by virtue of his being God and knows it necessarily, comprehensively, and eternally. Because of the *imago Dei* in man, God was able to reveal himself, his nature, purpose, and will to man not only through general revelation, but more specifically and clearly through special revelation that was vouchsafed to the prophets and apostles under inspiration, who later passed it on to us in written form as Scripture.

A Recapitulation of Henry's View of Man in Aquinas and Barth

From Henry's reaction to Aquinas and Barth we note that Henry wants to avoid two kinds of exaggerations regarding man: that which overestimates his capability to arrive independently (of revelation) at an authentic knowledge of God, his nature, and ways by means of his reasoning powers and the senses (against Aquinas); and that which overstates

1 GRA 2:124.
2 GRA 5:376, 12.
3 GRA 4:42.

4 Concerning Henry's caution against the exaggeration of the human mind in one way or the other, see GRA 2:124; Henry, *Gods or God?* 225. Man is neither "totally discontinuous" nor "totally continuous" with God (Henry, *Protestant Dilemma*, 137, n. 9).
man's corrupt and sinful state to the extent that man is believed to have lost all capacity for God or the capability to understand revelation (against Barth). The following four points further clarify Henry's own view of man and the latter's relationship to God:

1. Man's problem lies not in a lack of natural capacity to know and understand general revelation but in his inability to interpret that revelation correctly and arrive at a natural theology that prepares him as a qualified candidate for the reception of special revelation (against Aquinas).¹ The problem that stands in the way for such an otherwise noble enterprise is not so much his noetic deprivation but his rebellious, alienated, and recalcitrant will.²

2. Man still bears the *imago Dei* even in his fallen state. As such, and to a certain extent, there is still a point of contact between him and God, especially at the rational and moral levels (against Barth).

3. On account of the image of God, man's knowledge of the Deity is identical with his knowledge of man at that point (against Aquinas and Barth).³

4. The *imago Dei* in man likewise holds him morally responsible for manipulation, distortion, and rejection of revelation.

Thus far, we have seen Henry's view of man from the perspective of his reaction to Aquinas and Barth. In order to get a total or broader picture of Henry's view of man, we also need to take into consideration his description of man independent of his reaction to

¹See pp. 143-45, 147 above.

²See pp. 103-04 above.

³Henry describes the relationship between God's mind and man's mind as a "hinterland relationship" with the two coinciding at certain points (GRA 5:382).
any other view. After that is done, a summary follows that recapitulates the major emphases of the man that Henry has in mind.

**Henry's Doctrine of Man**

**Man's Creation and Fall**

The first man, Adam, came from his Creator's hands some 6,000-10,000 years ago.\(^1\) Besides being "the highest form of created existence,"\(^2\) man was also a "unitary personality" of body, soul, and spirit, and enjoyed a state of "pristine perfection."\(^3\) Man

\(^1\)Henry, "The Bible and Modern Science," 1193; GRA 6:213; 225; GRA 2:127. Henry does admit however that the Bible provides no precise age for the antiquity of either man or earth (GRA 6:226). Henry also says that once human existence is correlated with evolution, then man himself has lost his own significance. "At best [he is] a cosmic tramp destined for oblivion" (Henry, "Introduction," in *Quest for Reality*).

Henry endorses creation *ex nihilo* (GRA 6:37; 120). In his view the creation story of Genesis is to be understood literally and not as a myth or symbol (ibid., 116). However, while stating that the doctrine of creation is the "bedrock foundation of every major doctrine of the church," Henry assumes that the Bible does not require a six twenty-four-hour-day creation (ibid., 119; 220). With respect to the creation of "species" but not "kinds," Henry seems to be predisposed to theistic evolution as the means for their emergence (see Henry, "Theology and Evolution," 197).

\(^2\)GRA 4:16; see also GRA 6:200; Henry, *Gods or God?* 230.

\(^3\)While Henry holds that man is a "harmoniously unified self" (Carl F. H. Henry, "Distinction Between Conservative and Liberal Theology," *The Watchman-Examiner*, 2 December 1948, 1224; see also idem, "Christ's Resurrection and Human Destiny," *Christianity Today*, 27 April 1973, 9), yet he also maintains that man is a compound creature whose body "houses a soul" (idem, "The Final Triumph," in *Foundations of the Faith: Twelve Studies in the Basic Christian Revelation*, ed. David J. Fant [Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1951], 183; see also GRA 5:383 where Henry regards man as a "psycho-somatic entity"). Henry holds that these dual aspects of man are not "different entities" but rather "different functions of the one psychic life of man" (Henry, "Image of God," 548; GRA 2:17). Henry believes that at death the soul "survives in the intermediate state" and is reunited with its body at the resurrection (idem, "Image of God," *EDT*, 548). At the resurrection man will be reconstituted into a corporeal being (ibid., 548); Henry, "Man's Dilemma: Sin," 13; idem, *Protestant Dilemma*, 129. Note: Henry's detachment of the body from the soul seems to contradict his previous emphasis on man's organic unity.
was fashioned "for personal and endless fellowship with God, involving rational
understanding (Gen. 1:28ff.), moral obedience (2:16-17), and religious communion (3:3),"¹
made possible by the image of God in him. The *imago* is the faculty through which God
"ongoingly confronts" and addresses man.²

One day, however, a tragedy struck Adam when he fell into sin—not out of the
necessity of his created nature³—but out of his own "deliberate choice" to go against the will
of his Maker, which is what sin is all about.⁴ The result was terrible: all of mankind, and

¹Henry, "Image of God," *EDT*, 548; 546; GRA 1:150; 228; GRA 2:125. The
objective of man's creation is for God's glory and obedience; "for reasonable knowledge
and service of his Maker" (idem, "What Is man on Earth For?" 159-60; idem, "The Nature
Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Channel Press, 1964): 74; see also idem, "Christianity and
Medical Frontiers," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 30 (September 1978):
102; idem, *Evangelicals at the Brink*, 8; idem, "Epistemology," *BDT* [1964], 185; see also idem, *Gods or God?* 81; 225; 230). "Man is made to know and love and serve God and
under God, is to reclaim the earth and mankind for the Creator's holy purposes. Only if
man lives in the light of this scriptural perspective can he escape enslavement by ancient or
modern myths" (GRA 1:153).

²GRA 2:133.


⁴Henry, "Man's Dilemma: Sin," 17; idem, *Protestant Dilemma*, 140, 144. "Sin is
neither necessary nor natural and normal for man; it stems rather, from the voluntary act of
rebellion" (GRA 4:607). "Sin is a deliberate choice" (idem, "Man's Dilemma: Sin," 17); a
idem, *The God Who Shows*, 81); and a disposition of the heart (GRA 4:607). Man is a
"sinner in thought, word, and deed" (idem, "Man's Dilemma: Sin," 15). In this respect
Henry also concurs with the traditional definition of sin which is "a lack of conformity to
God's moral law either in act, disposition, or state" (ibid., 18). In his analysis of sin
Henry concludes that at its root lie pride and selfishness (ibid., 18; idem, *The Drift*, 116;
see also Carl F. H. Henry, "Our Lord's Virgin Birth," in *Man's Need and God's Gift*,
313, where Henry emphasizes man's sinfulness; see also idem, "Biblical Authority and the
Social Crisis," 218. Henry also says that the depth of sin is radical and its range is
extensive, ibid. 218.
not just certain individuals, inherited Adam's sinful nature.\(^1\) Every person "suffers from the guilt of Adam's transgression, inherits a defiled nature and is exposed to penal evils."\(^2\)

Man's state from that day onward changed from sinlessness to sinfulness.\(^3\) Here is how Henry describes that tragedy:

The fall of man was a catastrophic personality shock; it fractured human existence with a devastating fault. Ever since, man's worship and contemplation of the living God have been broken, his devotion to the divine will shattered. Man's revolt against God therefore affects his entire being; he is now motivated by an inordinate will; he no longer loves God nor his neighbor; he devotes human reasoning to the cause of spiritual rebellion. He seeks escape from the claim of God upon his life and blames his fellow man for his own predicament. His revolt against God is at the same time a revolt against truth and the good; his rejection of truth is a rejection of God and the good, his defection from the good a repudiation of God and the truth.\(^4\)

Man's Nature: The *imago Dei*

When Henry considers the nature of man he seems to correlate it exclusively with the *imago Dei* or image of God.\(^5\) Says he: "The Bible answers the question of the nature of


\(^2\)Henry, *CPE*, 181. Henry also makes plain that it is not only Adam's transgression that man is implicated in but also "his own transgression of the will of God." Adam's sin "does not destroy [man's] moral responsibility in personal decision (ibid.)."

\(^3\)Ibid., 16-17; idem, *Protestant Dilemma*, 160. That man is a sinner by nature is constantly and strongly affirmed by Henry. See idem, "Distinction Between Conservative and Liberal Theology," 1224-26; idem, "Modern Education and the Secularistic Tide," *The Watchman-Examiner*, 11 October 1951, 966; idem, "The God of the Bible vs. Naturalism," 228.

\(^4\)GRA 2:135.

\(^5\)Henry, "Image of God," *EDT*, 545. In Henry's understanding the term "image" and "likeness" (e.g., Gen 1:26 and 5:3) are used interchangeably or synonymously (ibid., 546). Although man is created in God's image, yet he bears that image only in certain and not in all respects (or even in most). The "personality of God is far more complex and intricate than that of created life" (GRA 5:167). Henry cites the following passages for the
man by pointing to the *imago Dei,* which he defines as that "cohesive unity" of the rational, moral, and spiritual faculties of man. These faculties "interact with and condition each other." The *imago* also includes the conscience, freedom of the will, self-consciousness, and self-transcendence. It is the image of God that sets man apart from and elevates him above the animals in degree and kind. The *imago* not only prevents man from degradation to animality but "supplies the continuing conditions of humanity, " provides . . . a sense of personal worth and peculiar destiny," enables the correlation of the "meaningfulness of God-language with all other meanings and experiences of his daily existence, "

biblical teaching of the image of God: Gen 1:26, 27; 5:1, 3; 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Col 3:10; Jas 3:9; and Ps 8 (idem, "Image of God," *EDT*, 546).

1Henry, "Image of God," *EDT*, 545.


7GRA 1:145; 151.

8Ibid., 144-45; 151.

9GRA 3:376.
furnishes him with an idea of God,¹ and serves as the means for a relationship with the Creator.² The imago constitutes man's core, and invests him with "inherent dignity," "infinite value and sacredness of human personality."³ The imago points to man's unique connection and kinship with God without implying that he is part of or in the same order with God (against pantheism).⁴

By making the image of God as the definitive contrast between humans and animals, Henry indirectly points to creation as the primary context vis-a-vis those who want to view the image only from the Christological or eschatological perspective.⁵ That is, although Henry does not deny the Christological dimension of the image,⁶ yet he wants to point out that the "redemption-image" (eschatological) "presupposes" and "anticipates" the "creation-image" and the latter takes precedence over the former.⁷

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¹Ibid., 389.
²GRA 2:125.
³Henry, "Image of God," EDT, 545.
⁴Ibid.; GRA 2:124. Although Henry believes that man bears the image of God only in certain respects, yet that image is nevertheless an "exact resemblance" of God's own image. To clarify, Henry points to the resemblance of the image of the incarnate Christ to that of God's (Henry, "Image of God," EDT, 546).
⁵Henry, "Image of God," EDT, 547.
⁶The doctrine of the image of God is framed "in the setting of divine creation and redemption (ibid., 545).
⁷GRA 2:125. Henry compares the two (creation-image and redemption-image) as follows: (1) The creation-image was once-for-all wholly given at the creation of the first Adam; the redemption-image is gradually fashioned. (2) The creation-image is conferred in some respect upon the whole human race; the redemption-image only upon the redeemed. (3) The creation-image distinguishes man from the animals; the redemption-image distinguishes the regenerate family of faith from unregenerate mankind. (4) The creation-
implies a "state" and the "redemption-image," a "relation." As a relation the *imago* points to man's personal "standing before God," resulting in a progressive restoration of the image, but limited to the redeemed or the regenerate family of faith.\(^1\) As a state the *imago* stands for that fixed element gifted "at creation" and possessed by every human person irrespective of whether he/she is a regenerate or unregenerate.\(^2\) This universal possession of the creation-image points to the obvious indication that "in some measure," though blurred and sullied, the image "still universally survives the fall."\(^3\)

**The Formal Aspect of the *imago Dei***

Henry further subdivides the *imago Dei* into two aspects. "The divine image in man after as well as before the fall embraces both a formal aspect and a material content."\(^4\) Regarding their condition after the human progenitor fell into sin, Henry also states thus:

"The fall of man is not destructive of the formal image (man's personality) although it image is probationary; the redemption-image is not (Henry, "Image of God," *EDT*, 547).

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\(^2\)Henry, "Image of God," *EDT*, 546-47. Since the *imago Dei survives in every man* (GRA 1:405; Henry, *Twilight*, 33), it follows that all can understand special revelation, irrespective of their cultural differences (Henry, "American Evangelicals in a Turning Time," 1062; idem, "Are We Doomed?" 201; see also Daane, "What Is Truth?" 28).


\(^4\)GRA 2:130.
involves the distortion (though not demolition) of the material content of the image.\footnote{Henry, "Image of God," EDT, 547; see also GRA 3:374.} The formal side of the \textit{imago} is comprised of the "basic forms of reason" and "structures of morality." Without the forms of reason, man\footnote{The forms of reason are identified with "the laws of logic" or "the categories of thought" (GRA 2:126; GRA 3:222). Reason refers to the capacity to think along logical lines. It is "the mind of God or the mind of man, which ideally operates in accordance with the innate, a priori, objective laws of formal logic." That is, these laws "are descriptive statements of how reason ideally functions" (Johnson, 59). "Reason is [also] a divine attribute, and the laws of reason are definitive of God's nature and descriptive of his will," (GRA 5:335; 337, 374; Henry, "The God of the Bible Vs. Naturalism," 234-37; idem, "The Bible and Modern Science," 1194; and idem, "The God of the Bible and Moral Foundations, 22). Although God is the "basic structure of the ultimately real world . . . , yet because of his rationality, it can also be said that reason is the essential foundation of ultimate reality" (GRA 5:374).} could never intelligibly discriminate God from the not-God, right from wrong, truth from untruth. Only if man is logically lighted, and not simply morally or spiritually involved independent of intelligence, can he be meaningfully aware of responsible relationships to God and other selves and to the cosmos. If man made any sense of his own experience, the laws of logic must intrinsically have qualified the \textit{imago Dei}. From the first, man as man possessed reasoning capacities and rational discernment on the basis of creation. All distinctively human experience presupposes the law of noncontradiction and the irreducible distinction between truth and error; man cannot repudiate these logical presuppositions without sacrificing the intelligibility of what he says and does and his own mental coherence. Reason illuminates divine revelation by furnishing the concepts for truth not only about man and nature but also about God and by discriminating the true God from false gods, revelation from pseudorevelation, and true from false religion.\footnote{GRA 2:126; see also ibid., 134; GRA 4:58; Henry, "Revelation and the Bible-2," 17; idem, "Man," BDT, 340-41. All men have the formal side of the \textit{imago}; therefore all "conceptualize in the same way" (GRA 2:133).}

Similarly, without the structures of morality, man would be incapable of making a distinction between good and evil and between right and wrong [as "genuine objective"] irreducibles. Moreover, he was endowed with conscience—with the "good conscience" which approves what is right and disapproves what is wrong; he did not as yet have a "bad conscience" because of moral disobedience. Anyone who demotes all

\cite{Henry, "Image of God," EDT, 547; see also GRA 3:374.}
ethical distinctions to relativity and considers conscience an irrelevancy is not only morally perverse but also a candidate for insanity.¹

The Material Content of the imago Dei

The material content of the imago refers to experiential knowledge of God such as the heathens' cognition of God's divinity and power.² It pertains to the possession of moral light by every human person and to his/her capability for revolting against that light.³ Such a knowledge can be "as a liberating power found in a life of commitment to his holy will; or it can be a knowledge which condemns the sinner to his sinful deeds."⁴ In its most ideal form it existed before the Fall when man personally . . . truly and intimately knew Elohim as his Maker; . . . knew . . . that God's revealed will defines the good, and . . . knew specific elements of that will that placed him under God's command. [Man] knew . . . that truth is what God thinks and says, and by divine communication he also knew and treasured in his heart certain truths enunciated by his Maker. Indeed, man in God's image knew God himself to be the truth and the good, the Creator and Lord of all; he knew reason and conscience as God's enablements to recognize and approve the true and holy Lord. Created man knew God's revealed truth and declared will, and love, trusted and obeyed him. His fellowship with God was unbroken; he lived a moral life in truth, a life consonant with God's revelation pulsating through the imago Dei. To God he gave his whole heart, his undivided self; God's light and law were his highest fealty and felicity.⁵

Unfortunately, because of sin, none of that "original righteousness remains." In its place is

¹GRA 2:126.
²Ibid., 128-29.
³Henry, Toward a Recovery, 45, 58; GRA 2:129.
⁴GRA 2:129.
⁵Ibid., 134.
a "horrendous spiritual and moral chasm" between man and God.\(^1\) Therefore, man, in God's presence, is always and inevitably a sinner.\(^2\) Consequently, even his "best acts are still the performances of a sinner."\(^3\) Man is so awesomely "depraved," ridden with "corruption, guilt," a "defective will," and a "fallen nature"\(^4\) that even in "his best moments he is constantly in revolt against revelation and involved in the consequences of that revolt."\(^5\) Actually, his "story is a story of revolt."\(^6\) He is preoccupied with it.\(^7\) As an act of insubordination, man wills 'down', suppresses general revelation, twists, warps, and tapers it "to what is more compatible and congenial with an alienated will."\(^8\) The Fall reduced man to "depravity."

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\(^1\)GRA 4:607-08; 610.

\(^2\)Henry, *Protestant Dilemma*, 140.

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Henry, "Man's Dilemma: Sin," 4; 8; 17; idem, *Protestant Dilemma*, 140; see also idem, "The Ambiguities of Scientific Breakthrough," 103; idem, *CPE*, 383.

\(^5\)GRA 2:135; 122-23; GRA 3:460.

\(^6\)Henry, *Protestant Dilemma*, 160; see also idem, *Gods or God?* 223, where Henry talks of man's "volitional rebellion," and "sinful human's rebellion against the light of the Logos." In the category of revolters "against the living God," Henry places the secular idealist, theistic philosopher, proponent of non-biblical religious outlook, and the atheist (idem, *Gods or God?* 223). Regarding the non-biblical religions, Henry views them as the "end-result of this revolt. On the one hand, they are a response to universal divine disclosure, on the other hand, they are a deflection and dilution and distortion of it that constitutes as a warped effort to bridge the gap between an alienated God and his alienated creatures" (ibid., 222).

\(^7\)GRA 2:135.

\(^8\)Henry, *Toward a Recovery*, 57; 109. For Henry's portrayal of man as a willful, rebellious being, see idem, *Protestant Dilemma*, 146; 160; GRA 2:88; 127; 129-30; 135-37.
[It] affects him in the entirety of his being—in volition, affection and intellection. But this hardly means that man cannot comprehend God’s revelation, or that he cannot do so prior to the regenerative or illuminative work of the Holy Spirit; far less does it mean that man’s rational capacities are wholly nullified. The fall conditions man’s will more pervasively than his reason. Man wills not to know God in truth, and makes religious reflection serviceable to moral revolt. But he is still capable of intellectually analyzing rational evidence for the truth-value of assertions about God. If the noetic effects of the fall were totally and utterly damaging, thus making man incapable of thinking aright and immune to the rational validity of the basic categories of logic (e.g., the law of contradiction), then no rationally persuasive case could be mounted for or against anything whatever.1

Henry again says that although man’s response to general revelation is “broken,” “evasive,” and oblique, yet the fact still remains that he has contact with general revelation, except that

he does not fully meet it . . . in a truly answering fashion; his presuppositions are wrong; he perceives . . . the knowable in wrong perspectives; he directs his faith wrongly; he ‘derails’ his thinking by forming wrong concepts, judgements, theories, and so forth’; he thus perceives the knowable in accordance with wrong theoretical constructions.2

Hence, man’s problem is not that he cannot understand revelation but that the Fall has so affected the will that he sets his face against God, distorts divine disclosure in the cosmos and in history,3 and “translates religious reality into a nondescript spiritual realm or into imaginative reconstruction of reality such as those of the pagan Gentile world that the

1GRA 1:226-27. “Sin affects man’s psychological activity, and hinders his ability to think correctly [though] it does not affect the laws of valid inference. True propositions are universally true now, as they were before the fall and as they always will be” (GRA 2:135-36). “Logic, the law of contradiction, is not affected by sin. Even if everyone constantly violates the laws of logic they would not be less true than if everyone constantly observed them” (Gordon H. Clark, quoted in GRA 2:136).

2H. G. Stoker, quoted appreciatively in GRA 1:160.

3GRA 2:123.
Because of his rebellious nature, man has lost the capability to deduce from general revelation a dependable meaning. Consequently, he is usually wrong in his ethical judgments. And even when he is correct, his inner alienation from God and his present moral predicament prevent him from being certain. In other words, "the fall conditions man's will more pervasively than his reason" (with Aquinas).

That although the perspicuity of God's universal revelation remains undimmed, yet man wills not to know God in truth, and makes religious reflection serviceable to moral revolt. Perhaps that is why Henry says that man's problem is basically spiritual. In such a pathetic, unregenerate state, man is as good as dead. However, Henry believes that this

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1Henry, Gods or God? 223.

2Henry, CPE, 156.

3GRA 3:460; see also Henry, "Man," BDT, 340-341.

4Henry, Gods or God? 223.

5GRA 1:226. See also Rice, review, GRA 1-4, 110, where he observes that in Henry "the consequences of the fall are more volitional than noetic."


7GRA 4:610. Man's sinful and rebellious state incapacitates him from delivering himself. His lot can only be changed by Jesus Christ (GRA 4:608). He is man's best and only hope for salvation (Henry, "Man's Dilemma: Sin," 15, 20; GRA 4:608). Only in Christ will man ever hope to get rid of his sins and rebellious nature. And only through him will he get to taste a sinless life of glorification in the age to come (Carl F. H. Henry, "The New Image of Man," in The Scientist and Ethical Decision, ed. Charles Hatfield [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973]: 172). On that day man will either be justified and ushered into eternal life of fellowship with God or condemned and assigned to the fiery flames (GRA 6:414; 506-12).
distortion and revolt are "progressively" reversed and corrected in the lives of believers;¹ but it is only at the eschatological future that the image of God is fully restored in the redeemed sinners.²

Further, Henry not only says that the formal side of the image of God has not been totally destroyed by the Fall,³ but he insists upon its precedence over the material content of the imago Dei. Note, for instance, the following statements:

But in contemplating the divine image in man, it should be clear that the rational or cognitive aspect has logical priority. The Johannine Prologue declares that man by creation is lighted by the Logos (John 1:4, 9), that is, logically lighted. The apostle Paul, moreover, exhorts Christians as their "logical service" (literal) to present their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1, RSV). The restoration of sinful man to his created image includes logical considerations. Light in John's Gospel has both rational and moral connotations.⁴

The surviving imago assures the human intelligibility of divine disclosure, preserves the universal validity of human knowledge, and correlates God's inner revelation to man in the mind and conscience with God's external revelation in nature and history. It qualifies man not only as a carrier of objective metaphysical truth about God's nature and ways, but more particularly as a receiver of the special revelational truth of redemption.⁵

The cognitive aspect of the imago is the "essential basis of moral responsibility and of

³See note 4, p. 164 above, and also p. 172 above; see also GRA 3:222 where Henry says: "The fall . . . has not destroyed man's rationality"; see also GRA 1:228, where Henry confirms the intactness of man's reasoning capacity shown by the Spirit's using of truth "as the means of persuasion and conversion."
⁵Ibid., 130.
meaningful religious experience.1 Were it not for rational capacity, man would not know truth and God, and would not therefore be held responsible for his revolt against light.2 Without the formal aspect of the imago, he would not be able to "communicate intelligible truth, nor could intelligible revelation be appropriated by him or meaningfully addressed to him."3 It is because of the imago's preservation that man is "still capable of intellectually analyzing rational evidence for the truth-value of assertions about God."4

Reason provides man the basis for the intelligibility of the universe and human experience,5 and serves as an instrument for organizing and drawing inferences.6 The faculty of reason or rationality is given by God as a gift to man,7 not to create or establish truth, but to use it as an instrument for testing, recognizing, and elucidating truth.8 Reason is neither to be equated nor contrasted with revelation; rather, it is the means by which we

1Ibid., 128; italics supplied.

2GRA 1:409. Man is gifted with "responsible knowledge of his creator and created reality" (GRA 3:171; italics supplied).


4GRA 1:227. "Reason [is] an instrument for organizing data and drawing inferences from it, and as a logical discriminating faculty competent to test religious claims" (GRA 1:226)


7Johnson, 224.

8GRA 1:215, 225, 228; GRA 3:12-13; GRA 5: 336; Johnson, 224; GRA 1:232, 226; Patterson, JMPL 1, 5; idem, CFH, 65; Johnson, 224; 141; Mohler, Baptist Theologians, 526; Henry, Remaking, 215.
comprehend revelation. It is reason that furnishes man with meaningfulness in what he says and does, in his spiritual and moral experiences, his relationship to God, the cosmos and other selves, and it provides him with "mental coherence." 

Because of this critical role that Henry assigns to reason, the latter therefore seems to occupy prominence in Henry's understanding of the image of God. Note again the following comments: "The image of God . . . specially embraces all psychic elements that elevate man above the animal world, although, of course, any beclouding of the rational in human experience will confuse everything else." In relation to God, "humanity bears the divine image only in some respects, most notably [the] rational and moral capacities."

A Summary of Henry's View of Man

When Henry wrote an article on man for Baker Dictionary of Theology, his first sentence begins with: "Who is man?" After having yielded only one-half of a column of space to the various answers given by naturalists, idealists, pantheists, and modern science, Henry quickly passes on to his own answer, namely, that he is the image of God. The rest of the space (seven columns) is given to an in-depth exposition of the image. This

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1Henry, Remaking, 215.
2GRA 2:126.
3Ibid., 133; italics supplied.
4Henry, Toward a Recovery, 109; italics supplied; see also Henry, "Image of God," EDT, 548.
6Henry's article on the image of God in BDT is republished verbatim in EDT.
observation is significant because it means that the *imago Dei* constitutes man's essence, and through it, he enjoys a unique connection and kinship with God.

It is by means of this image that God confronts man and addresses him on rational, personal, moral, and spiritual levels. The rational, however, takes precedence over the others, as it is the one that renders everything else intelligible. For this very reason, whenever Henry speaks of the *imago*, what initially strikes him is its rational aspect. Man, therefore, is first an intelligent or rational creature. So, if revelation is to be recognizable and appealing to man, it must necessarily be rational.

The possession of the *imago Dei* also means that man "can know the God of creation and created reality—though not exhaustively, to be sure, but nonetheless truly." That is, man has a univocal knowledge of God. However, because of the Fall and his subsequent willful and revolting nature, man habitually manipulates and reduces this knowledge to a level and shape that serves his own alienated and hostile nature. This rebellious propensity accordingly renders him incapable of interpreting general revelation rightly, making it all the more necessary for special revelation.

Now that the divine-human point of contact—according to Henry—has been clarified, and his view of man adequately sketched, chapter 5 pursues with an analysis of his portrayal of the human role in revelation and inspiration.

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1GRA 1:160.
CHAPTER 5

AN ANALYSIS OF HENRY’S PORTRAYAL OF THE HUMAN
ROLE IN REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

The examination of the human role in Henry’s doctrines of revelation and inspiration is treated in this chapter and the one that follows. Chapter 5 analyzes the human role within these two doctrines, and chapter 6 evaluates Henry’s presentation of that role by means of a comparison and contrast of man’s role in revelation with his role in inspiration.

Man's Role in Revelation

In an attempt to see the human part in revelation, one can approach it by considering several key aspects of Henry’s doctrine of revelation where the role of man becomes more evident. Henry’s treatment of revelation highlights at least three such crucial moments: the origin, the reception, and the conveyance of revelation. Each of these is considered separately under the following subheads: man’s role and the origin of revelation, man as receiver of revelation, and man as carrier of revelation.

Man's Role and the Origin of Revelation

Chapter 2 of this dissertation has already addressed Henry’s doctrine of revelation with its implications. A closer examination of that doctrine reveals that the answer to the question of the origin of revelation is implicit in its nature. That is, the fact that
revelation is defined as a voluntary divine disclosure of God's truth and will for mankind\(^1\) implies that revelation can originate only from God and at his own discretion and determination. This is true for both general and special revelation. Furthermore, such a conception predetermines human position and role, as we shall see below.

**The Transcendence of Revelation**

Henry has pointed out that revelation is a divine voluntary activity or event by which God discloses to man truths concerning his nature, ways, will, and purpose for man. It is a process by which God communicates to man information vital for both his present and future.\(^2\) In other words, revelation is a divine method whereby God chooses to open up himself to man by sharing his thoughts and unveiling "his very own mind."\(^3\) In short, revelation is an informational disclosure of divine truths for man, oriented towards his soteriological needs.

Henry also said that this divine revelatory activity takes place in two forms—general revelation and special revelation.\(^4\) The avenues of general revelation are nature, history, mind, and conscience;\(^5\) and those of special revelation are Jesus Christ and Scripture.\(^6\)

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1\(^{See~pp.~42,~62-63~above.}\)

2\(^{GRA~3:12-14;~see~also~pp.~42,~71-72~above.}\)

3\(^{See~pp.~75-76~above,~and~note~7,~p.~160~above;~GRA~3:457.}\)

4\(^{See~pp.~63-64~above.}\)

5\(^{See~p.~62~above.}\)

6\(^{See~pp.~65-66~above.~We~have~already~been~told~by~Henry~that~special~revelation~is~broader~than~Christ~and~Scripture~because~in~times~past~God~had~specially~communicated~with~some~human~beings,~including~Adam,~and~in~a~variety~of~ways.~Those~divine}\)
Each of these forms of revelation constitutes an indispensable and individual facet of God's comprehensive disclosure. General or universal revelation provides man with a knowledge of God's eternal power as creator and sustainer, as well as awareness of man's guilt on account of his distortion and suppression of, and revolt against, this revelation. That is, general revelation furnishes the basis of man's moral and spiritual accountability. Special revelation, on the other hand, republishes the propositional content of general revelation, discloses the full implications of general revelation and of human sinfulness, and especially informs man of the divine plan of redemption.

The connection of Christ and Scripture to special revelation is further clarified when Christ is considered as the ontological high point of special revelation and Scripture as the communications, however, are no longer available to us. Therefore the focus of special revelation falls squarely on Jesus Christ and Scripture (see pp. 66-70 above; see also GRA 2:87-88).

1GRA 2:88.

2See pp. 66, 92, 148-49, and 179-80 above. Man's distortion of God's general revelation occurs when he disregards, or stifles, or suppresses it (GRA 4:12). Such a gross human abuse of revelation not only testifies to his corrupt nature but implies that revelation safeguards human will in the sense that man is left free to express his rebelliousness and hostility toward it.

3GRA 2:85-86.

4See pp. 65, 67 above.

5In Henry's view, special revelation has an "epistemological priority over general revelation" (GRA 1:223). This priority is due not to the obscurity of general revelation, or man's inability to know it, but to the fact that "Scripture as an inspired literary document republishes the content of general revelation objectively over against sinful man's reductive dilutions and misconstructions of it. Furthermore, special revelation proclaims God's way of redemption to sinful man in his guilty condition" (ibid.).

6GRA 2:85-87.
epistemological high point of revelation. The reason for considering Scripture as the epistemological high point of revelation lies in the fact that it is only through Scripture that we have access to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, both of his person and work. In Henry's view, Scripture is the authorized summary of all God's revelation, whether it be in the universe, in redemptive history, or in Jesus Christ. It is the proximate and universally accessible form of authoritative divine revelation and the epistemological conduit and reservoir of divinely revealed knowledge. This capital epistemic function that Henry ascribes to Scripture ultimately leads him to identify revelation with the Bible. Hence, every teaching and revelatory claim must be tested and verified on the basis of its conformity to the Bible. Henry even goes so far as to state that the Bible is the only special revelation that we have. There is no revelation apart from Scripture. The Bible is revelation.

Further, in both forms of revelation, Jesus Christ is the sole agent. There is no

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1 See note 4, p. 70 above; see also GRA 1:224.
2 See pp. 70, 131-32 above; emphasis supplied.
3 See p. 70 above.
4 GRA 1:229.
5 See p. 43 above.
6 See pp. 43, 71 above.
7 GRA 1:215, 229; GRA 3:46.
8 See p. 70 above.
9 See note 7, p. 70 above.
10 See note 3, p. 68 above.
other revelation outside or independent of him. He is the exclusive mediator of all divine revelation. As preincarnate Logos, he was behind general revelation.\(^1\) He enlightened and still enlightens every person.\(^2\) Likewise, in his incarnate state he was both the agent of special revelation and special revelation itself,\(^3\) so that in him both "the source and content of revelation converge and coincide."\(^4\) His person, words, and acts constitute revelation. In that sense, Jesus Christ is not only the agent of revelation, but its goal and climax.\(^5\)

As already stated, the above delineation of revelation has been carried out with the purpose of addressing the human role at the inceptive stage of revelation. From that perspective, two observations are in order: (1) revelational activity is exclusively limited to God, and (2) Jesus Christ is the only agent of revelation. Both of these assertions indicate the transcendent dimension of revelation. In other words, Henry affirms emphatically together with Barth that revelation can originate only from God,\(^6\) and criticizes Aquinas for placing faith in human reasoning as naturally capable of knowing truth and reality without divine help.\(^7\) Both Henry and Barth disavow any capacity of man to build an epistemic

\(^{1}\)See p. 64 above; also note 5, ibid.; and pp. 68-69 above.

\(^{2}\)GRA 1:228; GRA 2:84-85.

\(^{3}\)See pp. 68-69 above; see also pp. 162-63 above.

\(^{4}\)See p. 68 above.

\(^{5}\)Ibid.; see also note 3, ibid.; GRA 1:214; GRA 2:87.

\(^{6}\)See pp. 62-63, 153-55 above.

\(^{7}\)GRA 1:84, 87.
bridge to God through natural theology.\(^1\) Put in other words, Henry's emphasis on the transcendence of revelation for its source as well as agency bars man from claiming any independent discovery of truth and reality, and denies any human role whatsoever in producing revelation. Human reason is inadequate to unravel all the enigmas of life.\(^2\) God alone is the ultimate ground for each act of knowledge and certitude for any genuine truth available to man.\(^3\)

**The Transcendence of Truth**

The preclusion of man from the inception of revelation can further be evidenced by looking at Henry's understanding of truth. He defines truth as the content of what God thinks, says, and wills.\(^4\) Truth is what is in his mind, his ideas.\(^5\) In other words, truth depends on the sovereignty and transcendence of God, who sovereignly upholds the truth; and establishes and preserves whatever is true.\(^6\) "All truth is a revelation of the one true

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\(^1\)GRA 2:86,73, 184, 135, 105; GRA 5:84-87; GRA 1:331.

\(^2\)GRA 2:226.

\(^3\)GRA 1:328; GRA 2:86.

\(^4\)Henry, *Toward a Recovery*, 50; Henry, "Will Christianity Outlive Its Critics?" 130; GRA 5:334; Henry, "Seminar," 9. God wills according to the laws of reason; that is, the laws of reason are descriptive of the activity of God's will (Gordon Clark, quoted approvingly in GRA 5:335).


\(^6\)GRA 5:334. God is "the author of all meaning, the foundation of all facts; his thought is ultimately decisive for all predication" (GRA 5:334).
God"; therefore "there is but one system of truth,¹ and truth finds its meaning in Jesus Christ who is the Truth."²

But Henry also says that God's mind "consists of rational propositions."³ Truth is therefore a divine concept or thought that is propositional—or one that can be articulated in sentences.⁴ In addition, truth is characterized by logical consistency (without contradiction)⁵ and coherence (all its parts are integrally united or held together).⁶

Henry also holds that all truth⁷ is the revelation of the one true God,⁸ hence, all truth is revelatory.⁹ Because God is the revelational source of all truth,¹⁰ including the truth

¹"There can be only one system of truth, however many theoretical models might be constructed" (GRA 1:237).

²Henry, Giving a Reason, 36.

³GRA 5:337; see also note 7, p. 73.

⁴GRA 3:457. "Christianity contends that revelational truth is intelligible, expressible in valid propositions, and universally communicable" (GRA 1:229).

⁵"Consistency is a negative test of truth; what is logically contradictory cannot be true. A denial of the law of contradiction would make truth and error equivalent; hence in effect it destroys truth" (GRA 1:233). "Without noncontradiction and logical consistency, no knowledge whatever is possible" (ibid., 232). "Truth is self-destructive unless noncontradictory and governed by the canons of reason" (ibid., 90).

⁶GRA 1:215, 237; italics original; see also Peter A. Angeles, Dictionary of Philosophy (1981), s.v. "Consistent"; "Coherence."

⁷For Henry the distinction between theological truth and other forms of truth is that theological truth is "divinely authorized, infallibly certain, and biblically attested; all other claims for truths are subject to correction and at most are but probable" (GRA 1:228).

⁸Henry, Giving a Reason, 36; GRA 1:228.

⁹Henry, Gods or God? 206.

¹⁰GRA 1:228; Henry, Toward a Recovery, 50.
of Christianity, mathematics, logic, law, and cosmic order, there can then be only one system or order of truth, and these branches of knowledge accordingly provide the possibility for a coherent coordination with each other. That is why philosophy and theology should not be confined to separate compartments of the human mind; for all life, history, and culture find their meaning only in relation to him and derive their ennoblement only through the resources resident in him.

Now, if truth is what God thinks, and if one knows this divine thinking only through revelation, then truth is the content of revelation, and the latter is the only source of truth. In other words, revelation is a "divine communication of truths." This direct and intimate connection between revelation and truth at times leads Henry to treat the two synonymously. So he says: "Revelation is [God's] disclosed truth." "Reason is a

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1GRA 1:215; Henry, Toward a Recovery, 70.


3GRA 1:95.

4Henry, "Seminar," 17; see also idem, "Christian Education and Culture," 4; GRA 3:280; Henry, Giving a Reason, 36-37; idem, CPE, 148.

5"The character of revelation as truth and not simply as acts" should be Christianity's primary emphasis (Henry, Frontiers, 65-66).

6GRA 2:73; GRA 1:228.

7GRA 3:302.

8It should also be noted that in Henry's discussion of the tests of truth, revelation is often treated synonymously with truth (see GRA 1:232-33).

9GRA 1:228.
divinely gifted instrument enabling man to recognize revelation or truth.\(^1\) Moreover, Henry's identification of the Bible with revelation, and his insistence upon Scripture as a "verifying principle" of truth,\(^2\) as well as his asking that we seek revelation "in truths,"\(^3\) further point to the convergence of revelation and truth in his theological system. Because revelation is the only source of truth, the latter accordingly bears the dignity and authority of revelation so that it can be viewed as revelation itself.

The point stressed here thus far is that inasmuch as revelation is transcendent or supernatural, so also is truth transcendent. This direct and exclusive connection of truth with God as its sole author is further displayed in the following statement:

If divine revelation and not human reason is the source of truth, then man's mind cannot be viewed as inherently qualified to unravel all the enigmas of life. To say that man's mental powers are virtually divine contradicts both the basic Christian axiom that God in his transcendent revelation is the only source of truth and its related emphasis, namely, that finite and fallen man even though gifted with the divine image is dependent upon revelation. When human reasoning is exalted as the source of truth, then the content of truth is soon conformed to the prejudices of some influential thinker or school of scholars, or it may be conformed to the current consensus of opinion, sometimes dignified by the expression "the universal human consciousness."\(^4\)

With regard to the relation of the human mind to truth, Henry again says: "Christian theology denies that the human mind or human reasoning\(^5\) is a creative source of

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\(^1\)Ibid., 228, 226; italics supplied.

\(^2\)GRA 1:215; italics original. The Bible as the verifying principle means that all theologico-ethical propositions are to be in conformity with biblical criteria (GRA 1:230, 232).

\(^3\)GRA 4:46.

\(^4\)GRA 1:226; see also GRA 2:73, 41, 130.

\(^5\)Note that the terms "human mind" and "human reasoning" are used synonymously; italics supplied. Henry understands reason as an objective intelletive faculty in man that
revelational content; its proper role is not to fashion revelation or truth, but rather to recognize and elucidate it.\(^2\)

The transcendent nature of both revelation and truth determines and explains the preclusion of man from any role at the point of their origin. In addition, Henry indicates two more reasons for excluding human involvement in the inception of revelation, namely, human finiteness and sinlessness.

**The Finitude of Man**

The following statement from Henry elaborates man's finiteness (limitedness)\(^3\) and the "epistemic predicament"\(^4\) that arises out of this creaturely limitation:

Human reason is not a source of infallible truth about ultimate reality. For human intelligence is not infinite, and left to itself man's reasoning all too evidently reflects his finitude. All speculative interpretations of reality and life projected on the basis of human insight and ingenuity—modern no less than ancient—are merely provisional in character. Whether arrived at by sustained scientific inquiry or disciplined philosophical reasoning, they are destined inevitably to revision and replacement. So limited is human life that no man has time or opportunity to gather all the information relevant to a comprehensive world-life view, and even if he could, volitional or emotional pressures upon the human spirit prejudice every man's interpretation of the data. This best explains the fact that brilliant minds using the same canons of reason interpret reality in amazingly diverse ways, and expound competing views with compelling force.\(^5\)

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\(^{1}\)Note again that the terms "revelation" and "truth" are used synonymously; italics supplied.

\(^{2}\)GRA 1:226.

\(^{3}\)CDEL, s.v. "Finite."

\(^{4}\)GRA 2:123.

\(^{5}\)GRA 1:91.
For Henry, man is God's creation. By definition, no creature can mount to equality with its creator. If man cannot know the thoughts of another person, much less can he know God's thoughts. And because truth is what God thinks, man can know truth only as God chooses to reveal it to him. Therefore, man has no capacity to create truth. He has to depend on God for its revelation. God alone is the giver and source of divine truth or revelation.

The Sinfulness of Man

The exclusion of man from the inception of revelation is further indicated by Henry's correlation of revelation with man's need for it as a sinner. For instance, Henry points out that human sinfulness goes hand in hand with the necessity for special revelation. Sin causes a moral barrier or a gulf between God and man, and special revelation is required to deal with this problem of overcoming the separation. In addition, man cannot know the thoughts of another person, much less can he know God's thoughts. And because truth is what God thinks, man can know truth only as God chooses to reveal it to him. Therefore, man has no capacity to create truth. He has to depend on God for its revelation. God alone is the giver and source of divine truth or revelation.

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1See pp. 61, 103, 151 above.
2GRA 2:54; GRA 3:13; GRA 5:336.
3GRA 1:88, 91.
4See pp. 148, 188 above; see also pp. 62-63 above. The stress on God as the sole source of revelation and truth is highly significant for Henry. His advocacy of God as the source of all authority (GRA 4:24) and of his Word (Scripture) as the Christian's ultimate norm for faith and practice (GRA 4:15) can stand only as man is denied the capacity for creating truth. Once it is admitted that man can know truth on his own, the possibility for the erosion of God's authority is set in motion.
5Henry, *The Drift*, 98.
6Ibid., 110.
sin creates in man a spirit of rebellion against God and his will,\(^1\) resulting in obstruction of truth and production of several contradictory systems of knowledge.\(^2\) Sin enslaves man’s mind and blinds it in the face of the light by which he stands constantly condemned.\(^3\) Special revelation, on the other hand, informs man of his true state and of the consequences brought about by sin. It shows him the solution to his predicament. Thus, God alone is capable of bridging the gulf and overcoming the epistemic barrier created by sin. As a sinner, man is cut off from God, the source of revelation and truth, and therefore disqualified from generating truth, as human powers and ingenuity are hopelessly limited and perverted by sin.

The foregoing section has underscored the exclusion of man from the inception of revelation. Henry arrives at this conclusion on the claims that revelation as well as its content (truth) is an entirely transcendent phenomena, and also from the fact that man himself is a finite and sinful being. However, since man is the object of divine disclosure, human involvement must be sought at another stage of the revelatory process.

Man as Receiver of Revelation

Since revelation is addressed to man, he necessarily has a role to play. Henry calls this role "receiver" of revelation.\(^4\) The question here is whether this role is passive, active,

\(^1\)See note 3, p. 103 above; and pp. 149, 151-52 above.

\(^2\)GRA 1:91.

\(^3\)Ibid., 105.

\(^4\)GRA 2:130; see also ibid., 13, 151, and GRA 3:78, 480, where Henry speaks of the prophets and apostles as "recipients" of revelation. We must note the emphasis is on the fact that man is a receiver, not an experiencer of revelation as in Barth.
or a combination of the two. Furthermore, since this study concerns man's role in revelation and inspiration, special revelation is primarily in view. However, since Henry sees revelation as a unified whole, coming from the same source—God, existing in two forms: general and special, both being complementary, standing one behind the other, and rational—it is therefore proper that we do not draw too sharp a contrast between general revelation and special revelation so that one is made to be of less revelational value than the other. Both are divine revelation, and response to either is of crucial importance.

Moreover, since the prophets and apostles were exposed to general and special revelation, what is described here as man's role is likewise applicable to them as well. Similarly, although terms like "man," "man's role," or "human role" are used primarily with the prophets and apostles in mind, yet the terms are also extended to all humankind in general, hence to be understood in a generic sense. The adoption follows Henry's own practice. The reason for extending the term "man" to all human beings is because ontologically, Henry does not put the prophets and apostles under a sui generis category.

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1 Henry looks at inspiration as a communication of revelation in inerrant written form (GRA 2:14). This revelation is called special revelation.


3 In addition to the two forms of revelation, Henry also adds another: eschatological revelation (GRA 2:73). The last form is yet future, and Henry does not elaborate on it. Moreover, with respect to special revelation, the Bible is immediately in view, because Henry maintains that although Christ is the supreme special revelation, he is known only through Scripture (see p. 70 above). For our purpose, however, only general and special (scriptural) revelation are under consideration.

4 See pp. 60, 64-65; 161 above.

5 See p. 64 above.
He does not consider them different from other men in terms of nature or capacity. Therefore, the prophets and apostles suffer whatever natural limitations and sinful impediments other human beings suffer. Like all humans they too were finite, sinful, and erring.\(^1\) Similarly, whatever natural endowments the prophets and apostles enjoyed, the rest of mankind likewise enjoy. As far as Henry is concerned, the only difference that exists between them and the rest of mankind is in terms of function. To the prophets and apostles was given special revelation in a once-for-all manner.\(^2\) They were the receivers of God's special revelational truths.\(^3\) That privilege, however, ended with them,\(^4\) and will not happen again until the \textit{eschaton}.\(^5\)

Before focusing on various human faculties as receiving points of revelation, it is important to remember Henry's insistence on the universal experience of revelation by every human being. This reception is something that is certain, objective, and intelligible, in which several of man's capacities are involved. For instance, Henry portrays man as one whose mind, will, conscience, motives, deeds, and life experiences are being bombarded, pervaded, and invaded by general revelation.\(^6\) The forceful impact of revelation suggests first of all that man is exposed intensely and continuously to revelation.

\(^{1}\)GRA 4:151, 160.  
\(^{2}\)See pp. 82, 85 above.  
\(^{3}\)GRA 2:151, 130.  
\(^{4}\)GRA 4:147, 242, 259.  
\(^{5}\)See p. 85 above.  
\(^{6}\)See p. 64 above. Note: In Henry, special revelation is likewise received through the same avenues as is general revelation.
Its invasion connotes definite or effective entry into an otherwise inattentive, reluctant, unyielding person. But once entry is made, revelation pervades or spreads through every dimension of his being. The penetrating activity of revelation compels him to yield to its presence. The fact that Carl F. H. Henry recognizes will, conscience, linguistic capability, and reason as revelation's avenues indicates that man is being impressed by revelation in his totality. Let us take a closer look at those crucial human avenues through which man receives revelation, and close with the one Henry is most keen in emphasizing, namely, the human reason.

**Human Will**

Carl Henry asserts that general revelation is an address of God's will to man's will.\(^1\) This means that man engages his will in receiving revelation. The engagement of the will indicates that man confronts revelation with his volitional considerations: he finds himself confronting revelation with his heart and emotions. Man realizes that revelation calls for a response and a decision in terms of either a yes or a no. At this juncture he exercises his will to display his emotional attitude and disposition to the requirements of revelation. That is, man sees himself standing at the point of decision, response, and submission to or rejection of revelation.

In the case of man's reception of general revelation, the will is far from being cooperative. In fact, Henry describes man as obstinate, unstable, and rebellious.\(^2\) The will

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\(^1\)GRA 3:248; see also note 5, 158 above; and Henry, "The Reality and Identity of God—2," 14. Note: The inclusion of the mind as revelation's avenue is deferred to a later stage when we deal with special revelation.

\(^2\)Henry, *CPE*, 105, 146, 166.
frustrates revelation's message and operation in his life. In his fallen and rebellious nature, man wills down and suppresses revelation; he twists, warps, and tapers it to what is more compatible and congenial with an alienated will. Even in "his best moments he is constantly in revolt against revelation and involved in the consequences of that revolt." At the epistemological level, then, the will plays a vital part because it has a volitional capability to shut man from revelation or to submit him to it. However, it is only a redeemed person who submits to God's revelation. An unredeemed man constantly rebels against God and distorts his truth.

If man through his will either turns away from or toward revelation, it means that human reception of revelation at this stage is an active one. As indicated, however, the habit of shutting oneself from revelation is characteristic of the unregenerate. This means that the will can be transformed either to a positive or negative posture. In any case, receiving revelation requires man's active participation. There is in him that volitional "switch" that he can either turn on and let the light of revelation fill him or turn off and shut that light from entering.

Human Conscience

Conscience is a moral aspect of the imago Dei. It is "an immediate—yet

1 Henry, Toward a Recovery, 57; see also GRA 4:12; GRA 1:226.
2 See p. 175 above.
3 Henry, CPE, 146, 166, 105.
4 "God's image in the human person is itself a means and kind of revelation, particularly in its irreducible rational and moral aspects" (GRA 3:460).
implanted—Divine revelation that has a definite conceptual content. The principles of moral law confront man in and through conscience.1 Whenever conscience assents it validates the divinely implanted moral law, and reason accuses or excuses as conscience directs.2 Henry also calls conscience the "inner moral voice, the intuitive monitor of the ethical life."3 Conscience is that which imparts knowledge of good and evil. It refers to the power of moral judgment and criticism.

Conscience functions in both pre-event and post-event; that is, before as well as after the act. It operates before the act when it forbids doing something (1 Cor 8:7; Rom 13:5); similarly, it operates after the act when it condemns, acquits, or approves something that has been done or committed.4 This condemnation takes the form of guilt and terror. The knowledge of God's will through conscience is due to its link with God's ethical demand by creation. "Behind conscience, therefore stands the transcendent authority of God, whose demand and verdict it mediates to man."5

Henry also holds that (general) revelation penetrates man's conscience,6 which serves as a "second" knowing, a "knowing alongside" what is otherwise revealed, and hails

1Henry, CPE, 154.
2Ibid.
3Ibid., 513.
5Ibid., 515.
6GRA 1:272; GRA 3:460, 481; see also p. 161 above. If by virtue of conscience man already has some implanted moral truths, the penetration of conscience by revelation would need clarification. Although I have not observed a clarification in Henry, yet could the penetration mean that conscience has been given additional truths from without?
men anticipatively before God's judgment bar. The penetration of revelation into his conscience means that man not only knows that he has to make a decision (the will) for or against revelation, but he is aware that this decision is essentially a moral one, one that has an ethical dimension in terms of good or evil, right or wrong, for which he is responsible before God.\footnote{GRA 2:130.} After the Fall, however, man's conscience has lost the full capacity to function as "a self-sufficient barometer of the moral life," and requires its reorientation to the specifically revealed will of God.\footnote{Ibid., 150.}

Although Henry maintains that elements of the implanted moral law can be found even in the most depraved human person,\footnote{Henry, \textit{CPE}, 150.} yet that fact itself does not provide an alternative to the objective divinely revealed precepts such as the Ten Commandments. Man's active involvement in distorting God's implanted truth (i.e., general revelation) calls for the need of externally given divine moral precepts.\footnote{Ibid., 154.} In other words, since general revelation is being manipulated and caricatured by sinful man to meet his perverse alternative, it no longer is adequate to meet his real needs. Hence, general revelation has to be

\footnote{Ibid., 157.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid., 155.}
complemented and supplemented with (though not superseded by) special revelation.¹ While sinful and rebellious man reduces the moral law within, special revelation enlarges his moral knowledge as well as knowledge of God's own nature and will both before and after the Fall.² Hence, special revelation is more comprehensive and complete than general or universal revelation. Special revelation also expresses the moral law with rational consistency and objectively addresses man's pride, rebellion, arbitrary speculation, and distortion of the implanted moral law, and points to him the benefits of God's saving grace which general revelation does not.³

If by virtue of having been created in the image of God man already has been equipped with an implanted revelation, then the question of his active involvement in the reception of revelation does not seem to arise. In this instance, man may remain passive and yet that does not deprive him of the elements of revelation because he has already been furnished by creating him in God's image. However, what he does with that revelation involves an active participation on his part, and the worst that he can do is distort, misrepresent it, or reject it altogether.

**Human Linguistic Capacity**

Henry maintains that since revelation comes from God's mind, it is essentially a mental conception.⁴ But a concept by itself, albeit divine, is nonverbal and, hence,

¹Ibid., 156; see also pp. 60, 66-67, 161 above.
²Ibid.; GRA 4:111.
⁴GRA 2:53, 12; GRA 3:248.
inaccessible to the other person.\textsuperscript{1} In order for a concept to be significant, it must yield information. To do that, it needs to be conveyed in intelligible sentences and propositions.\textsuperscript{2} It is therefore Henry's contention that the only way of conveying revelation's concepts is through verbalization; that is, through the use of human language, for without words it is impossible to express any thought or idea.\textsuperscript{3}

"A fundamental emphasis of Judeo-Christian religion" is that in revelation "God speaks his mind intelligibly."\textsuperscript{4} In fact, "in his redemptive disclosure, God often speaks \textit{before} he acts."\textsuperscript{5} And when he speaks to a human agent he uses man's own language just as he did when he spoke to Abraham and Moses.\textsuperscript{6} God in his special revelation has spoken in sentences and to this the prophets and apostles have attested.\textsuperscript{7} Therefore, that which God has spoken is assuredly intelligible to man, the listener.\textsuperscript{8} Indeed, God has spoken in a linguistic propositional form, truth concerning himself and truth concerning man, history, and the universe.\textsuperscript{9} Accordingly, God's revelation should be understood as a "\textit{rational}

\textsuperscript{1}GRA 5:337, GRA 3:302. Revelation as extrarational and extraverbal belongs to the "rim" of revelation (GRA 3:457).
\textsuperscript{2}GRA 3:302.
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 421-22; GRA 4:46, 110, 143, 145, 205.
\textsuperscript{4}GRA 2:12.
\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 12; italics original.
\textsuperscript{6}Ibid.; see also ibid., 151; GRA 3:457; Henry, "Concerns and Considerations, 20.
\textsuperscript{7}GRA 3:481.
\textsuperscript{8}GRA 5:337.
\textsuperscript{9}Francis Schaeffer, quoted approvingly in GRA 3:457.
Thus, man's language is pressed into service in God's conveyance and man's reception of revelation. Human linguistic capacity is assumed in God's intelligible speaking. Because no revelation can be conveyed without words, human language is therefore part of the nature of revelation. Its concepts and truths are viable only because they are conveyed in intelligible human language. Through speech God imparts to his prophets information essential for man's present and future destiny.3

In view of a direct connection between concept and words, any attempt to vindicate concepts alone as the primary aspect of revelation goes contrary to its nature, because a concept without words (nonpropositional) to convey it is unintelligible, let alone true or false.4 So "if revelation is a communication of sharable truth, it will consist of words, sentences, and especially propositions or mental judgments,5 and not simply of isolated

1God is rational and the source of all rationality (GRA 5:337), his revelation is likewise rational. Since man is also rational, divine revelation is readily intelligibly to him.

2GRA 2:12; italics original.

3GRA 3:457.

4Ibid., 429-30.

5"Truth . . . attaches not to words per se, but to words used together to express mental judgements—i.e., propositions. What is either true or false is the meaning of words used in logical relationships" (GRA 3:449). Only intelligible sentences have the ability to communicate meaningful information and/or truth (ibid., 430). In Henry's usage, "sentence" is equivalent to a statement (GRA 4:46). At times a sentence is also used as a synonym for a proposition (GRA 3:481). "Truth is a property of sentences or statements" (GRA 4:46; GRA 3:449). Henry also points to Ernst Cassirer who said that the primacy of the sentence over the word is one of the most secure findings of linguistics (GRA 3:446-47).

"We shall readily agree with Dodd, of course, that revelation is not to be sought in isolated words but rather in truths. Words as isolated units of speech are never by

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concepts. Meaningful divine revelation involves communication in intelligible sentences. 4 Hence, both concepts and words are to be accepted as joined instrumentalities of God’s disclosure. Divine revelation then is "conceptual-verbal" or "rational-verbal," or "cognitive-verbal." 2 So while concepts are implied in revelation, they are nevertheless revealed in verbalized form.

Viewed from the perspective of the human role, divine communication of revelation themselves fallible or infallible; truth is a property of sentences or statements, and words serve this purpose only as meaning referents in a logical, propositional context. But if divine revelation is intelligibly communicated to man, it is difficult to see how its meaning and truth can be conveyed without verbalization. If words necessarily involve error in what is taught, then Dodd’s view cannot be taken as gospel truth either; if human nature is restrictive of God’s being and truth, then the consequences for the incarnation of the Logos are such that Jesus Christ must have been mistaken in his teaching” (GRA 4:46; see also GRA 3:421).

We have already noted that Henry defines a proposition as an intelligible or declarative statement that is either true or false; it is a rational declaration, capable of being either believed, doubted, or denied (see p. 78 above). At times, however, by “proposition” Henry means an idea, thought, or belief (GRA 3:446). A judgment, on the other hand, “constitutes the minimal unit of logical meaning and of objective truth; while a judgment is mentally affirmed, a proposition is affirmed extra-mentally either in speech or writing. Propositions or judgments are composed of cognitive elements, but no array of cognitive elements will in and of themselves constitute meaningful communication unless conveyed or conveyable in propositional form” (ibid., 449).

1GRA 3:429-30.

2GRA 2:12; GRA 3:429-30, 248, 251; GRA 4:46, 53, 200. In favor of objective, rational-verbal revelation, Henry asks: "If self-revelation is contrasted with a disclosure of information, then on what basis does one propose to distinguish such nonrational "self-revelation" as authentically divine rather than demonic or merely psychological? It is precisely through our knowledge of divinely revealed information—and not rather in some other way—that we know the truth about the transcendent God himself and his purposes. To render even the bare idea of revealed presence intelligibly defensible, one must correlate that view with a thoroughly cognitive content." To equate revelation only with man’s experience of God’s presence is to reduce God to an impersonal being. "Apart from meaningful and true cognitive information, one could not know that a presence is that of Yahweh, or speak confidently of God’s personality and selfhood, or even of transcendent reality” (GRA 3:458-59).
in human language implies at least two things: Man's understanding of revelation, and his ability to communicate it in his own language, both of which are testified to by Henry himself.\(^1\) God's decision to speak to man would be of little public value if that speech is beyond man's grasp. If God's speaking demands community response, then it should be assumed that man (i.e., prophet/apostle) is able to tell what God has spoken. That further implies man's ability to understand revelation, for without that understanding he cannot be held accountable even if it was verbally revealed. In this way, language has become a crucial means for human reception of revelation.

Furthermore, man's participation in revelation through speech implies his active reception of revelation because it requires him to pay close attention to what God is saying. It causes him to rally the faculties of comprehension, reflection, and memory where he presumably takes mental notes of significant words, names of persons, events, or places, or message conveyed by the speaking God. Besides, the weightiness of revelation, the need to communicate it to the rest of the community, and to ensure its accuracy or purity would also have probably led man to interact with God for the sake of clarity. In that way man's task as a receiver of revelation is not only active but made less difficult, and more reliable and authoritative.

**Human Reason**

While referring to conscience as one of the entry points of general revelation, Henry also points to the mind as another avenue.\(^2\) According to Henry, revelation comes to

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\(^1\) See pp. 188, 201-02 above.

\(^2\) GRA 2:130.
conscience "through" the mind. The mind or reason takes priority because revelation is rational or conceptual. Actually, reason as revelation's means of reaching man with its truths functions not only for general revelation but for special revelation as well. In this respect, reason is revelation's highway. Henry assures us that without this divinely gifted faculty, "no intelligible communication, divine or human, would be possible." Reason not only receives God's communication, it recognizes and discriminates revelation from pseudorevelation, tests, and elucidates the truths of revelation.

This ability of reason to recognize and apprehend revelation indicates that the Fall has not incapacitated reason beyond its usefulness for receiving revelation. Henry staunchly maintains that human reason still has the capability to know and understand

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1Henry to Kharbteng, 29 June 1996.

2At times Henry is found to use mind interchangeably with reason, though the latter is more precise as it is a faculty of the mind (see GRA 3:248, GRA 1:86-87, 226). The mind or human reason refers to the operation of the mind of God or the mind of man along logical lines or in accordance with the objective laws of formal logic (GRA 2:126; GRA 3:222; GRA 1:226; see also Johnson, 59). By means of reason, man is able to organize data, make inferences, formulate concepts, and draw conclusions (GRA 1:227; Henry, Remaking, 215).

3GRA 1:228.

4Ibid.; emphasis added; see also GRA 3:248.

5GRA 1:226, 228, 232; see also note 2, p. 76 above; pp. 173-74 above; GRA 1:228. The laws of reason along with the forms of morality constitute one of the fundamental elements of the imago Dei (GRA 3:168, 222, 229; GRA 2:133). Therefore one does not need to sacrifice his intellect in becoming a Christian (GRA 1:400). In fact, "no philosophy and no religion presses the concern for intellectual and moral integrity more insistently than does the Bible" (ibid., 264). Accordingly, Christianity calls for "reasonable reflection, reasonable decision, and reasonable service" (ibid., 272).
revelation. However, this does not mean that man on his own discovers truth. Were that the case, reason would be given a status of the creator of truth which, as we have already noted, Henry denies with vigor. The truth of revelation can be known only as God reveals *GRA 1:226-27; see also p. 179 above.

1 See pp. 44-45, 148 above; see also Henry, Remaking, 215. A question has been raised whether Henry as a presuppositionalist apologist belongs to the Augustinian-Anselmian or the Thomistic tradition. In the latter, reason precedes faith, and in the former, faith precedes reason. Johnson contended that Henry belongs to the Augustinian-Anselmian tradition (Johnson, 48, 52, 57-58), while McNeal argued that Henry is in the opposite camp, namely, the Thomistic tradition (McNeal, 108-109). Perhaps a resolution lies in examining whether or not Henry looks at reason as being autonomous. In the observations of Johnson (pp. 46, 224) and Kiš (p. 222), reason would be autonomous if it is conceived of as being a creative source of truth, which, as we have already noted, Henry denies (see p. 142 above; see also pp. 178-185 above, and Patterson, JMLP 1, 5). Reason is viewed by Henry as an instrument for recognizing truth, and all truth comes from God (GRA 1:228, 328; see also Johnson, 187). Fackre therefore concludes that it is wrong to categorize Henry as a rationalist (Fackre, Handbook, 598). In fact, Henry himself cautions against the danger of reason becoming an obstacle to accepting revelation on account of its pride (see Carl F. H. Henry, Reply to Objections, Special Collections, 3. No other publication data are available concerning this manuscript). However, Henry does acknowledge that his theological methodology is that of rational presuppositionalism (Henry, Toward a Recovery, 112).

Henry's position on reason can further be seen in his criticism of Thomas Aquinas. He sees in Thomism an attempt to use and trust reason as a tool for proper and adequate knowledge of God independent of revelation and Henry interprets this as a revolt against revelation (Henry, "Special Revelation," BDT, 457; see also Johnson, 46-47). Henry further states that Aquinas ignored the sin factor in man that prevents him from knowing God as he is known in his revelation (see p. 142 above; see also Richard H. Warneck, "The Theology of Carl F. H. Henry" [M.S.T. thesis, Concordia Seminary, June 1968], 65, 202-03). In other words, it matters little the amount of inferences Aquinas makes from sense data, for by so doing, he can never know the reality of God (Henry, Evangelicals at the Brink, 8). Likewise, Henry's rejection of Aquinas's proofs is based on his rejection of Aquinas's trust in reason and philosophy as creators of truth independent of revelation (GRA 1:36, 78, 184-85; Henry, Remaking, 202). It may also be pointed out that it is precisely the same reason that leads Henry to reject natural theology (see pp. 140-41 above), because knowledge of God is possible only when the initiative comes from God to man and not the other way around (Henry, Remaking, 313-14; GRA 1:85-95; GRA 2:120, 123; see also Johnson, 46-47; Weeks, 27).

For a detailed and critical examination of the role of reason in Henry's theology, see Johnson's dissertation. His work not only carefully describes Henry's position but also...
it to man.\textsuperscript{1} But when that takes place man understands it. As far as the degree of reason’s comprehension of truth or revelation is concerned, Henry describes it as "perspicuous"\textsuperscript{2} (plain to the understanding).\textsuperscript{3} Faith is therefore not needed in the understanding revelation. If man needs to have faith in order to understand revelation, it means that he can have an excuse for not understanding it.\textsuperscript{4}

The mental clarity of revelation is also indicated by Henry’s assertion that when man knows God's truth, he knows it univocally. That is, there is a point of identity (univocity) between God’s thought and man's understanding of it (against Aquinas’s and Barth’s analogical knowledge of God).\textsuperscript{5}

If there is no point of identity in what God and man know, . . . then man has no truth about God. If no proposition means to man what it means to God, so that God's knowledge and man's knowledge do not coincide at any single point, it follows by rigorous necessity that man can have no truth at all.\textsuperscript{6}

This univocal knowledge is possible because man's mind, to a certain degree, finds a corresponding likeness to God's mind by the very fact that he was made in God's own

\textsuperscript{1}GRA 3:12-13; GRA 5:336; see also pp. 148, 188, 190 above.

\textsuperscript{2}GRA 4:351; Henry, "Are We Doomed?" 201; GRA 3:248. Henry also claims that general revelation is "lucid" (see Henry, Toward a Recovery, 57).

\textsuperscript{3}Webster's New American Dictionary (1995), s.v. "Perspicuous"; hereafter cited as "WNAD."

\textsuperscript{4}GRA 4:210. Those who have faith, however, may be "more sensitive and receptive to the subtler nuances of the biblical teaching" (ibid.); see also Henry, Gods or God? 250-51; see also pp. 44, 48 above, note 6, p. 75 above, and p. 191 above.

\textsuperscript{5}See pp. 165-66 above.

\textsuperscript{6}Gordon Clark, quoted in GRA 2:54.
image. Because of this correspondence, the message of revelation remains true for both
God and man irrespective of the latter's response to it. This identity between man's
understanding and God's clearly indicates that man does know—and knows truly1—
God's truth and communication.2

It may be argued that if man's understanding of revelation is due to the fact that its
rational nature conforms to man's rational mind, then his part in that understanding or
receiving of revelation is passive. However, this is only partially true because no cognitive
activity can be passive as it requires concentration, imagination, reflection, remembrance,
and perhaps repetition of the data, and so on. Henry himself has already pointed out that
the mind engages in discriminating between revelation and pseudo-revelation as well as in
elucidating it for public consumption. Such a multiplex involvement of the mind in the
process of understanding revelation portrays man as being at a high level of active
involvement in the reception of revelation.

Man as Carrier of Revelation

Having assured us that man has a comprehensive intellectual grasp of revelation,
Henry argues further that this understanding is necessary because if revelation is not
rationally cognized it cannot be communicated meaningfully.3 After all, revelation's
content is meant to be shared and not kept private,4 and the possession of revelation is

1GRA 2:54.

2GRA 2:54; GRA 1:237.

3GRA 1:228.

4GRA 3:429.
antecedent to its sharing. The type of possession of revelation that is sharable in an
objective, persuasive, or authoritative manner is one that is rationally perceived through a
linguistic medium. An experience of the encounter type as in Barth, by the very nature of
the case, is subjective and noncognitive, which leaves little room for sharing in a
compelling manner and thereby defeats the very purpose of revelation, which is the
communication of God's mind and will to man's mind and will.¹ From Henry's point of
view, only a rational-verbal or conceptual-propositional revelation can fulfill the task. It is
for this reason that man can confidently occupy himself as a "carrier" of revelation.²

Just what the term "carrier" means in Henry is not immediately self-evident.

However, this could also indicate that he uses it with a conventional meaning in mind. The
word "carrier" refers to one who transmits/communicates or serves as a medium for
transmitting/communicating.³ Moreover, besides "carrier" Henry also uses other words
like "conveyors," "bearers," and "communicators" with reference to the human role in
revelation.⁴ He likewise says that the prophets were commissioned to communicate
revelation.⁵ As conveyors and bearers of revelation, at least two things are involved:
memory and verbal articulation. Both of these are stressed by Henry, as is evidenced
below.

¹Ibid.; see also note 3, p. 161 above.
²The term is provided by Henry himself (GRA 2:130).
³CDEL, s.v. "Carry."
⁴GRA 4:38, 50, 159; GRA 2:12.
⁵GRA 3:461.
Memory

If revelation is communicable, it implies that it is remembered. Man's memory of the content of revelation can be illustrated by Henry's reaction to form critics who hold that the Gospels are a product of an apologetic creation of the early church. In support for his own position, Henry appreciatively cites Harald Riesenfeld and Birger Gehrardsson who suggest that the Gospels are actually an embodiment of the oral tradition of the sayings and teachings of Jesus. This oral tradition came about as a result of his command to his disciples to commit to memory what he said and taught. Henry believes that what we have in the Gospels are testimonies of eyewitnesses and the illuminating role of the Holy Spirit. In this assumption, both memory and supernatural help are admitted. Henry also suggests that a mental retention of the words of Christ could have been made easier because the apostles might have heard Jesus repeat his sayings and teachings in different situations and places with "a quite formalized verbal exactitude" or perhaps with slight vocabulary variations. Memory, however, does not pertain only to the "outward shape" of what Christ said and taught (vox) but to the words (ipsissima verba) as well. According to

1See ibid., 84, 88, where Henry says that acceptance of the above suggestion by form critics is a dangerous alternative.
2Ibid., 84-85.
3Ibid., 87.
4Ibid., 89-90.

5The two Latin words, "ipsissima vox" (the very voice) and "ipsissima verba" (the very words) have often been used in the context of the search for the historical Jesus. Ipsissima verba refers to the "authentic sayings" of Jesus in contradistinction to those sayings in the Gospels and elsewhere that have been attributed to Jesus by the Gospel writers. Those who emphasize the ipsissima vox of Jesus hold that while the words in
Henry, it is not right to separate voice (message/teaching) from words, for it is the latter that preserves the former.\(^1\) In the case of the apostles, they remembered both the words and the voice of Jesus.\(^2\) The purpose of committing Christ's teachings and words to memory, however, was accomplished for the sake of preserving the accuracy of his teachings and spreading them to the whole world.

**Verbal Articulation**

The prophets and apostles bore God's specially given message to others.\(^3\) That means they possessed the capability to relate what they had heard or were told in revelation. Understanding of revelation is of course facilitated by the fact that revelation came to the prophets/apostles verbally in a human linguistic form they were most familiar with.\(^4\) In order to convey any message objectively and cognitively, man needs to resort either to oral or written means. In the case of the apostles' engagement in the conveyance of the revelation of Jesus Christ, Henry says they might have done that either by quoting verbatim (out of memory) or perhaps by restating it with some variations, or a combination of both.\(^5\)

\(^1\)GRA 3: 89.

\(^2\)Ibid., 88-89.

\(^3\)GRA 2:12.

\(^4\)GRA 3:88.

\(^5\)Ibid., 89-90. Henry feels that this apostolic freedom to present Christ's revelation could also have been the reason for the existence of several gospels of Jesus Christ (ibid., 90).
Despite this variation, however, the apostles still preserved Jesus's sayings and teachings with "singular precision and accuracy."\(^1\)

In a discussion of Jesus in the context of revelation Henry makes it clear that Jesus's person and his words are revelation.\(^2\) If Christ's words or sayings have been mentally preserved by the apostles with "singular precision and accuracy" then it means at least two things: that what they recorded in the Gospels as being Christ's words are truly or authentically the very words of Jesus himself; and so there is a degree of verbal continuity between revelation and Scripture. Similarly, what the prophets said to be God's words are likewise God's very words, and not just mere attribution. According to Henry, this is evidenced by the 4,800 times that the prophets said, "Thus saith the Lord."\(^3\) If Scripture is identified with revelation,\(^4\) then whatever we have in Scripture cannot be materially different from what was revealed; otherwise, Scripture cannot be equated with revelation.

As to the percentage of verbal continuity between the words of revelation and those of Scripture, Henry provides no specific answer. However, his emphasis on the clarity of revelation\(^5\) could imply that God, during revelation, would have used as many words as were needed for man to understand so that the latter could in turn convey God's revelation with accuracy and clarity. If in revelation God conveys divine concepts or truths through

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\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)See note 7, p. 44, pp. 159-60 above; and GRA 2:12-13.

\(^3\)Henry to Kharbteng, 25 September 1996.

\(^4\)See pp. 67-70 above.

\(^5\)See pp. 209-10 above.
human speech or language and man understands as well as remembers what was revealed, then any variation between the words heard during revelation and the ones that occur in Scripture is only to the extent that an oral form is different from a written form. In that case, slight verbal variation can be assumed as Henry himself has admitted. For this reason, Henry could say that Scripture is an authorized attestation of God's very speech and acts to us in human language. Hence, we are not to make a distinction "between human language-act and divine speech-act," for the prophets/apostles received from God both message and words. And they themselves testified to this when they "preface their reports with "Thus saith the Lord!" Indeed, God's voice is synonymous with his words as Peter has shown when speaking of Jesus's baptism, saying, "This voice from heaven we ourselves heard"—"a voice which said: "This is my Son, my Beloved, on whom my favour rests" (2 Pet 1:18, 17, NEB). Based on the trustworthiness of the prophets and apostles, one is therefore not to contrast between God's words (logos) and the words (hremata) of the Bible because the word of God is available only as "intelligible truth expressible in human language and sentences. The Bible supplies no basis for a theory that the logos of God must be something other than an intelligible or written word.

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1See p. 220 above.
2GRA 1:232; GRA 4:52.
3GRA 3:417.
4Ibid.
5Ibid., 410-411.
6Ibid., 482. In Henry's attempt to identify the Word of God (logos) with the words used to convey information about the logos, he points to some 13 instances in the Gospel of
Bible says and the words used to convey that meaning should not be differentiated. God's word is to be understood in terms of the words written in Scripture.

"Every word (of the Old Testament) was the authentic voice of God." There should not be any disjunction between vox (voice of God) and ipsissima verba (his words), because God's voice is reliably expressed in rational-verbal form. Were that not the case, then God has not spoken at all. God uses not merely thoughts but words in revelation.

Since Scripture is inscripturated revelation, we therefore have God's Word as well as God's words. Scripture is God's speech; so are its words. Therefore there should not be any distinction between God's speech (utterance) and the words of Scripture. And because God used human language in revelation, what we have in Scripture are the words of God in the words of men. Accordingly, there is an identity between what the prophet says and John where he says that the Gospel uses logos in terms of "a proposition or propositions to be believed and regarded as normatively expressive of Christ" (see ibid., 482-487).

1GRA 4:50, 52.
2GRA 2:12-14.
3James S. Stewart, quoted approvingly in Henry, "Inspiration," BDT, 286.
4GRA 3:95.
5Ibid., 89.
6Ibid., 408.
7Ibid., 423.
8Ibid., 424.
9Ibid.
10Warfield, quoted in GRA 4:159.
what God says and intends. Moreover, since God reveals through human speech, what the apostles wrote came from what God spoke so that the words of Scripture are at the same time the words of God.

The human role is significant in a propositional revelation. When revelation comes propositionally, it indicates that man actively brings himself to attention in order that he may hear and understand the truths of God. In propositional revelation, then, man is seen actively grasping objective, cognitive words with his ears, retaining them in his mind, ready to relate to others what he has heard in revelation; that is, ready to be its conveyor.

Man's Role in Inspiration

We have noted man's role in revelation and God's desire for him (prophet and apostle) to communicate to other human beings what has been revealed. To carry that out Henry says that man needs supernatural help, which he calls inspiration. However, while Henry acknowledges the inspired oral proclamation of revelation by prophets and apostles, his felt need for an uncorrupted, written, objective, and authoritative revelation leads him to direct the focus of inspiration on the text. As he sees it, an orally given revelation is subject to distortion and corruption so that over the years it would consequently lose purity,
authenticity, and credibility. So when Henry uses the word "inspiration" he usually refers to the process by which divine revelation is inscripturated in written form. What needs to be seen now is how Henry portrays man's role in inspiration, whether he is actively or passively involved, or whether both of these elements can be recognized, and most importantly, how man's role in inspiration compares to his role in revelation.

The analysis of man's role in inspiration follows the pattern used for revelation. The adoption of this methodological approach is appropriate in view of the fact that both of these are divine activities, where inspiration is a correlative of revelation, with inspiration rising out of revelation and is an intrinsic ground for positing revelation. The two also often converge as is the case with the epistolary writings of the New Testament. Moreover, using the same pattern also helps us make a more vivid comparison with or contrast between the human role in revelation and that role in inspiration. Accordingly, the following pages consider the human role in inspiration from three viewpoints: Man and the origin of inspiration; man as a receiver of inspiration, and man as a carrier of inspiration.

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1GRA 4:32.

2Ibid., 129; see also Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 101. In view of Henry's emphasis on inerrant inspiration, the following definition by Hodge and Warfield aptly conveys his notion when they say that inspiration refers to "the errorless expression in language of the thought designed by God" (Hodge and Warfield, 16). "Revelation is the fact of divine communication; inspiration is the means of divine communication" (see note 1, p. 30 above).


4GRA 4:70; see also GRA 3:12.

5GRA 4:160.
The Transcendence of Inspiration

Henry says that inspiration is not to be identified with the extraordinary creative activity of man's psychic powers, energies, artistic, poetic/literary genius, or imagination, engendered by a supernatural quickening.\(^1\) The naming of these respective human capacities could indicate Henry's recognition of a possibility or probability of achieving a work of wonder on account of a supernatural heightening of latent human talents and creative energies. The product of such an inspiration is nevertheless a human one because it originates from within man's own potentials that have been fired up by an external force or agency. The agency serves only as a catalyst or stimulator which induces the various faculties and creative energies of a person into an activity that results in an extraordinary product. The greatness of the product is not due so much to the external agent as to man's own inner potentials at work under this external influence. In this case, the agent (e.g., Holy Spirit) serves only as a secondary force that provokes and arouses man's own energies to operate at their highest level of creative achievement.

It is precisely this scenario that Henry wants to avoid with regard to inspiration. He categorically denies the attribution for the origination of inspiration to a creative action of man's native talents and energies that are triggered by the Holy Spirit. Such a view would lead to a conclusion that the Bible is essentially a human product where the Holy Spirit has only a secondary role.

\(^1\)See p. 106-07 above.
It should also be noted, however, that Henry does not refer to these human aptitudes or capacities in a derogatory or dismissive manner. While he might recognize that man possesses those talents and creative energies, yet he makes it clear that the inspiration of the prophets and apostles is not to be identified with an intensified activity of any of these human traits or talents, even if that activity is supernaturally induced. Whereas these are all naturally furnished in both men and women, Christians and non-Christians, inspiration of the prophets and apostles (or Bible writers) is something that is supernaturally accomplished not from within but from without. As such, man has no claim or share in the origination of inspiration.

That the source for inspiration is the Holy Spirit, not man, is also clearly indicated by Henry's affirmative statement on what inspiration is, namely, a "supernatural influence" upon the Bible writer during his recording of revelation.1 Henry's keenness on this attribution of inspiration to the Holy Spirit as its originator is also indicated by two other emphases: inspiration of the text and the meaning of theopneustos.

Inspiration of the Text

Although Henry does not deny the inspiration of the writers,2 he does not want to rest the focus there. What matters most is the inspiration of what the writer wrote—the text.3 It seems for Henry that stress on the inspiration of the writer rides too close to a subjective or human origin of inspiration which Henry eschews just as much as he does a

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1 See p. 107 above.


3 See pp. 107-08 above; GRA 4:144.
subjective revelation. Identifying inspiration with the writer instead of with his writing(s) takes one to the territory of the pagans who portray inspiration as a "subjective mood of the writer overmastered by the divine afflatus."¹ In Henry's opinion, then, emphasis on the writer instead of the text as the locus of inspiration is a nonevangelical or nonbiblical position² because it concentrates inspiration upon man instead of upon his writing, and consequently depreciates God as the author of the text in order that it may properly be considered his Word or revelation.³ So, although in principle Henry does not deny the inspiration of the writer, yet he is least at ease with that notion because he feels that it "indicates God's relationship to Scripture as being only before, above, or behind Scripture, and hence, prior or superior to the writings."⁴ That is, Henry stresses God's direct connection or intimacy with the writings (Scripture) so that what it says can be identified with what God says. Viewed from this perspective, the inspiration of the writers should be considered only of secondary importance, whereas that of the text of primary importance.⁵ By insisting on the text—and not its writer—as the locus of inspiration,⁶ Henry is not only suggesting that the Bible is God's written revelation, but also that inspiration, being an

¹Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 146; see also idem, "Inspiration," BDT, 286.
²See p. 108 above.
³Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 146.
⁴See p. 108 above.
⁵See p. 46 above, note 3, p. 125 above.
⁶GRA 4:74-76.

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activity of the Holy Spirit,\textsuperscript{1} originates outside of man so that he cannot claim any role in its origination.

\textit{Theopneustos}

Henry's emphasis on the transcendence of inspiration—hence, man's preclusion from the inception of inspiration—is also seen in his preference to translate \textit{theopneustos} as "spirated" (breathed out) instead of "inspirated" (breathed into).\textsuperscript{2} For him, "inspiration" (breathing into) somehow seems to suggest the likelihood of an interpolation of human ideas into the otherwise sacred writings. Spiration (breathing out or God-breathed) on the other hand, clearly excludes man from any substantive contribution to inscripturation, so that Henry could appropriately say that Scripture is the product of God's breath.\textsuperscript{3} Henry's preference for "spiration" seems to suggest a deliberate marginalization of human involvement and responsibility in inspiration. Such a picture of human participation is quite different from the one portrayed in revelation, where man is shown to be heavily and actively involved. Spiration points to man's lower or marginal involvement in inspiration, as he appears to remain passive and dependent, serving more or less as an instrument through which God breathes than one who is personally and engagingly involved in the writing process.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{1}Henry, "Inspiration," \textit{NIDCC}, 512.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{2}See pp. 122-23 above.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{3}Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," \textit{EDT}, 145.
Man as Receiver of Inspiration

It has already been pointed out that man has no part in the origination of inspiration because that phenomenon is an exclusive activity of the Holy Spirit, hence transcendent. However, the fact that man is a medium of inspiration, or of the Spirit's influence, indicates that he must play some role in inspiration, but perhaps at a different level.

Although the term "receiver" is not used by Henry in connection with inspiration, yet the idea of man as the receiver of inspiration is clearly present because the Bible writers were given inspiration during their inscripturation of revelation. In that respect they can also be properly considered as recipients of inspiration. The kind of reception, however, is quite different from that discussed in revelation. In this case, man is a recipient of the Holy Spirit's influence for inscripturating divinely revealed truths,¹ and not a recipient of information as is in the case with revelation. In inspiration no new revelation or additional truths are given. The objective of inspiration is to enable man to put into written form what was already revealed.²

What interests us at this juncture is how the human function is portrayed during the reception of inspiration; or how man relates himself to that supernatural influence called inspiration. One can perceive the answer by looking at the way Henry describes the writer's activity during writing. Before considering that activity, however, it is necessary that one first take into account Henry's depiction of the preparation of the writer.

¹GRA 4:129.
²GRA 2:14.
Preparation of the Writer

In considering man's role in inspiration, one needs to take into cognizance that God's choice of the writer is in no way comparable to one's choice of a volunteer.

According to Henry, the selection of the writer was made long before the prophet or apostle ever wrote Scripture. Previous to the wielding of the quill, the prophet/apostle had to go through "a long period of providential preparation involving diverse experiences." But what type of preparation does Henry have in mind?

In view of explicitly identifying himself with Warfield's doctrine of inspiration, Henry's mention of this supernatural preparation seems to be a shorthand statement of Warfield's own belief concerning this preparation, which he describes as follows:

The production of the Scriptures is, in point of fact, a long process, in the course of which numerous and very varied divine activities are involved, providential, gracious, miraculous, all of which must be taken into account in any attempt to explain the relation of God to the production of Scripture. He prepares a man, by birth, training, experience, [and] gifts of grace. [The preparation could involve being] born with just the right quality of religious sensibility, [receiving] just the right hereditary inclination, [getting] precisely the right religious example and training, [exposing to] circumstances of life in which his religious tendencies should be developed precisely on right lines; [given] just the right experiences to quicken in him the precise emotions he would be called upon to express, and finally [being] placed in precisely the exigencies which would call out their expression. When we give due place in our thoughts to the universality of the providential government of God, to the minuteness and completeness of its sway, and to its invariable efficacy, we may be inclined to ask what is needed beyond this mere providential government to secure the production of sacred books which should be in every detail absolutely accordant with the divine will.

The detailed nature of Warfield's statement hardly calls for additional explanation.

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1Ibid., 140; 146.

2Ibid., 141, 159-60, 163, 165, 168-69, 172-73, 176, 183; Sharp, 76.

or expansion. What is obvious is that there has been an extensive and intensive divine preparation of the sacred writers. Beginning from or even before birth, the preparation is elaborate and meticulous. Among other things, the readiness of the writer involves genetic, mental, emotional, experiential, and religious grounding.

Furthermore, what is also significant about this preparation is that the varied experiences that the writers went through are attributed to divine initiative and activity, characterized either as providential, gracious, or miraculous. All these are necessary for the production of Scripture. The writer's birth, religious experience, training, and gifts of grace are all divinely measured and ordained. This shows that man is not only thoroughly prepared for the work of inscripturating revelation, but is also intensely conditioned by supernatural power so that whatever emotion is displayed during writing, literary skills and method adopted, or sensitivity registered are a result of this supernatural conditioning or preparation and can be attributed to none other but the Spirit. It is to be noted, however, that no such preparation is needed for the revelation experience. This signals a cardinal difference between the human role in revelation and inspiration. If God's choice of the writer was from or even before birth, then the question of exercising his (writer's) will or volition seems no longer a real possibility.

With the preparation over, Henry moves on to a consideration of man's part during the writing process. The discussion is divided into the following subheads: originality of the writer, man as agent of the Holy Spirit, man's role in the divine-human concursus or confluence, and man's role in relation to the words of Scripture.
Originality of the Writer

Because of this extensive supernatural preparation of the writer, one wonders if it is still relevant to consider the need for an overwhelming influence of the Spirit upon the prophet/apostle during writing. Such a consideration naturally leads one to ponder on the freedom of the Bible writer, for it is only as he is allowed to exercise his own freedom as a writer that he can claim to be original in his writing. Is the writer free in this exercise? Does Henry's reference to the "very human features" of Scripture¹ imply that the writer was so permitted to exercise that freedom that it can be said he left his own mark and personality on what he wrote?

Henry's response to questions such as these seems to elicit a yes-and-no answer. One the one hand, he says that we are not to consider the Bible writers as mere "divine amanuenses, penmen or secretaries."² That is, if the writer is only an amanuensis it means that he writes from dictation or copies what another has written.³ That kind of role or operation does not provide any room for self-expression or originality. In Henry's view, the prophet/apostle enjoyed more freedom than penmen and secretaries do. He supports this statement by arguing that the Bible writers freely engaged themselves in "historical research, logical reasoning, ethical thought, religious aspiration,"⁴ and enjoyed the right to express their own "personality, stylistic peculiarities, vocabulary range, and personal

¹GRA 4:160.
²Ibid., 142.
³WNAD, s.v. "Amanuensis."
⁴Warfield quoted in GRA 4:159.
preferences in their writing of Scripture. Actually, they were even free to state and summarize the message of Jesus in a manner that would truly convey his thought.

But having said that, Henry moves quickly to the next affirmation, namely, that the writers executed all this under the prevailing assistance, superintendence, direction, and control of the divine Spirit, or under his inspiration. The question is then, how does one account for human freedom and the Spirit's comprehensive control over man's writing? Or how can one claim that this supernatural control of the writers is consistent with their human freedom and disparate personalities? Henry's only answer is that it is a mystery; its "how" lies in the hinterland just as is the virgin birth of Christ. The significance of Henry's admission of the freedom and originality of the writer is seriously questioned when one considers Henry's correlation of the writing process with the immediate and heavy controlling activity of the Holy Spirit.

Man as Agent of the Holy Spirit

By looking into the Holy Spirit's relation to man in inspiration, one can obtain a

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1GRA 4:207; see also ibid., 150, 142; GRA 3:424.

2GRA 3:91; see also ibid., 93.

3Warfield quoted in GRA 4:159; GRA 3:91.

4GRA 3:93. Henry also quotes Hodge and Warfield where they identified divine inspiration with divine superintendence (GRA 4:141).

5Henry in Gaebelien, 25.

6GRA 4:213, 277; Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 77.

7Henry, Conversations, 25.
fuller view of man's role in that phenomenon. Henry himself makes a direct and intimate connection between the human writer and the Holy Spirit. The consideration begins by looking again at Henry's definition of inspiration:

Inspiration is that supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit whereby the sacred writers were divinely supervised in their production of Scripture, being restrained from error and guided in the choice of words they used, consistently with their disparate personalities and stylistic peculiarities.\(^1\)

The definition clearly points to the Holy Spirit as actuating the writer. As an influencer, the Holy Spirit sways and conditions man in such a manner that he elicits responses that are divinely desirable.\(^2\) Besides influencing, the Holy Spirit also superintends the writer. This superintendence, however, is not just a matter of watching and directing from a distance.\(^3\) According to Henry, the oversight involves restraining and guiding the writer. But what is included in this supervision? Henry thinks that it could embrace the safeguarding from error in thought or word, the choice of words or dictation, or a varied combination of these and other possibilities.\(^4\)

Henry enlarges this notion of divine influence and superintendence by quoting Warfield:

The Spirit is not to be conceived as standing outside of the human powers employed for the effect in view, ready to supplement any inadequacies they may show and to supply any defects they may manifest, but as working confluently in, with and by them, elevating them, directing them, controlling them, energizing them, so that as his instruments,

\(^1\)See p. 107 above.

\(^2\)WNAD, s.v. "Influence."

\(^3\)GRA 4:159.

\(^4\)Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 77.
they rise above themselves and under his inspiration do his work and reach his aim.¹

Though Henry himself has not expanded on the meaning and implication of the above words in italics, yet one can gain a greater appreciation of their significance by considering them in the light of the task at hand, namely, the inscripturation of revelation in written form. Keeping this in mind, the writers' elevation seems to refer to the raising or enhancing of the level of their mental, religious, moral, and linguistic capacities to a state higher than they would otherwise enjoy. Moreover, the elevation does imply that man in his natural state is inadequate for the task of inscripturating revelation independent of supernatural help. For instance, the apostles depended upon the Holy Spirit to bring back to their memory all the things Jesus said, and even to help them understand what they failed to grasp during his physical presence with them.² They also relied on the Holy Spirit even in the choice of words.³

That man is heavily dependent upon the Holy Spirit during inspiration is also indicated by the giving of the Holy Spirit's mind to the writer.⁴ Since man's mind is the control center of his activities (internal and external), the giving of a supernatural mind would certainly facilitate or even automate this superintendence. What happens then to the writer's own mind under such a situation? Henry does not provide an answer. But if man is possessed by the mind of the Holy Spirit, is it likely that this can result in the hindrance

¹Warfield, quoted in GRA 4:159-60; italics supplied.
²GRA 3:91-92, 95.
³See p. 107 above.
⁴GRA 3:91.
or suppression of the writer's own intellectual and literary creativity and freedom?

**Man's Role in the Divine-Human Confluence**

Henry provides another important window through which we can view the human role during inspiration. It is by means of the term "confluence," or "concursus"—words that refer to "the simultaneous agency of God and man in one and the same event, whether historical (Acts 2:23) or literary (2 Pet 1:21)." In the interest of obtaining a clearer understanding of the term, it may be pointed out that it would be a misunderstanding of Henry if the word was conceived in a manner of a confluence of two streams of water where both not only freely penetrate each other but also bring along their negative as well as positive properties to the confluence. This caution is significant because Henry affirms that "both thoughts and words are a divine product in view of the divine-human concursus." If thoughts and words are those of the Holy Spirit, what, then, is man's role in the confluence? Henry's response is telling when he says that "it is not quite correct to speak of a dual authorship or of a divine-human coauthorship of Scripture." This clearly shows that Henry does not allow equal share of contribution between the writer and the Holy Spirit. In that respect even the very use of the word "confluence" does little to recognize the human role. By giving preponderance to the Holy Spirit in inspiration,

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1Ibid., 160, 424.
2GRA 4:142, 159-60.
3Ibid., 206.
4Ibid., 142, italics added.
Henry accordingly places him as the only real and ultimate author of Scripture.¹

But if prophets and apostles are not to be regarded as cocreators of Scripture,² what position did they occupy as writers in relation to the Holy Spirit? Henry answers this question by alluding to Barth's notion: "They were auctores secundarii"—secondary authors.³ In view of this subsidiary or secondary role of the human writer, Henry also takes exception to the use of Christ's divine-human nature as an analogy for the nature of Scripture (e.g., divine-human book). In his view,

while each [Scripture and Jesus Christ] involves divine and human, each does so in distinctive ways; the God-man and God-book are not equivalent analogues. In the incarnation one divine person assumes sinless human nature alongside his eternal divine nature; in inscripturation the divine Spirit selectively superintends fallible and sinful human beings in the inerrant oral and written proclamation of God’s message.⁴

As explained in the above statement, Henry's objection to the christological analogy for the nature of Scripture is due to the following: (1) that one is a person and the other a book; (2) that although both Christ and the Bible have their divine and human aspects, yet the Bible cannot be thought of as having a divine nature in the way Christ has it in his own person; and (3) Christ’s human nature cannot be compared to that of the human writers because his was sinless while that of the Bible writers was fallible and sinful,⁵ making it


²GRA 4:206, emphasis added.

³Ibid., 142; see CD 1/2, 505.

⁴GRA 4:160. "If to assume authentic human nature Christ needed to share in human fallibility, we have lost Jesus as an inerrant teacher of doctrine" (ibid., 150).

⁵"Inspiration did not put an end to the human fallibility of prophets and apostles." That is, outside of inspiration "they remained fallible men prone to mistakes, and frequently
necessary for them to be supernaturally supervised in order to keep them from error in their writing of Scripture. So the human writers were not allowed to express themselves freely in the writing process. The analogy therefore does not suit Henry's emphasis on the passive and dependent role of the writers.

**Man's Role and the Words of Scripture**

It has already been pointed out that in Henry's understanding the function or purpose of inspiration is the inscripturadon of "divinely revealed truths in verbal form." Since "ideas are humanly inexpressible apart from words," the choice of words in the recording of revelation is obviously of paramount importance. For this reason Henry feels that the doctrine of inspiration should be directly connected with the expressed truths and words of Scripture because "improperly phrased ideas fall short of being a communication of truth." Accordingly, Henry correlates the "verbal linguistic formulation" of Scripture with "the pneumatic initiative and activity of God." In another place he also claims that the Holy Spirit safeguarded the writers from error by superintending the choice of the made them" (ibid., 151).

1GRA 4:129; see also pp. 45, 106-07, 197, and 224 above.

2GRA 3:422; see also GRA 4:46, 145, where Henry argues for the indispensability of words in the communication of truth.

3GRA 4:144, emphasis supplied.

4See p. 102 above.

5GRA 3:424.
words they used."¹ Henry's conviction of the impossibility of conveying one's thoughts or ideas without words leads him to conclude that both the thoughts and words of the Bible are a divine creation,² the product of a single divine mind³ and his creative breath.⁴ If in inspiration man cannot choose his own words, then it seems that his role in inspiration is no higher than that of a secretary or amanuensis, let alone author. Perhaps this could be the reason why Henry prefers to call man a secondary writer,⁵ because his contribution is more superficial than deep, or more auxiliary than primary.

**Man as Carrier of Inspiration**

When the role of man as a carrier of revelation was examined, we identified it with his ability to communicate or convey the truths of revelation.⁶ This means that it is part of man's task to share the content of revelation with others. Before the act of sharing several things have been noted: man has received, understood, remembered—and still remembers—revelation, and has the linguistic capability to articulate its truths. What is important to note is that Henry does assume that man uses competently the faculties of will,

¹GRA 4:244, 167, emphasis supplied. See also his definition of inspiration (p. 107 above) where Henry uses almost an identical phrase: "The sacred writers . . . were . . . being restrained from error and guided in the choice of words they used." We must not forget that Henry limits inspiration only to that which originally came out of the biblical author's pen, that is, the autographic text (see pp. 114, 136).

²GRA 4:206, italics added.

³Ibid., 218.

⁴Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 145.

⁵See p. 233 above.

⁶See pp. 214-215 above.
conscience, reason (understanding), memory, and speech in the conveyance of revelation.¹ 

This acknowledgment is useful for our consideration of man's role as carrier of inspiration. In view of the fact that inspiration is given for the sake of conveying/communicating revelation in writing,² the engagement of the faculties of reasoning, memory, and speech is equally needed. In fact, Henry admits their use. For instance, he says that during inspiration, three things occur:

1. The Holy Spirit helps man to understand revelation—including things that Jesus said and did and other matters in the Old Testament that are applicable to him.³ The Spirit accomplishes this by sharing with man his own mind.⁴ But what should be pointed out is that when Henry describes the human role in revelation, man is not given nor does he need supernatural help in understanding revelation. His ability to understand comes easily and naturally. If man does not need the direct help of the Holy Spirit at the level of revelation, why should he need it now with such intensity at the stage of inspiration? What has happened to that lucid human comprehension of revelation that Henry testifies of?⁵ Does man suddenly lose his grasp of revelation the moment he begins to write it down?

2. In inspiration the Holy Spirit brings to man's memory all the things that Jesus

¹See pp. 196-97, 198-200, 205-10, 210-11, and 215-16 above.
²See p. 132 above, note 3, 197 above, and p. 220 above.
³GRA 3:91.
⁴See p. 231 above.
⁵See pp. 44, 47, and 208-14 above.
said and did.¹ But this is different from what happens to man in the conveyance of revelation. There, man can remember the content of revelation to the point that he can repeat it verbatim, or even present it in different words without losing any of the original meaning.² Does it mean that man's memory becomes incapacitated the moment of inscripturation? If the Holy Spirit brings everything into remembrance, does it not also imply that revelation itself is repeated during inspiration?

3. Man is given help with the choice of words used in the writing of revelation.³ Again, it is not clear what has happened to the fact that revelation comes in propositional form or in man's own language, as well as his capacity to remember that which has been revealed. Moreover, man is able to elucidate revelation. Is it therefore not reasonable to hold that writing is made easier because of the nature of revelation and the correspondence of human nature with it? Is inspiration in disharmony with human nature?

Summary Conclusion

This chapter delves analytically into the question of the human role in revelation and inspiration. While analyzing the human involvement in revelation, it was observed that Henry initially distances man from revelation in terms of its inception. That is, man has no part in the origination of revelation, including truth as its content. Henry furnishes four reasons: the transcendence of revelation, the transcendence of truth, the finiteness of man, as well as his sinfulness. At this stage then, man has no role to play. It is only at the stage

¹GRA 3:91.
²See pp. 215-16 above.
³See pp. 107, 234-35 above.
of reception and conveyance of revelation that man is involved.

As a recipient of revelation, man uses various faculties such as his will, conscience, linguistic capacity, and mind or reasoning power. The word "receiver" may connote passivity because it portrays man at the receiving end—one who can do nothing to obtain revelation but wait until God gives it to him. However, we also noted that human active participation characterizes the reception of revelation.

First of all, when it comes to general revelation Henry refers to the necessity for revelation to bombard, invade, and penetrate the mind, will, and conscience. This indicates that man is actively resisting revelation. And yet if he is to be accountable before God, he needs to be exposed to revelation. Henry particularly points to man's will as actively engaged in open revolt, disregarding revelation, and revising it to accommodate to his selfish and sinful motives. Man's rebellious attitude during the reception of general revelation when juxtaposed with his attitude during the reception of special revelation shows that it cannot simply be taken for granted that man will receive revelation. Like the prophets and apostles, he must first of all subordinate or bring his will to submission before God can reveal to him truths otherwise unknowable. In this respect, man is actively involved in revelation because he has to make a decision whether or not to accept or reject the role God wants him to occupy in that disclosure. So while the reception of revelation is a mental act, yet the rebellious will can frustrate that reception.¹

As to the conscience, Henry provides two depictions of the human role, namely, passive and active. Because conscience refers to the implanted moral law, man does not

¹Henry to Kharbteng, 25 September 1966.
have to take any initiative in acquiring revelation. It is already given to him at creation. However, an active mood is also evident at this level because man actively engages himself in ignoring and distorting conscience. In Henry's own words, "reason accuses or excuses as conscience directs."¹ In this instance the conscience does play an active role in the reception of revelation because it can deliberately turn a blind eye to revelation or respond to it in a positive manner. That is, conscience can either live up to revelation’s demands or muffle its voice.

When man's role is considered at the level of his linguistic involvement in revelation we see him actively engaging his mind and ears in receiving revelation and deploying his memory and linguistic skills in conveying it to others. Similarly, the engagement of his reasoning power to receive revelation is just as active because the attempt to understand per se calls for an active effort, where several of human powers and faculties are summoned to accomplish the task of understanding or realizing the cognitive value or transparency of revelation. When in contact with revelation, man's mind is seen to be discriminating and testing revelation or truth. His reasoning power tests truth to verify whether or not it is really truth. When convinced, he then elucidates revelation/truth, or makes it intelligible to others by "clear explanation or careful analysis."²

The active way man uses his will, conscience, linguistic skills, and reason in receiving revelation indicates that Henry's presentation of the human role in revelation is

¹Henry, CPE, 154; see also ibid., 146, where Henry says that man's distortion of the moral content of the imago is so severe that the content can no longer serve as a basis for the moral precepts of special revelation.

quite different from the utterly passive Barthian portrayal of the human role in the reception of revelation.¹

When one speaks of the elucidation of revelation, it also indicates that man is its active carrier or communicator. At this stage, two more closely related activities are assigned to man. Henry tells us that the apostles could recall from memory Jesus' words and teaching with precision either verbatim or with some verbal variation. This indicates that when man receives revelation it remains in his memory in the form of intelligible propositional truths that can be recalled as needed. Such an ability of course is necessary if man is to fulfill his role as a carrier or conveyor of revelation. After all, of what significance is a revelation that cannot be remembered? What public utility does it have if it cannot be shared? However, because it is harder to remember than to forget, retaining revelation in one's mind takes conscious and deliberate efforts. To that extent one can also discern man's deliberate and active participation at this level of revelation. Man's active role in revelation is further indicated by the fact that the apostles could restate or summarize revelation.² Here one sees not only a human capacity to present revelation in different creative literary forms, but also his freedom to do so.

With respect to the human role in the inception of inspiration we observe that man

¹As Barth sees it, man, being totally corrupt (see p. 154 above), does not have the natural capability to know revelation or 'Word of God' (CD I/1, 191-93 [ET, 1975 ed.]). If man is to hear or know God's Word, God himself has to help him do that through the power of his Word (ibid., 194-96, 223). Even if one talks of the experience of God's Word, that, too, is made possible by God alone (ibid., 199-200). Divine utterance is something which cannot be anticipated. It comes as an "event of . . . grace" through faith which is also created by God's Word (ibid., 224).

²See p. 228 above.
has no part in it whatever. There is nothing in him that can be identified as a source of inspiration. The phenomenon is not immanent in either man's psychic faculties or creative energies. Inspiration is purely an action of the Holy Spirit. It is a transcendent or supernatural influence⁴ that is made available to man during his inscripturation of revelation.

The analysis moved to the next stage where man is seen playing the role of a receiver of inspiration. While his reception of revelation refers to its cognitive apprehension, his reception of inspiration pertains to an experience of the Holy Spirit's influence, guidance, and superintendence during the inscripturation of revelation.² Did man do anything that would qualify him to receive inspiration? The answer is obviously no because he did not ask that he be chosen for the task. It was the Holy Spirit who chose and even prepared him beforehand for that responsibility. Acquisition of every experience and skill has been as a result of a divine arrangement or provision in order to qualify man perfectly for the task.

This human passivity is also exhibited in Henry's emphasis on the Holy Spirit's rigid and comprehensive control of the writers during the writing process. While Henry may claim that man enjoyed freedom of diction and choice of a literary style or form to convey revelation,³ yet that claim seems to lose force in view of this divine preparation and programming of the human person. Whatever emotional, mental, and literary sensitivity a

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¹Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of," EDT, 145; idem, "Inspiration," BDT, 286.
²GRA 4:129.
³See p. 228 above.
prophet or apostle exhibited in the process of writing Scripture would have been a result of this intensive and detailed preparation; otherwise, the preparation itself would have hardly any importance.

The passivity of the writer is also vividly highlighted by his being elevated, directed, controlled, and energized by the Holy Spirit during inspiration. For that matter, even when man and the Holy Spirit are supposed to be operating conjointly in the writing of Scripture, yet no human contribution is acknowledged for the product of this divine-human effort. As far as Henry is concerned, despite the confluence, both the thoughts and words of Scripture are a divine product. Henry also assures us that man did not have much control over what he wrote because that control had been taken over by the Holy Spirit who actively superintended even in the choice of words.

Regarding the question of man's role as a carrier of inspiration we have noticed that there are differences when compared with the same role in revelation. In carrying (communicating/conveying) revelation, man has the requisite faculties for executing that responsibility. He has the will to decide for or against the task, the reasoning power to understand what is to be conveyed, the linguistic capability to elucidate, as well as the memory to retain revelation. Those faculties operate freely and competently independent of supernatural assistance. Man's operation as a carrier of inspiration, on the other hand, is described in significantly different terms. It appears as if Henry is dealing with a different person than the one involved in conveying revelation. For instance, as a carrier of

1 See p. 229 above.

2 See p. 235 above.
inspiration, man is charged with putting it into written form. But he is totally unqualified for the task. He needs to be prepared in advance, because none of his natural capacities are adequate to carry out the responsibility to a satisfactory level. And even after the long preparation for writing, man still needs the overwhelming help of the Holy Spirit. His comprehending faculty requires supernatural aid to grasp adequately what he is about to write. His memory needs to be reinforced; he requires divine inspiration or help of the Holy Spirit to expand his understanding and help him recall the data of revelation. Furthermore, man does not have the right words for writing revelation. So he again finds himself being guided by the Holy Spirit in the choice of words.

The fact that inspiration is the means by which man (prophet/apostle) puts into written form the revelation he has been given, shows that the same man is actually under consideration. In that respect, the divergence of the roles of man in revelation and inspiration can be significant. Chapter 6 critically evaluates this difference of Henry's depiction of the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration.
CHAPTER 6

THE HUMAN ROLE IN HENRY'S DOCTRINES OF REVELATION AND INSPIRATION: AN EVALUATION

The Importance of a Consistent Portrayal of the Human Role

The previous chapter has analyzed Henry's portrayal of the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration. It has identified and described the various elements that comprise the human role in the two doctrines. This chapter evaluates the portrayal. The criteria of evaluation is based on the correspondence or consistency between the human role in revelation and that role in inspiration. The significance of harmony or consistency between the two roles is indicated by four considerations:

1. According to Henry, the content of the product of inspiration (i.e., Scripture) is identical with the content of revelation. On the one hand, man's task in revelation is to receive and convey revelation; on the other hand, his responsibility in inspiration is to transfer the content of revelation into writing. The real difference between revelation and inspiration is then in terms of form, not content. In revelation, the content (truth) is given through intelligible human speech and stored in the memory; in inspiration, the content of revelation is retrieved from memory and made available in written form. That

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1See pp. 215-19 above; see also pp. 67-70 above.
being the case, man's role in these phenomena should likewise correspond to the degree of
the identicalness of their content.

2. God has adapted the content of revelation to man's nature so that man can relate
to it meaningfully. Revelation's nature is so compatible with man's nature that he can
receive it with his will and conscience. Because revelation is rational, man's rational mind
can likewise understand it. The propositional character of revelation likewise helps him to
receive its truths in his own language, and share them with others. If during revelation
man employs competently his different capacities to receive and convey revelation, so
should he also be expected to use those very capacities and carry out his role with equal or
similar competency at the stage of inspiration.

3. God has created man for fellowship and communication.\(^1\) This implies that the
capability for communication is something natural to man. If revelation has already been
tailor-made for him, then his ability to communicate it either orally or in writing should be
one that can be carried out in a somewhat independent manner.

4. Man was divinely prepared for the task of inspiration. The preparation itself
points to his furnishing and equipping beyond that which he has already been naturally
endowed with. During inspiration man should then all the more be able to carry out the
task of writing the contents of revelation with a facility that is reminiscent of that displayed
at the time of reception and conveyance of revelation.

\(^1\)See pp. 61, 103, 170-71 above.
Nature and Function as Criteria of Evaluation

This evaluation follows a comparison and contrast of the human role in the doctrines of revelation and inspiration. To proceed with such a task, one needs a criterion or perhaps a set of criteria by which to verify similarity and contrast. Since the evaluation pertains to Henry's own presentation, it is necessary that the criterion/criteria be identified from within his own exposition of the doctrines of revelation and inspiration.

In this instance, nature and function (or purpose) have been identified and adopted as the criteria. Their adoption is based upon Henry's emphasis that both revelation and inspiration are meant for man. If the purpose of revelation is to serve man, then it would necessarily have to be given in a form that he can assimilate. Thus, human nature would have to be taken into consideration. Revelation's purpose would therefore have to be adjusted to man's nature. Similarly, his role in revelation would likewise have to be determined by the nature of revelation because he could be expected to participate in it only if revelation itself is of the type that man can actually be intelligently involved in. The case with man's place in inspiration is similar. If the purpose of inspiration does not respect man's nature, then neither can he be engaged in it authentically. Therefore inspiration's nature will also have to be of the kind that facilitates man's mindful participation in it. Only when nature and function are properly correlated can one say that revelation and inspiration have realized their goal.
Furthermore, the use of nature and function as criteria is equally significant when considered from the standpoint of Henry as an apologist.\(^1\) In fact, his presentation of the doctrines of revelation and inspiration is made apologetically. Accordingly, his manner of exposition of these doctrines is characterized by a consciousness of and reaction to other competitive views that he strongly disagrees with—particularly the neoorthodox view.\(^2\) And Henry does that by singling out Karl Barth as the focal point of attack.\(^3\)

The Barthian or neoorthodox view of revelation described as subjective, irrational,\(^4\) noncognitive,\(^5\) non-propositional,\(^6\) and continuous—and of inspiration that locates in the reader and hearer,\(^7\) is seen by Henry as dangerous to the cause of Christianity because it

\(^1\)Patterson (\textit{CFH}, 163) considers Henry as an instinctive apologist.

\(^2\)Johnson observed that neoorthodoxy has been Henry's main target of apologetical attack throughout his literary career (Johnson, 210; see also Patterson, \textit{CFH}, 137, and Cross, 127). See GRA 5:100 where Henry dismisses the neoorthodox view of the Bible as fallible, and holds that if it is accepted, it would have resulted in dissolving the authority of the written revelation into a vague mysticism (Henry, \textit{Fifty Years}, 101-02). Note: According to Harold J. Ockenga neoorthodoxy is a new form of liberalism (see Harold J. Ockenga, "From Fundamentalism, Through New Evangelicalism, to Evangelicalism," in \textit{Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith}, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer [New York: Thomas Nelson, 1978], 41).

\(^3\)See notes 3 and 4, p. 93; pp. 93-96, and 160-61 above.

\(^4\)It is probably because Henry considers the neoorthodox view of God as a "stuttering God" that revelation from such a God is bound to be irrational (Henry, "The God of the Bible vs. Naturalism," 232).

\(^5\)The consequence of a noncognitive revelation is theological suicide (Cross, 127; based on Henry's correspondence with Cross).

\(^6\)See note 1, p. 94 above, where we are told that Henry regards Barth as the most influential 20th-century theologian in encouraging the rejection of propositional revelation (see also GRA 1:192-93).

\(^7\)GRA 4:136.
undermines the religion's epistemological foundation and authority. To solve that problem Henry argues strongly for a rejection of the Barthian teaching and presses for the espousal of the evangelical—which he also calls the "biblical"—view of revelation described as rational, objective, propositional, inscripturated, and once-for-all,¹ and of inspiration which focuses on the text rather than on the writer, hearer, or reader.² The rejection of the Barthian concept of revelation and inspiration also leads Henry to reject Barth's doctrine of man³ and his portrayal of the human role in revelation and inspiration.

Henry's line of defense for the evangelical position takes two forms: first, he makes a painstaking clarification of the nature of revelation, inspiration, and man so that their superiority against the neoorthodox view is based on scriptural grounds.⁴ Second, Henry shows a serious concern for the function of revelation, inspiration, and human beings in God's great plan of salvation. The significance of nature and function is indicated by correlating them, where function is adjusted to, dependent upon, or determined by nature.

In the interest of clarifying the relationship between function and nature as well as their significance for the evaluation, Henry's correlation of these is provided herewith.

¹See pp. 82, 85 above.
²See note 2, p. 46 above; pp. 107-08 and note 7, p. 123 above.
³See pp. 163-66 above; cf. note 5, p. 160 above.
⁴See chapters 2-4 of this dissertation where Henry clarifies his doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and man.
Function of Revelation and Nature of Man

1. Revelation discloses God's existence, because man by nature cannot know divine existence independent of God's disclosure.

2. Revelation shows God's nature and ways, because if man cannot know God's existence without divine disclosure then, a fortiori, he cannot know God's nature and ways either.

3. Revelation discloses divine will, purpose, and truths to and for man's benefit, because in his finite and sinful state man cannot know them, let alone create them.

4. Revelation appeals intellectually to man's mind, because it is rational and he is rational.

5. Revelation addresses man propositionally, because man is a speech-using creature.

6. Revelation informs man's need of salvation, because he is a sinner.

1Chapters 2-5 have already dealt with nature and function of revelation, inspiration, and man. What is being indicated here is a recollection of what has already been provided in those chapters.

2See pp. 57, 62-63 above.

3See p. 57 above.

4See note 3, 161 above; p. 168 above.

5See note 1, p. 44 above; note 2, p. 76 above; 182 above.

6See pp. 73-77 above.

7See pp. 77-82, 215-19 above

8See pp. 103 above; note 3, 172 above; and pp. 178-79.
7. Revelation penetrates man's mind, will, and conscience,¹ because God made him a responsible moral agent who needs to be informed before he is judged.²

8. Revelation respects man's freedom, because man is a will-endowed being who can accept or reject revelation.³

Function of Man and Nature of Revelation

1. Man does not and cannot create revelation or truth, because it is transcendent or divinely originated.⁴

2. Man receives revelation from God,⁵ because revelation is shareable.⁶

3. Man understands revelation,⁷ because it is rational and because he is rational.⁸

4. Man communicates revelation, because it is conceptual-propositional,⁹ and because it is given for humanity in their predicament.¹⁰

¹See p. 201 above.
²See pp. 60, 174, 197 above.
³See pp. 201-203 above.
⁴See pp. 44, 150, 186-94 above.
⁵See pp. 62-63, 186-90 above.
⁶See pp. 211-14 above.
⁷See pp. 44, 48, note 6, p. 75; note 2, p. 175 above; 208-11 above.
⁸See pp. 73-77 above.
⁹See p. 206 above.
¹⁰See pp. 42, 195-96 above.
5. Sinful man revolts against revelation, because coming from God, it is holy, accusing, and demanding.¹

Function of Inspiration and Nature of Man

Prior to considering the function or purpose of inspiration, we need to point out Henry's emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the agent of inspiration. It is he who, decades before the event of inspiration, prepares man thoroughly for it, over a long period of time. The preparation implies that man is not inherently qualified to carry out the task of inspiration. During the writing process, the Holy Spirit energizes, influences, guides, supervises, and controls the writer. He brings to man's memory all the things Jesus said and did, because finite and sinful man cannot retain them to the degree that God requires. He also expands man's comprehension of revelation. Such actions of the Holy Spirit upon the human agent during inspiration are indispensable because:

1. Inspiration's primary task is to inscripturate revelation—a task which sinful and erring man cannot carry out to God's expectation of inerrancy.²

2. Inspiration helps man with the choice of words in writing the truths of revelation, because he is finite and erring and may consequently make a poor selection of words.³

¹See pp. 103, 148-49, 171, 178-79

²See pp. 102, 228, 112-15 above.

³See pp. 107, 234-35 above.
3. Inspiration guarantees inerrancy\(^1\) of inscripturated revelation, because by
definition, sinful and fallible man cannot, on his own, record revelation inerrantly.\(^2\)

4. Inspiration makes revelation available for posterity (permanence)\(^3\) in objective,
written form, because man cannot mentally retain revelation accurately and permanently
over a protracted period of time.\(^4\)

5. Inspiration produces Scripture or inscripturated revelation\(^5\) to serve as final
authority for individual Christians and the church,\(^6\) because man is unable to fashion truth
on his own and therefore cannot stake his claim to final authority.\(^7\)

\(^1\)See pp. 112-13. It is significant to note that in Henry's 25-page answer to the
question: "Who are the evangelicals?" three-fourths of the space has been used for the
defense of inerrancy as the proper character of inspired Bible to which evangelicals
subscribe. (see Henry, "Who Are the Evangelicals?" 69-94). This points to the fact that
Henry correlates inspiration with inerrancy, where the latter is treated as an implicate of the
comments on inerrancy are deferred to the latter part of this chapter.

\(^2\)See note 2, p. 233 above.

\(^3\)See pp. 219-20 above.

\(^4\)See p. 220 above; see also GRA 3:91 and GRA 4:36, 26.

\(^5\)See p. 45 above; GRA 3:96.

\(^6\)See p. 98 above.

\(^7\)See note 1, p. 44 above; note 5, 167 above; and p. 182 above.
Function of Man and Nature of Inspiration

1. Man does not and cannot generate inspiration from within himself, because that phenomenon is not natural but supernatural.¹

2. Man inscripturates revelation faithfully and inerrantly, because inspiration, being a supernatural influence and a power over him, is able to achieve inerrancy despite his fallibility.²

3. Man yields to inspiration for the correct choice of words during writing,³ because being a divine activity, inspiration is able to accomplish that quality of choice which finite, sinful, and erring man cannot.⁴

4. Man is supposed to reproduce revelation in unerring written form, but he is unable to recall that which has been revealed because his finiteness and sinful limitations have adversely affected his memory power. He therefore needs the supernatural power of inspiration to do the recalling.⁵

5. Man is to express the truths of revelation through carefully chosen words so that its transmission is executed accurately. But his depraved nature prevents him from conceiving such words, leading him to rely on inspiration for the words.⁶

¹See p. 107; see also pp. 225-26.
²See p. 233 above.
³See p. 236 above.
⁴See pp. 234-35 above.
⁵See p. 236 above.
⁶See note 1, p. 126 above.
A careful look at the correlation of nature and function shows that a harmony is evident when man’s nature and function in revelation are considered within that phenomenon’s nature and function. A similar harmony or correspondence also prevails within the phenomenon of inspiration. However, this correspondence seems to break down the moment human nature and function in revelation are correlated with, or related to, his nature and function in inspiration. Since the importance of the presence of a correspondence between the two roles has already been indicated, I now show how Henry’s portrayal of the human role in revelation does not correspond with his depiction of that role in inspiration. This is done by comparing and contrasting the two roles in table 1.

Except for entries number 1 and 11, which show varying degrees and forms of similarity between Henry’s depiction of the human role in revelation and inspiration, the rest of the entries clearly indicate a significant difference of that depiction.

At the revelation level, man is presented as having the natural capacity to receive and convey revelation independent of any supernatural help. The man that we find in inspiration, on the other hand, is one who is naturally unqualified. He is full of sinful defects. He needs first to be subjected to a long period of training and preparation before he can assume the responsibility of a writer.

Whereas in revelation (#2) man receives vital information from God, in inspiration, man engages himself in writing down the given revelation. At the level of revelation man is depicted as one naturally equipped for the event (#3), but in inspiration he is portrayed as

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1 See pp. 244-45.

2 For the table, see pp. 254-56 above.
## TABLE 1
### COMPARISON OF MAN'S ROLE IN REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Man's Role in Revelation</th>
<th>Man's Role in Inspiration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Revelation is a transcendent activity. By nature, finite and sinful man is incapable of such an activity. Therefore man has no part in the inception of revelation (see pp. 186-90 above).</td>
<td>1. Inspiration is transcendent activity. Accordingly, man has no part or access to it unless God himself makes it available to him (see pp. 221-22 above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Man receives divine information or truths from God (see pp. 186, 205 above).</td>
<td>2. Man does not receive any new truth or revelation. His duty is to inscripturate the truth/revelation already given (see p. 225 above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Man is naturally qualified to receive and convey revelation (see pp. 196-99, 211-13 above).</td>
<td>3. Man receives supernatural influence, guidance, and superintendency from the Holy Spirit as he writes or inscripturates the truths of revelation. Such a supernatural enablement is necessary because man is not naturally qualified to write revelation (see p. 233-34 above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Man engages his will, conscience, linguistic capacity, and reason freely and independently, though at times reluctantly, to receive and process revelation (see pp. 199-211 above)</td>
<td>4. Man's independence and freedom seem to be restrained by the overwhelming influence, superintendence, and control of the Holy Spirit (see pp. 228-29 above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Man uses his will in the reception of revelation (see pp. 200-01 above). This implies that he makes a conscious decision whether or not to respond to revelation and its demands. Man can turn down that privilege. In fact, his tendency—as in the case of receiving general revelation—is to rebel against revelation. Hence, he has to be invaded and bombarded with revelation in order that he may not be left with any excuse for not responding to it (see pp. 62, 64 above; note 2, p. 172 above). Such a situation indicates not only man's active involvement in revelation but his freedom in it as well.</td>
<td>5. Man's will is not mentioned. Is it conditioned by the preparation and overwhelmed by the Spirit?</td>
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**Table 1—Continued.**

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<td>6.</td>
<td>Man uses conscience for receiving the moral elements of revelation. Thereafter, the conscience can regard or disregard the moral terms of revelation (see pp. 201-203 above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Man's linguistic capacity receives revelation's truths in the way one normally receives information, because revelation comes to him verbally and propositionally by means of God's speaking in the language that man understands (see pp. 201-04 above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Man's reason understands the content of revelation. That understanding does not come as a result of faith. The rationality of revelation, plus the rational nature of his own mind makes this comprehension a reality. Man's understanding of revelation is identical (not equal) with God's understanding of it. Furthermore, man's grasp of revelation is so perspicuous that he can make it clear to others (see p. 194 above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The lucidity of revelation to man's mind indicates that his grasp of revelation is inerrant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Man remembers what has been revealed to him. The apostles, for example, could recite from memory Jesus's sayings and teachings (see pp. 215-16 above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Man receives special revelation in a once-for-all manner and not repeatedly. Further, that reception is limited only to the prophets and apostles. There is to be no more revelation until the eschaton (see pp. 83-84 above).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6. Conscience is not acknowledged.

7. Man depends upon the Holy Spirit for words to be used during writing (see pp. 107, 234-35 above). What happens to his linguistic capacity?

8. Man's grasp of revelation is inadequate, thus making it necessary for the Holy Spirit to help him have a full understanding of revelation by sharing His mind with the writer (see p. 231 above; GRA 3:91).

9. Man's writing of revelation would have been errant had it not been for the Spirit's safeguarding and supervision that results in an inerrant Scripture (see note 3, 106 above, and 112-13 above).

10. The Holy Spirit brings back to memory all that Jesus said, taught, and did (see p. 231 above). The memory that has thus far retained revelation is inadequate.

11. Man receives inspiration only during the written transmission of revelation. That reception, moreover, is limited only to the prophets and apostles, and does not continue to the present day even on a sporadic basis (see pp. 47, 85 above; and GRA 4:154).
one lacking the necessary qualifications for the task. During revelation (#4) man is presented as one who functions independently and competently, whereas at the stage of inspiration he is seen as passive and overwhelmingly dependent upon the Holy Spirit. In revelation we see man engaging his will in the reception of revelation (#5); with it he can choose either to accept or disregard revelation. He can decide to submit to its terms or rebel against it. Man also uses his conscience (#6) in discerning the moral elements and implications of revelation because by virtue of creation, he is inherently equipped to do that.\(^1\) In fact, the moral voice of revelation is so clear to the conscience that the latter is left with one of two choices: either to validate or suppress that voice. In inspiration, on the other hand, neither the will nor the conscience is mentioned. The way the Holy Spirit deals overwhelmingly with man could betray the possibility of a divine disregard of human conscience and will, thus resulting in a violation of the human person where man is made to be less in inspiration than what is acknowledged of him at the level of revelation.

\(^1\)See pp. 201-03 above.
Henry also points to the propositional (verbal) nature of revelation (#7) that enables man to receive it. That is, revelation is divinely imparted in human speech or language,\(^1\) and man understands it just as he normally does in a conversation with another human being. This means that in revelation man is God's communication partner. Since man is naturally equipped with linguistic and propositional capacities and these are needed in writing, it is expected that those faculties be equally used during inspiration. But such is not the case. Rather, at this juncture, man is depicted as totally incapable of writing by himself the truths of revelation without the comprehensive help of the Holy Spirit.

If revelation is heard in his own language and grasped by reason alone, why can it not be expressed in written propositions on the basis of reason alone? If man can be trusted to receive and convey revelation, can he not be relied upon to put in writing without having to be supernaturally controlled all the way to words?\(^2\) If man receives revelation

\(^1\)See pp. 204-05.

\(^2\)Emphasis mine. In fairness to Henry, it must be acknowledged that he denies that the Bible writers functioned as amanuenses and stenographers (see p. 228 above). That is, Henry rejects a mechanical or dictational view of inspiration (see p. 106 above; see also Henry, "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," 45). The question, however, is whether he follows that through. For instance, how is one to understand Henry's emphasis that the "verbal linguistic formulation" of Scripture is a result of the "pneumatic activity and initiative of God" (see p. 234 above)? Or that both the thoughts and words of Scripture are a divine creation, and product of God's breath (ibid.)? Or that despite the divine-human confluence, both words and thoughts are a divine product? (see p. 235 above). Again, how is one to regard his emphasis that the writers were guided by the Holy Spirit "in the choice of the words they used" (see p. 234 above)? In fact, in one place Henry surmises the modus operandi of inspiration as follows: "It could either be a safeguarding from error in thought or word, or divine superintendence in the choice of words, or dictation or varied combinations of these and other possibilities" (Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 77).

Does not such a presentation of the human part in inspiration betray some form of a dictation? James Leo Garrett acknowledges that those who hold to verbal inspiration with inerrancy cannot avoid the charge that they actually espouse the dictation theory of inspiration (James Leo Garrett, Jr., Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangel-
authoritatively, inerrantly, and propositionally, and understands as well as remembers that which has been revealed, it seems surprising that he is not allowed to communicate or participate in an active and personally authentic manner in the origination of Scripture. I grant that the mode of relation between human nature and function in revelation can be different from that in inspiration because the activities are different. However, to portray (in inspiration) a human being with a different nature, and ignore the potentially positive contribution to writing by reason, memory, man's linguistic capacity, and the propositional as well as the cognitive transparency of revelation, is suspect.

Further, one may also grant that writing is not the same as speaking, one may not always be able to execute the two with equal skill. Yet in view of the identity of content or substance between revelation and inspiration, one questions if it is necessary for Henry to draw such a sharp contrast between human nature and function in revelation and human nature and function in inspiration. For instance, we know that in order to be a competent writer one needs to: (1) understand the subject matter; (2) have an ability to retain it in his memory, and (3) acquire an adequate command of the language in which that subject is to be expressed. In our observation of man's nature and function in revelation, we find all the above are clearly present in man, as shown by the fact that he (1) understands the message.

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Trembath, likewise, says that regardless of what the advocates of verbal inspiration say, what they teach concerning inspiration is in all respects dictational (Trembath, 189). After all, is not the writing down of words of another person the essence of dictation? In such a situation the writer cannot claim authorship for what he writes, nor a significant contribution to the product. Because of Henry's emphasis on word inspiration, one then wonders with Trembath if he has fallen into an evangelical camp that denies the word 'dictation' but not its effects (Trembath, 183).

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1See pp. 21-16 above.
of revelation, (2) remembers it, and (3) elucidates or explains it to others. Whereas Henry acknowledges the efficient, independent function of these human faculties in revelation, he has not done so in his doctrine of inspiration.

In revelation man is depicted as one who has a mind or reason capable of recognizing and comprehending the revealed truths (#8). His cognitive grasp of revelation is so satisfactory that he is able to elucidate it.¹ In inspiration, on the other hand, man needs the Holy Spirit to help him with the understanding of revelation. The question is, what happens during inspiration to human reasoning that was capably functioning in revelation? Has something gone wrong with it so that man now needs the Holy Spirit to bring him the comprehension? If human reason which is unaffected by sin can perform well in revelation, must it not also remain unaffected by sin in inspiration and perform just as well? It seems incongruous to point to man's sinfulness as cause for his inability to execute his role competently in inspiration, and then at the same time stress his utter competence in revelation because sin has not affected reason. Is it not possible that one faculty effective in the task of grasping revelation could retain the same measure of aptitude for inspiration as well?

The necessity for such a wide difference between the human role in revelation and his role in inspiration is also questionable when viewed from Henry's emphasis on the integral and unitary nature of man's being.² How can the "awesome fact of human

¹See p. 208 above.
²See pp. 170-71 above.
depravity” not have affected man’s mind so that he does not need supernatural help in this lucid understanding of revelation? Being the same person in both revelation and inspiration, how can the individual portrayed in inspiration, as affected by sin and all its defects, be barely affected by them during revelation so that he can grasp it inerrantly? Does Henry’s admission that the Fall affects the entirety of man’s being (his volition, affection, and intellection) not call for a similar help from the Holy Spirit during revelation as during inspiration? The two tasks of grasping revelation and then communicating it—either orally or in writing—are so closely tied together that one directly depends on the other. To take the risk at the level of revelation and then to refuse to do the same at the level of inspiration is misleading, at best.

Reasons for the Inconsistency of the Human Role

In order to be fair with Henry as well as help the reader understand how the inconsistency in question could have come about, this section identifies some possible reasons for the inconsistency. Since evaluating the reasons themselves goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, I leave to the reader to judge for himself/herself whether those reasons are indeed valid so as to justify Henry’s discrepant depiction of the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration. In this instance, three reasons are suggested: (1) a reaction to Karl Barth; (2) the inerrancy of written revelation or Scripture; and (3) the authority of Scripture.

2GRA 1:226.
A Reaction to Karl Barth

We have noted that Henry presents his doctrines of revelation and inspiration with an apologetic spirit. He does that in at least two ways: by showing the advantages of espousing the evangelical view of revelation and inspiration, and by showing the dangers of the Barthian teaching of these doctrines.¹ Since Henry’s reaction to Barth is under consideration, it is to this that I now turn.

Fackre pointed out that Henry’s engagement with Barth’s thought has been both intensive and extensive.² In some instances Barth is cited favorably, but in most cases, he

¹See pp. 160-64 above.

²Fackre, 592, n. 14; see also Mohler, Baptist Theologians, 524; 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), 92; and notes 3 and 4, p. 93 above). For a concise presentation of Henry’s criticism and consequent rejection of Barth's theology, see Richard Albert Mohler, Jr., "Evangelical Theology and Karl Barth: Representative Models of Response" [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989], 116-134; but for a mediating presentation of the same issue, see Cross, 108-17; see also the criticisms of Henry’s reading of Barth by James D. Smart, review of GRA 1 & 2, Theology Today 34 [July 1977]: 213; and Ramm, "Good Thinking!” 63).

Henry had met Barth in person. His first encounter with him turned out to be a memorable one, not just for Henry himself but for the rest of those present with him that evening of 1962, during the question-and-answer session with Karl Barth at George Washington University. After having introduced himself as editor of Christianity Today, Henry asked Barth whether the resurrection of Jesus Christ was newsworthy for the news media. Piqued by the way the question was framed, Barth reacted: "Did you say Christianity Today or Christianity Yesterday?" The 200 academicians and journalists spontaneously responded with laughter. In response, Henry replied, "Yesterday, Today, and Forever." More laughter broke out (see Carl F. H. Henry, "My Encounter with Karl Barth," TSF Bulletin 9 [May-June 1986]: 10; or Henry, Confessions, 211). His subsequent meetings with Barth in Germany, however, were private and interview-like. For that matter, Henry had also met Bultmann. Comparing the two, Henry said, "Whenever I conversed with Karl Barth I had the clear sense that, however flawed was Barth’s dialectical theology, I was in the presence of a believer in the gospel. Bultmann, by contrast, had de mythologized the gospel, and seemed to lack the joy and buoyancy of Christian faith.
has been the target of Henry's criticism. In Henry's estimate, Barth is the one 20th-century theologian responsible for and most influential in advocating irrational revelation and disavowing propositional revelation.\(^1\) Henry also regards Barth as the "progenitor of the advocates of secular Christianity which . . . abandons modern man to an empirical scientism by denying that valid truths about God can be propositionally known."\(^2\) Henry likewise holds Barth responsible for the rejection of the Christian view of God by death-of-God theologians.\(^3\) Without a doubt, the core of Henry's criticism pertains to Barth's doctrine of revelation, which Henry sees as undermining evangelicalism.\(^4\) Acceptance of Barthian or neoorthodox view of revelation calls for "a thoroughgoing transformation of evangelical beliefs article by article."\(^5\) Actually, in Henry's eyes, the entire neoorthodox or dialectical theology poses a threat to evangelicalism, and Barth is at the very center as he is its champion.\(^6\)

Based on the above observation of Henry's attitude toward Barth, it seems that Henry's stress on man's natural capability and readiness for receiving and conveying revelation has been intensified by his reaction to Barth's stress on man's total corruption.


\(^1\)GRA 5:365; GRA 3:466.
\(^2\)Hutcheson, 92.
\(^3\)GRA 1:192.
\(^4\)Mohler, *Baptist Theologians*, 524.
\(^5\)Henry, *Fifty Years*, 37.
\(^6\)GRA 1:188.
and his natural inability to receive God's revelation or word.\textsuperscript{1} Barth's emphasis on man's epistemic discontinuity with God and his subsequent natural unpreparedness for revelation\textsuperscript{2} is countered by man's readiness for revelation in Henry. The human incapability to hear and receive God's revelation and Word\textsuperscript{3} leads Barth to stress divine preparation of man by furnishing him with the gifts of faith and grace so that he can be ready for the revelatory encounter with God.\textsuperscript{4} Thus, it is God who creates the conditions in man who makes the experience of revelation possible.\textsuperscript{5} By pointing to the will, conscience, reasoning power, linguistic capacity, and memory as avenues through which man capably receives as well as conveys God's revelation, Henry indicates that he outrightly rejects Barth's doctrine of man, let alone his portrayal of the human role in revelation and inspiration. So whereas Barth emphasizes complete human passivity and incompetency in revelation, Henry underscores human competency and active involvement in the phenomenon.

When it comes to inspiration, however, Barth's depiction of the human role is one characterized by freedom and intense involvement. Man is free to write whatever he understands about the revelatory encounter. He can use all the resources at his command. However, because what he writes is only a human witness to revelation,\textsuperscript{6} that witness is

\textsuperscript{1}See pp. 154 above; see also note 1, p. 239 above.

\textsuperscript{2}See pp. 154-55 above.

\textsuperscript{3}CD I/1, 191-93 (ET, 1975 ed.).

\textsuperscript{4}See note 7, p. 155 above, note 1, p. 239 above.

\textsuperscript{5}See note 1, p. 239 above.

\textsuperscript{6}CD I/2, 463. Although the Bible is only a witness to revelation, yet because revelation is the content of the witness, the Bible is therefore indissolubly united with
naturally bound to be imperfect and fallible, containing perhaps historical, scientific, and theological errors, as well as contradictions and overlappings that are likely to offend and put off a modern reader.\(^1\) In Henry, on the other hand, God does not allow man to inscripturate revelation on his own. To give him that freedom would be too risky. It would result in transferring some of his own weaknesses and errors into Scripture and thereby lose its purity, credibility, and subsequently, its authority. Hence, during the writing process, sinful and erring man needs to be prepared for the task and placed directly under the Spirit's influence, control, and supervision. This superintendence extends even to the choice of words. Thus, Barth's portrayal of man during the writing of Scripture as a free, active, but erring writer is changed in Henry to one who is a totally dependent, passive, Spirit-controlled, and error-protected writer.

The above scenario indicates that Henry's portrayal of man in revelation seems to harmonize more with Barth's depiction of man's role in inspiration where both emphasize man's active and independent participation. However, viewed from a consideration of consistency of the depiction of the human role, Barth can be said to be more consistent than Henry because the former still maintains man's defectiveness at both levels of revelation which cannot be had or apprehended apart from its witness (ibid.). As such, Barth also holds that the Bible can become the Word of God and when that takes place the Bible is also at that juncture the Word of God (ibid., 502). To identify the Bible at face value as the Word of God or revelation is not appropriate for Barth because he sees it as doing away with the free grace by which the Bible becomes the Word of God. The Bible becomes the word of God not because of its words but because of God's action, decision, and work through it (ibid., 522-23, 516).

\(^1\)CD I/2, 501, 507, 509-10. Pinnock observes that although Barth speaks of errors and contradictions in the Bible, yet he did that only in principle. In practice he treated Scripture as inerrant (see Pinnock, "Three Views of the Bible," 37).
and inspiration. Man is so corrupt and defective that he is hardly ready or naturally qualified for revelation. This is also his situation during inspiration. What he writes reflects human shortcomings and limitations so that Scripture is ridden with errors and contradictions.1

Henry, on the other hand, has not maintained this consistency about the human role in revelation and inspiration. In revelation, man is depicted as independent, competent, and ready for the unerring reception and communication of revelation, but in inspiration this very man is presented as one totally unqualified and unprepared so that the only way he can perform the task satisfactorily is by means of a prior, divinely orchestrated preparation and training, and the Holy Spirit's taking control of man through supernatural influence, guidance, and supervision during writing. In so portraying the human role in inspiration, Henry has, at the same time, failed to maintain a unified view of human nature.

The question is whether or not Henry's inconsistency could have arisen from his apologetical zeal and burden. That is, could the human role presented by Henry be a result of an overreaction to Karl Barth's doctrines of revelation, man, and Scripture? Could Henry's attempt to rescue man from Barth's consignment of him to total depravity and hence moral unaccountability2 have led Henry to emphasize man's independent, competent,

1By emphasizing Scripture as a human product Barth feels that he is trying to save Scripture from those who make it a docetic document and a "paper Pope" (CD 1/2, 525).

2Stress on man's total depravity implies man's total inability to respond to God and his revelation. In such a situation man can be saved only through God's arbitrary action. Henry sees Barth as emphasizing precisely this. Salvation for man comes not on the basis of a response to God's grace, but on the eternal covenant of reconciliation made between God the Father and God the Son before creation and the Fall (CD IV/1, 22-34, 290-92). This leads Henry to conclude that Barth is an advocate of universalism or salvation of every human being irrespective of his/her relationship to Christ. Henry rejects this
and inerrant reception of revelation and, hence, man's answerability before God?\(^1\) Or, is the inconsistency also caused by Henry's overzealous attempt to save Scripture from Barth's reduction of it to a mere human and fallible witness to revelation? And is not the rejection of the Barthian view of revelation partly influential for Henry's description of man as one who is detached, passive, greatly dependent upon, and controlled by the Holy Spirit so that what he wrote is inerrant, objective revelation?

While the above questions suggest a connection between the inconsistency under question and Henry's overreaction to Barth's doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and man, yet we cannot rest the case just on this. The most we can say is that the connection is a possibility or perhaps even a probability. Two other reasons seem to bear more directly on the inconsistency: (1) inerrancy of Scripture and (2) authority of Scripture.

Inerrancy of Scripture

We have noted that inspiration (in Henry) is the divinely chosen means by which revelation is written down. The need of inspiration for inscriptionation of revelation strongly points to the importance of revelation itself. The value of revelation for man is so enormous that it needs to be carefully preserved. This is done in two ways: (1) the oral form of revelation is converted into a written one in the form of Scripture;\(^2\) and (2) the

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\(^1\)See pp. 62, 64, 85-86, 106 above.

\(^2\)Henry recognizes that much of revelation was formerly in oral form. This includes Christ's instruction to his disciples (GRA 4:32, 38). But oral tradition apart from the written one would, over several generations, experience change and corruption and lose its
conversion was executed under inspiration because that alone can safeguard the writer from
transporting error into Scripture. In other words, the need for an inerrantly written
revelation or Scripture calls for inspiration of the writer and especially his words.
Inerrancy is therefore an implication of inspiration.\(^1\) In fact, it is implicitly taught, logically
deduced, and a necessary correlate of Scripture as the inspired Word of God.\(^2\)

When Henry refers to inerrancy he means that Scripture in whole and in its parts\(^3\) is
free from all falsehood, mistake, or error.\(^4\) This absence of error, however, is not to be
understood in terms of a scientific precision and exactitude in measurements, facts, or
wording of a quotation. Rather, inerrancy means that Scripture speaks truthfully in
religious and moral questions as well as in statistical, historical, and geographical matters.\(^5\)
For instance, Henry argues that if geographical and historical details in Scripture are untrue
then there is no reason why the events or doctrines correlated with them should be true.\(^6\) If

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\(^1\)GRA 4:193; Henry in Michaelson and Wallis, 27.

\(^2\)GRA 4:168.

\(^3\)GRA 4:133.

\(^4\)See p. 113 above.

\(^5\)GRA 4:178, 181, 183, 205, 207, 229; see also p. 113 above.

\(^6\)GRA 4:178.
we doubt the statistical details of the Bible we likewise have no sound basis to determine that Stephen, or the apostles, or Moses and the prophets sought to tell the truth factually in other respects.\(^1\) Hence, if error is admitted in one area of Scripture, there is no guarantee that one's inclination will cease from looking for errors in some other areas of Scripture. Consequently, epistemological uncertainty, frustration, and instability are likely the result,\(^2\) and one's confidence in, as well as efficacy of, the Bible itself is undermined.\(^3\) Therefore Henry agrees with Lindsell who holds that if inspiration allows for a possibility of error

\(^1\)Ibid., 181. "If error permeated the original, we would never under any circumstances arrive at an inerrantly authoritative text but only at an older one" (ibid., 241), and that would not bring us any nearer to the truth of God (ibid., 240). Inerrancy of the originals is also mandatory for Henry because without that quality there is no way of verifying the corruption of the text brought about by the alleged discrepancy of the copies (ibid.). That is, only inerrant originals can help us establish an error in the copy (ibid., 239, see also Henry, Capital Baptist, GRA 2:14). If copies and originals are alike errant, then there is no means by which the church can distinguish truth from error. In such a situation, the church is predisposed to tout its particular version of Scripture as more superior than the original (ibid., 241). By the same token, there is also no basis why one text should be preferred over the other (GRA 2:14). Moreover, to oppose the notion of inerrant inspired Scripture is to "destroy the objective truth of the Christian religion, trivialize theology, and lead finally to skepticism" (GRA 4:193). Without inerrancy, one is hard put to ascertain whether the Bible is speaking the truth without mixture of uncertainty and doubt (Henry, Capital Baptist; GRA 4:234, 239-40); or whether there is an identity of meaning between the copies and the originals (GRA 2:14). In Henry's opinion, then, if the doctrine of inerrancy is set aside, errancy is readily correlated with much broader spheres of conflict (GRA 4:178).

\(^2\)GRA 4:178; see also Henry, "Boundary Disputes," 25, where Henry implicitly suggests inerrancy as a necessary factor for epistemic stability in theology. Without inerrancy, evangelicalism could pass on from evolution, to revolution, and, finally, to devolution (see also Henry in Michaelson and Wallis, 27).

\(^3\)GRA 4:188, 249. Henry's argument is that in the event of Scripture losing its efficacy, it also loses its authority. But since efficacy depends on inerrancy, then authority likewise depends on inerrancy.
then it is not inspiration at all. For the same reason he also approvingly endorses John Wesley who said: "If there be one falsehood in the Book, it did not come from the God of Truth." So when Francis L. Patton suggested that it would be self-disastrous to press for detailed inerrancy of the Bible because it takes but one error to destroy one's confidence in its inspiration, Henry quips: "How often can God err and be God?" The God of truth cannot lie and thereby cannot inspire error. Only inerrant inspiration can ensure freedom

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1 GRA 4:191. Since Scripture has no error of any kind, Henry accordingly disallows the notion of limited inerrancy. He cites some examples of the consequential difficulties that would arise by accepting partial or limited inerrancy. For instance, Beegle and Marxsen's denial of the resurrection as being essential to salvation implies the questioning of Paul's authority who holds to the indispensability of Christ's resurrection for man's salvation (1 Cor 15:17). Likewise, Bloesch's shift from inerrancy to the inner testimony of the Spirit and the self-revelation of Jesus Christ leads to subjectivism, so that "no objective reason can be adduced for challenging those who choose instead to orient life to the spiritual perspective of the Koran or Zen, or for that matter of atheism and irreligion." Ridderbos's limitation of inerrancy to the ethico-religious and salvific, to the exclusion of the scientific and theological, presents a difficulty in ascertaining whether or not the ethico-religious ever permeates the scientific-theological; or whether or not salvific efficacy of Scripture can be correlated with an erroneous text. If the salvific purpose is achieved in spite of its erroneous theologico-scientific teaching, then is not salvation only an existential, internal event "unrelated to definite doctrinal conceptions?" Further, the reducing of inerrancy only to the religio-ethical teaching of the Bible might also result in giving up all those teachings that do not conform to this rule. It might present a problem of determining the precise point at which to draw the line of demarcation between the relevant and the irrelevant. Similarly, Berkouwer's limitation of inerrancy to the teleological, namely, Scripture's testimony or witness to Jesus Christ, regards propositional inerrancy as being irrelevant to this testimony. In that case "no sound reason remains for understanding 'testimony' 'to' or 'Christ' in any objectively uniform or intelligible sense." This includes the biblical testimony to Christ on which Berkouwer himself insists (see GRA 4:186-90).

2 GRA 4:191.

3 GRA 4:192-93.

of Scripture from "all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions."¹

Furthermore, if inspiration is a divine activity, then it necessarily participates in the divine character of perfection.² Henry puts this syllogistically as follows: "God does not err, God inspired Scripture, therefore Scripture is inerrant."³ In fact, it is precisely on the point of inerrancy of Scripture that Henry tells us why it is important for the Holy Spirit to exert overwhelming control and supervision over the prophets and apostles—even with respect to the use of words—during writing. Only by that manner of supernatural monitoring of human nature and operation can Scripture be expected to be error-free. When human nature and function are thus superintended by supernatural control, man cannot therefore be expected to be active or independent during the inscripturation of revelation. Thus, the man that we see at the revelation stage as active, competent, and independent is transformed at the inspiration stage to one who is passive, inadequate, and dependent.

¹GRA 4:217, emphasis mine.

²GRA 4:166. In this connection, Henry does not object to Barr's correlation of an inerrant Bible—which Barr readily debunks—with God's perfection. What Henry disapproves of is Barr's refusal to accept it as such. In Henry's eyes, it would mean that Barr would then have to choose one of the three possible alternatives: an errant Scripture which God did not inspire; an inerrant Scripture which God inspires; or an errant Scripture inspired by a God who is less than perfect. Unfortunately, "Barr opts for the last and worst of the options" (ibid.). This correlation of inerrancy with God's perfection is obviously arrived at through deduction, and not induction, which Henry admits to be the case, and in this instance, even criticizes induction in favor of deduction (see ibid., 172-174). "If all doctrines of the Christian religion were suspended on empirical considerations, then all the basic theological affirmations of the Bible would dangle indecisively in suspense" (ibid., 185).

³GRA 4:185.
Authority of Scripture

The other possible reason for this inconsistency of the human role seems to come from Henry's conviction of the unquestioned authority of Scripture. According to him, the ultimate purpose of inspiration and inerrancy is that both serve as a foundation for the authority of Scripture, which is its primary function. Therefore Scripture's first claim

1Inspiration and inerrancy expressively serve to warrant the Bible's authority. Scripture is authoritative because it is inspired. Henry says: "The Christian apostles affirmed not only the divine authority of Scripture but also its supernatural inspiration. Any repudiation of divine inspiration as a property of the biblical text they would have considered an attack on the authority of Scripture. In their view Scripture is authoritative, because divinely inspired, and as such, is divine truth" (GRA 4:68). "While the authority and the inspiration of the Bible are distinguishable doctrines, they are nonetheless correlative. The Bible is authoritative because the revealer of divine truth and redemptive grace authorized selected spokesmen to communicate his specially disclosed Word to mankind. These authoritative spokesmen, however, affirm their message to be God-breathed [inspired], that is, given by the Spirit through them" (GRA 4:71). This direct correlation of scriptural authority with inspiration means that, for Henry, no solid doctrine of biblical authority will long survive if the doctrine of scriptural inspiration is truncated or dismissed (GRA 4:71). The two—inpiration and authority—are inextricably linked together (Henry, The God Who Shows, 84). So, although authority is Scripture's primary emphasis, yet inspiration is not to be left behind because "the notion of an authoritative word . . . that isn't inspired, is out of view" (Henry in Michaelson and Wallis, 27). According to Henry, the emphasis then falls first on biblical authority, followed by the Bible's inspiration (Henry in Michaelson and Wallis, 27).

However, we must also not forget that for Henry inspiration means inerrant inspiration (emphasis mine). In his view, there is no such thing as inspired and errant Scripture. Such a view is Orwellian double-talk (Henry, "Who Are the Evangelicals?" 80). What God inspires has to be inerrant (Carl F. H. Henry, "The Bible and the Conscience of Our Age," Journal of Evangelical Theological Society 25 [December 1982]: 403). Because Henry makes an immediate and definite connection between inspiration and inerrancy, he is also able to state that biblical authority implies inerrancy (Henry in Comfort, 20; Henry, Evangelicals in Search, 54). Conversely, what is errant cannot be divinely authoritative (GRA 4:192). Henry's position is therefore clear: it is only by safeguarding the doctrine of inerrancy that one can safeguard the authority of Scripture (ibid., 192-93).

Therefore Scripture is either errant, uninspired, and unauthoritative; or inerrant, inspired, and authoritative. Thus, one can maintain the full and final authority of Scripture only to the extent that one is willing to admit its detailed inerrancy. If authority is to be
about itself is authority. This claim also comprises the "forefront" of apostolic
proclamation and kerygma.1 "My conviction is that the first thing the Bible says about
itself is not its inerrancy or inspiration but its authority."2

However important the fact of divine inspiration is for the commanding importance of
the Bible, the apostles like the prophets before them focus attention first and foremost
not on the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture but rather on its authority: what is
crucially important for the human race is that they speak God's Word not their own.3

based on truthfulness of content, then its content must necessarily be inerrant. Only logical
imprecision can begin with errancy and conclude with divine authority (ibid., 192). So,
Henry rhetorically asks: "Can we associate divine authority with anything less than verbal
inerrancy?" (GRA 4:162). If detailed inerrancy is not part of Scripture then any attempt to
maintain the truthfulness of any one aspect of Scripture is done not out of a regard for
consistency, but "solely by the act of will" (Henry, Conversations, 25; idem, Evangelicals
in Search of Identity, 55; idem, review of The Battle for the Bible, by Harold Lindsell, The
New Review of Books and Religion 1 [September 1976]: 8). However, Henry does not
agree with Lindsell that only those who hold to the doctrine of inerrancy are real
evangelicals (Henry, review of The Battle for the Bible, 7).

In this case we see Henry making two important statements: 1. There is no
correlation between errancy and authority because the two are mutually incompatible and
exclusive. "To affirm the errancy of the text but to insist on the divine authority and
reliability of the Bible requires one to impose upon the notion of biblical authority "the
death of a thousand qualifications" (GRA 4:181); 2. Inspiration necessarily implies
inerrancy. "If one accepts 'plenary' divine inspiration of Scripture . . . the doctrine of
biblical authority doubtless implies 'inerrancy' of the content" (Henry in Comfort, 20). "If
the Bible is the Word of God it is inerrant; what is errant obviously cannot be the Word of
God" (Carl F. H. Henry and others, Spectrum of Protestant Beliefs, ed. Robert Campbell

1GRA 4:27.

2Henry, Conversations, 24; see also GRA 4:41.

3GRA 4:41.
In order to have a better grasp of Henry's stress on the primary function of Scripture as authority, we need to take note of the following logical steps that leads him to this conclusion: (1) the authority of God; (2) the authority of revelation; and (3) the authority of Jesus Christ and of Scripture.

**Authority of God**

By virtue of being the creator and sustainer of all things, God alone is obviously the source of all power and authority. He is the Potter and is free to do whatever he wills with the clay of his creation. He is sovereign in creation and history. Every form of authority is derived from him. This includes the authority of human governments, angels, the antichrist, and Satan who, although he exercises and imparts limited power and authority on earth, does so only within the defining bounds of God's sovereign will and purpose. Since God is man's creator, man is ultimately answerable to God. By virtue of being the creator and sustainer, God therefore wields legitimate and final authority, and man is expected to submit to God's sovereignty. Hence, claims for the authority of

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1Pinnock also observes that Henry's main aim is to contend for the authority of the Bible above every other form of authority (Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze*, 46-48).


3GRA 4:8; GRA 5:11-12; GRA 2:24-26. God's sustaining power is expressed by Henry as "the God who stays." "Were it not for his staying power, man and the world would crumble into dust and disappear into nothingness" (GRA 5:17).

4GRA 4:24, 216.

5Ibid., 24-25.

6Ibid.
revelation and Scripture are therefore significant and legitimate only if they can be shown that they are a direct extension of his own authority.

**Authority of Revelation**

Henry asserts that one of the tragedies of the fall of man was his choice to rebel against God's will and authority and assert self-rule and self-determination. It is this act of revolt that constitutes man's sin.\(^1\) The assertion of human authority against God's authority is also seen when man sets up his varying religious and philosophical systems in lieu of God and his provision. These include communism, evolutionism, humanism, scientism, naturalism, contingency, variableness, relativism, etc.\(^2\) In the event of accepting any of these authorities, man also consciously and actively repudiates divine absolutes, revealed truths, scriptural commandments, fixed principles, and supernatural purpose, and regards them as challengers to his own autonomy and creativity.\(^3\)

The question, however, is whether man can actually shut off God and his authority from his life? Henry thinks that although man has tried to do that, yet the reality of the living, sovereign, and authority-wielding God is known through his reason, conscience, nature, and history; that is, through general revelation.\(^4\) Accordingly, man is without excuse. In other words, no matter what modern man thinks of God, his reality and authority still invade and haunt him. The fact that God gave up the unruly, wanton, and

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\(^1\)See note 4, p. 171 above; see also Henry, *Spectrum*, 41; GRA 4:11.

\(^2\)GRA 4:8-10.

\(^3\)Ibid., 10, 23.

\(^4\)Ibid., 12-13.
immoral pagans to a debased mind and improper conduct (Rom 1:28) attests his punitive judgment against the ungodly generation that repudiates his authority.\(^1\) Besides general revelation, God's authority is also manifested through special revelation in Jesus Christ and Scripture.\(^2\) In these two forms of authority God manifests himself as the transcendent sovereign positioned at the crossroad of human civilization and destiny.\(^3\)

**Authority of Jesus Christ and of Scripture**

The question that arises at this juncture is one concerning the relationship between the authority of God, of Jesus Christ, and of Scripture. Henry explains the connection as follows: God invested Jesus Christ with unlimited power and authority.\(^4\) Christ in turn shared his authority with the prophets and apostles/disciples.\(^5\) Later, he authorized them to put down his instructions, teaching, and will into written Scripture that functions as decisive authority for faith and practice.\(^6\) This order of divine authority from God, to Christ, and to Scripture has also been stated thus: "The church recognizes no ultimate authority but that of the true and living God, incarnate in Jesus Christ, known to us as Lord by the Holy Spirit, who has inspired chosen men and inscripturated God's purposes intelligibly in the sacred

\(\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{Ibid., 13.}\)

\(\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\text{Ibid.; see also pp. 70, 98, 163 above.}\)

\(\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\text{GRA 4:13.}\)

\(\text{\textsuperscript{4}}\text{Ibid., 36.}\)

\(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\text{Ibid., 27. For an elaboration of the transference of authority as described above, see also ibid., 29-30.}\)

\(\text{\textsuperscript{6}}\text{Ibid., 27. According to Henry, all the historic confessions had affirmed the authority of Scripture (ibid., 17).}\)
canonical writings.1 This statement points to two significant dimensions of divine authority: (1) the unity or synonymity of God's authority and Christ's authority; and (2) the objective and/or material expression of this divine authority in inscripturated form.

Because Christ had delegated his word and authority to the apostles as the authorized spokespersons and interpreters of his life, words, and mission,2 Henry sees little need and justification for making a differentiation between the authority of what they had written (i.e., the Bible) with that of Christ's. First of all, the reliability of Scriptural assertions is attested by the incarnate Christ; second, Scripture is, in fact, the only source of significant information we have regarding Christ's person, work, and authority, as well as his impartation of authority to his apostles.3 Hence, the difference between Christ's word and the word of Scripture is only in terms of one being the "living Word" and the other the "written Word."4 Otherwise, the authority of Christ and that of Holy Scripture

1Henry, "What Is Christianity?" 113.

2GRA 4:38.

3Ibid., 50-51, 157, 27. Henry does acknowledge that the primary concerns of Scriptures are theological and ethical, or faith and practice, with Jesus as the center (GRA 3:208; GRA 4:43), and hence, Christological in focus (GRA 4:60). Apart from the Bible, we cannot know anything about Jesus Christ, or about the necessity of faith in him (ibid., 203). But this does not mean that Scriptures give life; they witness to Jesus Christ, the life (GRA 3:31). They reveal Christ (Henry, Protestant Dilemma, 82). However, Henry also cautions that Scripture should not be reduced to Christology, because in so doing, we "marginalize the rest and compress and limit the divine disclosure" (GRA 4:60; GRA 3:208). A limited or selective use of Scripture is strongly objected to by Henry because he thinks that it "makes a mockery of divine revelation" and robs its "revelational significance" (GRA 6:57, 74).

4GRA 4:216, 203.
are one, together coalescing into a single fount of authority. Consequently, Henry attempts to underscore the finality and binding authority of the Bible, insisting that it should be regarded as if Jesus Christ had spoken, because its content was mediated by Christ himself.

For Henry, then, final authority for the church's faith and life resides in the Bible, not in any subsequent authority or tradition alongside or outside of the Bible; not even the councils of the early church had such authority. "In and by Scripture alone, the divine

1Ibid., 217.

2Ibid., 37. "The Logos is the mediating agent of all divine disclosure both to and in created reality. The Logos, or Christ the eternal Son, is the agent in divine revelation given not only in created reality, both in nature and mankind, but also in the historical manifestation of Jesus of Nazareth, and in the yet future eschatological revelation when Christ returns in glory" (GRA 3:206).

3GRA 4:39. Henry's emphasis on an objective biblical text as the basis of authority for the church leads him to an unsparing criticism of functional authority of the Bible as espoused by men like David Kelsey, James Barr, and Jack Rogers. Henry views the notion to be a product of theologization and not something which naturally comes out of Scripture, or in accord with the way Bible writers use the Bible. Nor is the functional authority of the Bible accepted by the traditional or orthodox church (ibid., 95). Henry considers that those who use the Bible only as a functional authority are devising a "sophisticated way of evading the role of Scripture as an epistemic criterion for doctrines and morals" (ibid., 10). "The functional approach can supply no objective criterion for distinguishing Jehovah Witnesses, Swedenborgians, Mormons or so-called Christian Buddhists from the New Testament church" (ibid., 95). "A merely 'functional authority' yield no directions concerning what theology is or how it is to be done, and supplies no criterion for commending or criticizing how others conceive and do it" (ibid.). "No fixed meaning survives for any doctrine whatever if the functional premise is to be consistently applied" (ibid.). "[The functional use of Bible] 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 . . . truly lives. Evangelical Christianity rightly emphasizes that the Bible functions as it does in 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 the Old Testament promise. Had liberalism and neoorthodoxy alike remained faithful to these verities, they would not have gone the way of all rubbish" (ibid., 101; italics supplied).
exousia, God's authority and power, authorizes God's people to withstand any derivative and conditional authority that contravenes what God requires.\textsuperscript{4} It is only when the Bible is accepted as "the sole rule of faith" that Christ himself is preserved as the head of the church.\textsuperscript{2} Christ rules or exercises his headship over the church\textsuperscript{3} by or through Scripture. By means of Scripture he imparts authoritative truth, issues authoritative commands, and imposes an authoritative norm by which all church pronouncements and theology must be shaped and corrected.\textsuperscript{4} Hence, no ancient tradition, or papal power, or megachurch structure should take the place of the Bible. Such was the stand of the prophets and apostles, the historic church, and the Protestant Reformers,\textsuperscript{5} and the present church is to follow likewise.\textsuperscript{6} In fact, being God's full and final revelation, the universal truth-claim of

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 40.
\item Ibid., 17.
\item Ibid., 259. "The church is neither the locus of divine revelation, nor the source of divine inspiration, nor a seat of infallibility. Rather, the church has the task of transmitting, translating, and expounding the prophetic-apostolic Scriptures" (GRA 2:15). "The Holy Scripture is the authority of God in the church, the authority of Christ in the church, the authority of the Holy Spirit in the church, the authority of the prophetic-apostolic revelation in the church" (Henry in Gaebelein, 12; see also ibid., 10-11, where Henry asserts that God's authority is expressed through the Bible).
\item William C. G. Procter, quoted in GRA 4:39; GRA 4:15; GRA 4:42, 48; Carl F. H. Henry, "Committing Seminaries to the Word of God," Christianity Today, 13 February 1976, 9. If the Bible is not taken as divine authority then it has no absolute authority. It might as well be understood as "coming from the church, and the church might be disposed to revised it. On the other hand, if the Bible is taken as divine authority, then it opens up for the possibility of reformation in the church" (Henry in Gaebelein, 12).
\item Ibid., 48.
\item Ibid., 48, 380. "The fate of the Bible is the fate of Christianity" (Henry, Evangelicals at the Brink, 13, 16; see also idem, Christian Countermoves, 28). "Destroy confidence in the Bible and you destroy Christianity" (Henry, quoted in Sharp, 83).
\end{enumerate}
the Bible should actually be exerted upon the mind and conscience of all humankind.¹ All things should be brought under the authority of the Bible.²

¹Henry, "The Priority of Divine Revelation," 78; Henry, "American Evangelicals in a Turning Time," 44. Note: The overriding emphasis of Henry in this article is the finality of Scripture, based on the assumption of its being a product of God's transcendent revelation (see ibid., 41-49).

Henry is also convinced that Western civilization and the rest of the world's civilizations find their endurance and felicity only by accepting the biblical presuppositions and worldview as their basis of operation and anchorage (see note 1, p. 87 above; GRA 4:23). "Take warning, America: to lose this Book is not simply to lose a light, but the Light, God's lamp to our feet, God's light on our pathway" (Henry, Faith at the Frontiers, 73; see also Miller, iii). Miller also pointed out that Henry joined Christopher Dawson, Richard Weaver, and Reinhold Niebuhr in a "cultural critique that views the societal rejection of Christian theology and ethics as disastrous" for the future of America as well as Western civilization as a whole (ibid.). According to White's observation, Henry's thesis of the dependence of Western civilization's well-being on biblical theism is a perpetuation of the conviction of Peter Marshall, David Manuel and Francis A. Schaeffer (see White, pp. 29-30).

²Henry, Evangelicals at the Brink, 15-16. Although traditionally, the Bible used to enjoy final authority among Protestant churches, yet with the passage of time it no longer is given that status. Henry traces the erosion of its authority to several factors, one of which is biblical criticism. As Henry sees it, biblical criticism is antipathetic to the traditional high view of Scripture and views it as simply a fallible witness (GRA 4:17). "If one asks, what, in a word, eclipses the biblical doctrine of inspiration of Scripture, what stimulated theological redefinition of inspiration in nonconceptual or existential categories, and what encouraged neo-Protestant denial of inspiration as a decisive New Testament concept, the answer is modern biblical criticism" (ibid., 75-76). "Any objective reading of the data will trace to the hydra-headed modern phenomenon of biblical criticism the spirited assaults on the doctrines of the inspiration and authority of the Bible affirmed throughout Christian centuries by all major groups in their confessions of faith" (ibid., 76). In view of its unsympathetic and negative publicity of the Bible, biblical criticism works toward the deterioration of Scripture's claim to inspiration and as such, is "destructive" to the Christian cause (Henry, "Who Are the Evangelicals?" 80; see also idem, "Henry: New 'on God' Is Man Come of Age," interview by Art Troalston, Jackson Daily News, 17 February 1979, B-Sat., Special Collections; see also GRA 4:77-80, where Henry points to linguistic and archaeological discoveries as evidences that weaken and blunt the conclusions of biblical criticism).

Other factors that undermine the authority of the Bible are: (1) Pluralistic theology as espoused by neo-Protestantism and ecumenism is responsible in undermining the normativity of Scripture (GRA 4:17). Pluralism refers to "a metaphysical theory that there are more than one or more than two kinds of ultimate reality" (WTNID, s.v. "Pluralism").
The above sketch clearly underscores Henry's conviction that authority is the primary function of Scripture. It has also been pointed out that even inspiration and inerrancy serve to promote the authority of Scripture. However, Scripture is authoritative because it is inspired; and likewise it is authoritative because it is inerrant. In the case of Henry, however, inspiration is largely understood in terms of inerrancy. Accordingly, inerrancy has been singled out as a reason for the disharmonious depiction of the human role in revelation as compared to inspiration. However, since inerrancy subserves authority, it can also be stated that authority is actually the cause for this discrepancy. Nevertheless, the relationship of authority to the discrepancy or inconsistency of the human role is mediate, not immediate as is inerrancy.

Summary Conclusion

This chapter has engaged in evaluating Carl F. H. Henry's portrayal of the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration. It begins by showing the importance of expecting consistency in Henry's portrayal of the human role within his doctrines of

According to William James, an early advocate of pluralism of this century, "ultimate reality exists distributively, as numerous qualitatively different ultimate "eaches," only one of which is God." Pluralism also points to a "tolerant attitude in which varying views are acceptable" (see *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* [1983], s.v. "Pluralism"); (2) The decision of the U.S. Supreme Court (Schempp) prohibits the Bible from being used as a divine authority, and limits it only to a literary and historical source (ibid., 18). In this way the role of the Bible in public life and affairs has been effectively curved and undermined; (3) Modern scientist's adoption of naturalistic presuppositions marginalize the supernatural in the Bible; (4) Philosophical speculations led by Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, and Kant undermine the theistic explanation of reality (ibid., 19-20).

1See note 1, p. 271 above.

2Ibid.
revelation and inspiration. The chapter also clarifies the use of nature and function as the criteria of evaluation. By means of comparison and contrast of man's role in revelation with his role in inspiration we were shown that, in Henry, nature and function of man in revelation do not correspond with nature and function of man in inspiration. In other words, Henry's portrayal of the two roles lacks consistency.

In ensuring objectivity and fairness with Henry, the chapter also seeks to understand why Henry portrays the human role in inspiration so discordantly with the one he presents in revelation. Three reasons were submitted—all of which are tied to his apologetical concerns: a reaction to Karl Barth, Henry's stress on inerrancy of Scripture, and his similar emphasis on biblical authority. The first reason attracted our attention because in his exposition of the doctrines of revelation, Barth has often been under attack. It was felt that the inconsistency could be a result of his overreaction to Barthian doctrines of revelation, man,¹ and Scripture. However, it has been pointed out that although such a suggestion is informed and reasonable, yet no direct link has been found between the inconsistency and Henry's reaction to Barth. Nevertheless, rather than rule out the connection, it is felt that it can be regarded as a real possibility.

The question of inerrancy is another reason which has also been explored. This is an unavoidable consideration because of the fact that Henry links directly the Holy Spirit's influence, control, and superintendency with inerrancy, and thereby indirectly portraying man at inspiration level as one poorly equipped so that he needed a lot of supernatural help—a depiction which is quite different from the one given in revelation. Authority was

¹See pp. 163-65 above.
presented as another reason for the inconsistency. This suggestion was considered important because Henry sees authority as the primary function of Scripture. He makes this clear when he says that Scripture's first claim about itself is not inspiration nor inerrancy but authority.\(^1\) However, we also noted that Henry makes inspiration and, particularly, inerrancy the basis of Scripture's authority.\(^2\) Inerrancy is the focal point because of the fact that Henry would not consider Scripture inspired unless inerrancy is assumed as a necessary implicate or corollary of inspiration. This means that inspiration should be construed in terms of inerrancy. But he also says that inerrancy subserves Scripture's authority. That being the case, the inconsistency directly connected with inerrancy can also be seen as being actually motivated by a greater agenda, namely, his campaign for biblical authority.

Thus far we have completed the evaluation of Carl F. H. Henry's portrayal of the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration. Chapter 7 summarizes the entire study of this dissertation and concludes with some recommendations.

\(^1\)See pp. 273-74 above.

\(^2\)See note 1, p. 271 above.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Summary Conclusion

The primary task of this dissertation was to examine the human role in Carl F. H. Henry's doctrines of revelation and inspiration. The study sought to find out whether the human role portrayed in revelation corresponds with that role portrayed in inspiration.

The study began with a brief survey of the theories of revelation and inspiration (chapter 1). The need for familiarization with the theories arises from the fact that Henry expounds those two doctrines in an apologetical fashion and, in the process, responds or reacts to those formulations that he disagrees with. Since the focus of this dissertation is on the human role, the survey was conducted with an eye on how each theory presents that role. In order to provide an appropriate backdrop and perspective for the emergence of emphasis on the human role, the divine role was also treated. This approach likewise helps one see how the human role in those theories acquired place and prominence over the divine role.

Traditional evangelical Christians consider this overemphasis on the human involvement in revelation and inspiration as characteristic of those who hold that the Bible is less than the Word of God—a position which is perceived by these Christians as undermining the authority of the Bible. Among those who share this concern is Carl
F. H. Henry. He is a major evangelical figure who deals with the problem by reclaiming the traditional teaching of revelation and inspiration, which is also regarded as biblical and in harmony with the Reformation. In so doing, he likewise addresses the human role in those doctrines.

A preliminary survey of the human role in Henry’s doctrines of revelation and inspiration indicated that his depiction of the human role in revelation does not harmonize with the one he presents in inspiration. That observation, however, needed far more ground for understanding and verification which is provided by chapters 2-4, where Henry’s doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and man were examined. The doctrine of man was approached from the perspective of revelation and inspiration, and hence, bears the title, "The Divine-Human Point of Contact in Henry’s Doctrine of Man." This approach ensures a cohesive treatment of the human role under question.

To further clarify as well as determine the significance of the human role in Henry’s doctrines of revelation and inspiration, chapters 5 and 6 provided an analysis and evaluation. Chapter 5 conducted an analytical examination of man’s involvement in the events of revelation and inspiration at three stages: origin, reception, and conveyance. While addressing the human involvement at the level of origin, it was observed that a human being has no part in them because both the events are transcendent in nature and so naturally exclude any creature from their origination. According to Henry, the possibility for human inception of revelation is further made hopeless by finiteness and sinfulness. Moreover, human sinfulness has an adverse effect on man’s ability to carry out the task of inspiration, namely, the inscripturation of revelation.
The human role in revelation and inspiration begins at the level of reception. However, Henry's portrayal of that role in revelation indicates a divergence from the one he portrays in inspiration. In revelation he depicts the human agent as actively, independently, and competently using the will, conscience, linguistic capacity, and reasoning power to receive revelation. With the will he decides to accept or reject revelation, thereby indicating his freedom in it. His conscience perceives the moral dimensions of revelation. Through his linguistic capability man receives revelation in his own language. Man's reasoning powers comprehend the content of revelation and endorse its rationality, epistemic value, and cognitive clarity. Similarly, at the conveyance stage of revelation, man makes an effort in retaining with his memory the content and words of revelation and uses his linguistic capability in articulating the message of revelation.

On the one hand, during the reception of inspiration—that is, the receiving of the Spirit's enablement or influence to inscripturate the content of revelation—man's involvement is depicted as largely dependent upon God. First of all, man is presented as unqualified for the task of inspiration and, hence, his need of prior supernatural preparation through a long period of time. In revelation, on the other hand, he is assumed as being naturally qualified to receive it. At the stage of revelation, man's freedom, independence, and competence are not only assumed but explicitly emphasized. These qualities, however, are unaccounted for and overwhelmed at the stage of inspiration by the dominating influence, control, and superintendence of the Holy Spirit so that man turns into a totally divine-controlled instrument who executes the work of inscripturation to the degree of
God's expectation, namely, inerrancy.\textsuperscript{1}

This predominance of the Holy Spirit over man during inspiration is also to be seen even in the so-called divine-human confluence/concursus—a term referring to the collaboration between man and the Holy Spirit in the writing of Scripture. Man's part, however, loses its significance or is not recognized because Henry insists that despite the confluence, "both thoughts and words are a divine product."\textsuperscript{2} Consequently, he rejects the notion of dual authorship or divine-human coauthorship of Scripture.\textsuperscript{3}

Man's dependent and auxiliary role during the writing process is further indicated by the Holy Spirit's giving His mind and inspiring man with the choice of words during the writing process. If at the level of revelation man has the ability to understand revelation and commit to memory Christ's sayings and teachings—either verbatim or with some verbal variation—one then wonders why at the level of inspiration or inscripturation of revelation, man is shown to be so limited that he has to rely heavily upon the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the clarity and propositionality of revelation, plus man's linguistic capacity, would lead one to expect that man can, to a certain extent, write that revelation with lesser dependence on divine help. If the same man is involved in both the events of revelation and inspiration, and if the content that has been revealed is essentially no different from the content that has been written, then we would anticipate man's role in inspiration not to be so radically different from his role in revelation. That is, we would assume that during the writing

\textsuperscript{1}See pp. 113-14, 118 above.

\textsuperscript{2}See p. 232 above.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
process man should be able to put to effective use those faculties that he used competently in receiving and conveying revelation. Rather, we find Henry depicting man with a different nature in revelation and quite another in inspiration to the extent that he threatens his very acknowledgement of the unity of human nature. And even if Henry's claim for a unified human nature is taken into consideration, how can man's sinful defects which have to be supernaturally cared for during writing not have a similar adverse effect on man during his reception of revelation?

Aware of this discrepancy of portrayal of the human role, chapter 6 pursued with an evaluation. First, it pointed to the importance of expecting a concordant portrayal of the two roles. Then, based on Henry's own use of nature and function in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration, the chapter used nature and function as criteria for verifying the discrepancy or inconsistency. In the event, it was observed that nature and function are rendered consistently only within the individual confines of revelation and inspiration. The consistency, however, breaks down when man's nature and function in revelation were compared with his nature and function in inspiration. To bring this inconsistency to sharper focus, man's role in revelation was further juxtaposed with his role in inspiration where the two roles were then compared. Of the twelve entries only two bear similarity. The rest show a disharmony or divergence of roles. In other words, the study of Henry's portrayal of the human role in his doctrines of revelation and inspiration shows that the two roles have not been presented harmoniously with each other. That is, Henry's portrayal of

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1See pp. 170-71 above.

2See pp. 255-57 above.
the human role in the two doctrines betray inconsistency.

In an attempt to understand why Henry presents the two roles differently or inconsistently from each other, three apologetical reasons were suggested: (1) a vigorous reaction to Karl Barth; (2) inerrancy of Scripture; and (3) authority of Scripture. The first reason shows a real possibility for the inconsistency. For instance, we observed that when Barth depreciates the human role in revelation, Henry reacted to him by exaggerating that role. And when Barth depicts an unrestrained and free human involvement at the level of inspiration, Henry again counteracted by portraying man's role at that stage as one that is comprehensively controlled by the Holy Spirit. Inerrancy and authority of Scripture display both a direct and indirect connection with the inconsistency under question.

Inerrancy has been explicitly shown by Henry to be the cause for the Holy Spirit's comprehensive and overwhelming control and superintendence of the writer even to the level of words, and biblical authority lies behind Henry's crusade for inerrancy.¹

¹A question may be asked if Henry's doctrine of inerrancy did not actually arise from his doctrine of divine sovereignty. This is precisely the contention of Karanja's thesis (see his thesis referred to in note 4, p. 114 above). His argument is that since Henry believes in the comprehensiveness (Karanja, 88, 91, 93) of divine causality or sovereignty (ibid., 107-08, 158), Scripture is accordingly a product of this divine causality (ibid., 136, 138). And since Scripture is divinely caused, it is therefore inerrant (ibid., 136, 138). The fact, however, is that Henry has not made any connection between inerrancy and divine sovereignty. Actually, Karanja himself did not cite a single instance where Henry says—either directly or indirectly—that inerrancy should be held on the basis of divine sovereignty. Karanja's argument that since Henry believes God causes everything, Scripture is therefore caused by him (ibid., 136), is logically valid. In fact, Henry himself affirms that Scripture is a product of God's breath; it is his creation (see pp. 220, 230 above). However, to state that Scripture is inerrant because of this divine causality (Karanja, 136, 138) is not logically apparent or supportable. Rather, as we have already pointed out, inerrancy is explicitly connected by Henry with God's attribute of perfection and his character of truthfulness (see p. 271 above). Moreover, what is uppermost in Henry concerning the question of inerrancy is not where it comes from but why it should be
Recommendations

I would like to conclude this study by submitting some recommendations with the hope of bringing a balance and broadening of the depiction of the human role in ways that tally with Scripture's own depiction of that role.

Man's Role in Revelation

The Place of Experience

Henry's strong emphasis on revelation as rational and propositional points to man's involvement in it essentially in terms of his cognitive dimension. It places an exclusive stress on reason's unquestioned ability to understand revelation, and depicts man's role in it as primarily an intellectual one. While understanding revelation's epistemic viability is useful for apologetics, yet it needs to be reiterated that in revelation man deals not only with cognitive truths but meets the divine Person behind the revelation. Man not only hears the words but encounters the speaker of those words. That is, revelation is both a cognitive knowledge of divine truths and a personal acquaintance or encounter with God, the revealer of those truths. Barth's emphasis on revelation as encounter need not therefore be ruled out as unscriptural. However, that affirmation should also be simultaneously corrected if it limits revelation only to an inner encounter.

Dederen, for instance, pointed to some texts that indicate man's involvement in there. Actually, Karanja himself has shown (from Henry) that inerrancy is indispensable for Scripture because, without it, Scripture cannot be trusted as an objective expression of the content and meaning of all God's revelation (Karanja, 52-53), and, as I have already shown (from Henry), such a Bible cannot consequently be authoritative, hence, the need for an inerrant Bible (see p. 267-70 above, see especially note 1, 271 above).
revelation as one that includes both an experience of a personal encounter with God and a reception of divine truths. The book of Samuel says "The Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord" (1 Sam 3:21, NRSV). This text indicates that in revelation the Lord revealed himself to the prophet, accompanied with his word. Similarly, Isaiah affirms: "The Lord of hosts has revealed himself in my ears" (Isa 22:14 NRSV). The passage reiterates the thought of the preceding one where God simultaneously revealed his own person as well as verbally communicated to Isaiah. Jesus said not only that God the Father revealed hidden things to babes (Matt 11:25) but claims that he himself reveals the Father (vs. 27).1

Similarly, I. Howard Marshall spoke of the rightness and wrongness of encounter theology. It "is right in what it affirms and wrong in what it denies." It is right in asserting that man encounters or is encountered by God in revelation, but wrong when it denies that there is information involved in that encounter.2 The fact is that in revelation man experiences both the elements of a "meeting and a knowing."3 The two are not to be dichotomized because they are "indissolubly linked with one another."4

The Place of Faith

Henry's emphasis on the cognitive side of revelation points more to its rational

comprehensibility without acknowledging some of its incomprehensible elements. Actually, it can be pointed out that revelation is not always readily intelligible. There are some elements that elude man's comprehension. Peter, for example, refers to certain things Paul wrote that are hard to understand (2 Pet 3:16). Paul himself in 1 Cor 13:10 speaks of the partial nature of the knowledge of truth and the need of faith to understand revelation because man can never know it beyond all doubt.\(^1\) The mysteriousness of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection can be appropriated only by faith.\(^2\) Mortimer Adler makes the following pertinent remarks: "What's the point of revelation if we can figure it out ourselves? If it were *wholly* comprehensible then it would be just another philosophy."\(^3\)

**Man's Role in Inspiration**

**Inspiration of the Writer**

Henry's emphasis on inspiration of words (verbal inspiration) leads him to correlate it directly with inerrancy. Stress on inerrancy can consequently lead one to "focus on the total exclusion of mistakes"\(^4\) from Scripture, resulting in a shift to its words instead

\(^1\)Morris, 38; see also Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 30, where he cites 1 Pet 1:10-12 and Heb 5:11 as other examples of hard-to-understand elements of revelation.


\(^3\)Ibid., 34; emphasis added.

of to what it has to say, and moving the spotlight away from the primary objective of Scripture which, as Henry himself admits, is that of human redemption or salvation. Apostle John also testified to this when he said that what is written is meant to lead the reader/hearer to have faith in Jesus Christ as "the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing [one] may have life in his name."

If salvation is Scripture's main purpose, then we assume that the writer himself has been convinced of what he wrote. That is, he must have been personally gripped with the experience and conviction of salvation and, as Peter also pointed out, is moved by the Holy Spirit to speak what he has been revealed (2 Peter 1:21 NRSV; italics added). In other words, it was the person—rather than his words—that was moved; for strictly speaking, word-inspiration does not necessarily require such personal experience and conviction on the part of the writer.

It is because the sacred writers are believed to have had been supernaturally moved and inspired that renders what they wrote significant, important, and authoritative, and therefore is, or should be taken with seriousness. In this instance, James Orr's observation is to the point:

Inspiration belongs primarily to the person, and to the book only as it is the product of the inspired person. There is no inspiration inhering literally in the paper, ink, or type, of the sacred volume. The inspiration was in the soul of the writer; the qualities that are communicated to the writing had their seat first in the mind or heart of the man who wrote. It is on the mind, heart, faculties of the man that the Spirit works: the work is

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2See note 1, p. 97 above, and p. 134 above.

3John 20:31, NRSV.
inspired as coming from his thought and pen, and as having the power of quickening and awakening a like glow of soul in those who read.¹

**Inspiration of the Writer's Thoughts**

Ramm observes that emphasis on the inspiration of words can lead to an atomisticality of words where God is seen as doling out to the writer word by word as individual pearls. The fact of the matter is that although a sentence is written one word at a time, yet prior to the words themselves are "meaning-chunks" which determine the choice of words. Words essentially serve to convey meanings or thoughts. This means that the writer first of all understands what he is about to write, and then chooses the words that correctly convey the thoughts. The Holy Spirit can be assumed to come to man's aid wherever the writer encounters a difficulty in expressing the thought. On the other hand, if words are given priority in inspiration, it means that man's role at that level does not necessarily require prior understanding of what he is writing. Hence, any schoolboy competent of writing words might as well have written the Epistle to the Romans.²

Moreover, if words serve the clarity of expression of thoughts then words cease to have a fixed or mechanical relationship to meanings/thoughts and instead display a dynamic or flexible relationship between words and thoughts.³ Because of this, the same meaning

¹James Orr, *Revelation and Inspiration* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 162-63. Orr, nevertheless, went beyond the traditional understanding of inspiration when he connected it with nonbiblical individuals, including Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe. Such an extension of inspiration renders the concept commonplace and does away with the uniqueness and authority of the Bible.


³Ibid., 177-78.
can be cast in different forms of speech: direct, indirect, active, or passive, or by use of synonyms or equivalent expressions. "All these phenomena occur among the Gospels."¹

Given this scenario, man's role in inspiration is then more dynamic and free than the one depicted by Henry as totally dependent and controlled by the Holy Spirit. It is because the thoughts are divinely inspired that determine the value of what has been written, and will continue to be cherished despite the writer's crude or poor use of grammar and syntax as is the case in the Book of Revelation.² This shows that man has the capacity to tell the truth,³ and God allows him to do that even if his linguistic skills are far from perfect.

Adjusting Henry's Portrayal of the Human Role

Consistency occupies a high priority in Henry's thinking. For instance, he holds that this attribute should first qualify any system or worldview.⁴ Consistency comprises

¹Ibid., 178; italics original. Ramm, however, recognized that there is a limit to the flexibility of relationship between words and meanings, for "if the limit is exceeded the meaning is changed" (ibid.).

²According to William Barclay the Greek of the author of the Apocalypse is "so bad that a modern school boy would get into bad trouble for writing it" (William Barclay, Introducing the Bible [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972], 139). A similar comment was also made by C. F. D. Moule when he speaks of the book's "horrifying grammatical blunders" (see C. F. D. Moule, An Idiom of New Testament Greek, 2d ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959], 3).

³Based on the response of Henry to Brunner's assumption of the fallibility of human nature (GRA 4:149).

⁴Patterson, JMPL—1, 4.
one of the important tests of truth, and makes knowledge possible. Henry's giving importance to consistency is also seen in his reaction to the issue on whether or not one should be considered an authentic evangelical if he does not subscribe to the doctrine of inerrancy. Henry's reply is that such a person, while still an authentic evangelical, is nevertheless an inconsistent one, and clings to the rest of the doctrines by an act of will, rather than on the basis of epistemic consistency. In other words, an evangelical who rejects inerrancy, does so at the cost of consistency.

As pointed out, Henry's portrayal of the human role in the doctrines of revelation and inspiration is marked with disharmony or inconsistency. In adjusting this inconsistency, perhaps Henry should reconsider his anthropology. His emphasis on man's unitary nature and sinfulness needs to be correlated with the human role in revelation just as he has done so in his portrayal of that role in inspiration. Similarly, his assertion that the Fall has "fractured" man and created a "devastating fault" should also be brought to bear upon the human role in revelation, just as he has done in his doctrine of inspiration. In so doing, it would imply that Henry would have to emphasize divine aid in human reception and conveyance of revelation just as he does in the case of human reception and conveyance of revelation.

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1GRA 1:233-34; Henry, *Toward a Recovery*, 53, 60, 81; Mohler, *Baptist Theologians*, 526

2GRA 1:232.

3See p. 117 above.


5See p. 171 above.
inspiration. With this adjustment, Henry's stress on man's passivity and dependency in
inspiration can accordingly be shown to correspond with human dependency in revelation.
Otherwise, his doctrines of revelation and inspiration would have to be held together by an
act of will rather than by virtue of consistency.

In balancing Henry's depiction of the human role within his doctrines of revelation,
we can also endeavor that on the basis of direct and indirect evidences of Scripture. For
instance, while "divine speaking" as a model of revelation and inspiration has greatly
captured and exercised Henry's imagination and conditioned his exposition of those
doctrines, yet, there is need to take a closer look at the different genres of Scripture and
construct one's doctrines of revelation and inspiration and man's role in them on that basis.

By taking into account the different literary genres of the Bible, James I. Packer
concludes that inspiration can be divided into three types or forms:

1. **dualistic** inspiration—where God is represented as the speaker and man as the
hearer and reporter (This form of inspiration produced the prophetic oracles, Mosaic
legislation, and the apocalyptic visions of Daniel, and of John the Revelator.)

2. **lyric** inspiration—one which is similar to the inspiration of a poet where the
inspiring action of God was fused with the concentrating, intensifying, and shaping mental
processes of the author (This form of inspiration brought about the Psalms, lyrical drama
of Job, Songs of Solomon, and the many prayers throughout the Old Testament.)

3. **organic** inspiration—where "the inspiring actions of God coalesce with the
mental processes—inquiring, analytical, reflective, interpretative, applicatory"—of the
writer. (This psychological form of inspiration gave rise to the historical books of both
Testaments, the apostolic letters, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.)

If those forms of inspiration are taken into consideration, it means that the human role in inspiration would have to be accounted in a manner that corresponds with the literary genre of Scripture. Such an approach is likely to lead to a more balanced depiction of that role where man's participation at the level of inspiration is just as actively and intensely involved as the one shown by Henry at the level of revelation. Thus, man's part during the writing process is more integral and deep, because it is his language, his vocabulary, his culture, his emotions, his thoughts, and his mouth that are deployed.

Since God is the exclusive source of truth as well as one that is totally behind inspiration, Scripture is therefore

at the same time the word of God and the word of man. Although written by men, it is God's truth; and although God's truth it is the product of human authors. The words are their words, yet God's word; and God's word is uniquely his word though in the garments of man's words.

Moreover, such an intensive, passionate, reflective, analytical, interpretative, and applicatory nature of human involvement is a strength to one's view of the human role in inspiration, because it rules out any notion of dictation inspiration and a consequent docetic Scripture, of which Henry has been accused of.

1 Packer, *God Has Spoken*, 100-01.

2 Ramm, *Special Revelation and the Word of God*, 179, italics adapted from the author.

3 Ibid., 179.

4 Bloesch, for instance, feels that Henry's identification of the propositions of revelation with the sentences of Scripture prevents him from accounting seriously and adequately the historical and cultural elements of Scripture. Such a tendency leads Bloesch to suspect whether Henry has a "docetic view of Scripture, one that denies its true
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Interview by Boxter Kharbteng, 18 April 1994, Kantzer Wing, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, IL. The interview was taped and transcribed by the interviewer.


Letter to Boxter Kharbteng, 30 July 1996.

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