

## Whose Jesus? Which Revelation?

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### Introduction

*Alasdair MacIntyre and Carl F. H. Henry*

The title of this article is reminiscent of Alasdair MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*<sup>1</sup> which is relevant to a discussion on Carl Henry for a number of reasons.<sup>2</sup> First, MacIntyre has offered a major section of the Roman Catholic intellectual community a new lease on life. Carl Henry has offered a major section of the Protestant intellectual community something similar. Without Henry's contributions to the formation of the new evangelicalism, fundamentalist Protestant Christianity may well have headed off into temporal, and finally eternal, irrelevance.<sup>3</sup> A recent admirer of Henry says,

One of his major achievements has been the reestablishment of theology as a vital concern of the Christian community. His theological vigor and force have often laid bare the latent antitheological attitudes among some evangelicals and have reasserted the vital role of theology as a servant of the church.<sup>4</sup>

This is high praise, indeed! A second reason MacIntyre's work sheds light on our subject is that his thesis put a nail in the coffin of Enlightenment liberalism, at least from the philosopho-ethical perspective. Similarly, Carl Henry put a nail in the coffin of liberalism, from a philosopho-theological point of view. Moreover, he has identified significant weaknesses in that other Protestant reaction against

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<sup>1</sup> (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> This paper was originally read at a symposium on Carl F. H. Henry at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, which took place on March 7-9, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Bob E. Patterson, *Carl F.H. Henry, Makers of the Modern Theological Mind* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 38-45.

<sup>4</sup> R. Albert Mohler Jr., "Carl F.H. Henry," in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, ed. by Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 291.

liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, which he called neo-Protestantism. A third reason MacIntyre's work helps us understand Henry's contribution is that MacIntyre showed the impossibility of separating reason from authority and tradition. As MacIntyre notes, rationalities are dependent upon some tradition of justice and when those rationalities, specifically post-Enlightenment liberal ones, deny such dependence, they are self-contradicting and ultimately self-defeating.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Henry has enabled evangelicals to see that our conceptions of Jesus are intimately related to our doctrine of revelation. Despite their mutual intolerance of liberalism, the constructive proposals put forward by MacIntyre and Henry differ markedly. Where MacIntyre proposes a Thomistic synthesis of Aristotle and Augustine as the answer to liberalism, Henry believes the best answer to liberalism is to reassert the dependence of fallen humanity upon the manifestation of a transcendent God in the person of Jesus Christ who is brought into conceptual focus by the Bible.

### *Henry's Augustinian and Aristotelean Roots*

Although we note the difference between the purposes of MacIntyre and Henry, one must also recognize a certain dependence of Henry upon Aristotelean logic and Augustinian theology, a dependence fostered by Henry's acknowledged intellectual debt to Reformed thinkers such as Gordon Clark. For instance, Henry's Augustinianism can be seen in his philosophical historiography, which has a three-fold classification—ancient, medieval and modern.<sup>6</sup> Henry prefers the medieval outlook to the classical and corrects modern errors by reference to the medieval. In Henry's historiography, the medieval approach is rather broad: it began with the coming of Jesus Christ, embraced the Apostles' Creed, promoted the transcendence of God and failed only when it indirectly hastened the autonomy of man and nature. Although Henry places the Protestant Reformation in the modern period, he believes Luther and Calvin corrected medieval errors without succumbing to the modern antipathy toward metaphysics.<sup>7</sup> The Reformers are also important because they continued the Augustinian-like synthesis of revelation and reason.<sup>8</sup>

Henry's Aristotelean tendencies are evident in his relating of the

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<sup>5</sup> *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 3-10.

<sup>6</sup> Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976-1983; new edn, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999) [hereinafter, *GR&A*], I, 31.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>8</sup> According to Henry, Tertullian was keenly aware that philosophy is not benign; Augustine saw philosophy as a servant of theology; and, Aquinas made theology dependent upon philosophy. Launching from the medieval scholastic theologians, modernists went on to reject theology in favor of philosophy (*GR&A*, I, 182-88).

divine *Logos* to human logic and his dependence upon Clark's critique of Karl Barth. According to Henry, the light that lightens every man of John 1:9, the eternal *Logos*, is the source of logic within humanity.<sup>9</sup> Barth's non-propositional view of revelation is therefore declared unbiblical. Clark is approvingly quoted:

Christianity, . . . if the Bible is authoritative, as Barth often says it is, should develop its epistemology and theory of language from the information contained in the Scriptures. Aside from imperative sentences and a few exclamations in the Psalms, the Bible is composed of propositions. These give information about God and his dealings with men. No hint is given that they are pointers to something else. They are given to us as true, as truths, as the objects of knowledge. Let linguistics, epistemology, and theology conform.<sup>10</sup>

This is immediately followed by Henry's critical appropriation of Aristotle's logical program, and a call to "preserve the existing laws of logic to escape pleading the cause of illogical nonsense." "We are therefore back to the emphasis that the laws of logic belong to the *imago Dei*, and have ontological import."<sup>11</sup> Thus, although Henry is concerned to vindicate Scripture, he readily employs Augustinian theology and Aristotelean rationality to bolster his argument.

## Two Questions

### *Henry's Theological Method*

Two questions are before us: "Whose Jesus? Which revelation?" Answering these two questions in reverse order will be helpful: first, we will consider the epistemological issue, and second, the ontological. Henry approached the theological enterprise in this manner,<sup>12</sup> apparently for two reasons. First, history demanded it. Protestant orthodoxy has long treated revelation as prolegomena to systematic theology proper. In the nineteenth century, liberalism focused attention on epistemology by denying the authority of the premier conduit of Christian authority, the Bible. In the twentieth century, neo-orthodoxy sought to revivify Protestant Christianity by reclaiming revelation, but, unfortunately, reoriented our knowledge of the divine revelation away from the written text and toward internal encounter. The second reason Henry approached epistemology first is because, although God is ontologically prior to

<sup>9</sup> *GR&A*, III, 209, 215.

<sup>10</sup> Clark, *Karl Barth's Theological Method*, (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1963), 150; quoted in *GR&A*, III, 228.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>12</sup> Mohler, "Carl F. H. Henry," 286-87.

revelation, knowledge of God must first be established. Answering the epistemological question helps provide the answer to the ontological question.

In his later work, *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, Henry began by identifying the numerous views of who Jesus really is. Some of these views are opposed to Christianity, such as the doctrines of Judaism or Islam; others are perversions of Christianity, such as the teachings of Rudolf Bultmann or the early church heretics.<sup>13</sup> These radically different views of Jesus can be distinguished by reference to their radically different views of revelation. As Henry says at the beginning of his explication of the fifteen theses in the first part of *God, Revelation and Authority*:

Few concepts have in fact encountered and endured such radical revision throughout the long history of ideas as has the concept of divine revelation. Especially within the last two centuries divine revelation has been stretched into everything, stripped into nothing, or modeled into innumerable compromises of such outrageous extremes.<sup>14</sup>

When Henry's *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth* is read alongside *God, Revelation and Authority*, it is apparent that the doctrine of revelation is formative for how modern people see Jesus. In both works, revelation is treated prior to Christology. Henry spends much of his time in *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth* refuting errors concerning revelation in order to construct a biblically viable Christology.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Current Crisis in Authority*<sup>16</sup>

Before moving to the questions, let us note the current crisis of authority plaguing Protestant Christians that gives Henry's theology a renewed relevance. In June 2000, the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a revised *Baptist Faith & Message*. Article one of that document was significantly altered to exclude the idea of the suprahistoric Christ as a source of special revelation set over against the special revelation of Scripture. The 1963 *Baptist Faith & Message* stated, "The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ." Concerned with neo-orthodox interpretations of this statement, the revision committee assembled by Paige Patterson altered the sentence to read, "All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation." This idea has parallels in the epistemology of evangelicals such as

<sup>13</sup> (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 9-22.

<sup>14</sup> *GR&A*, II, 7.

<sup>15</sup> *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, 23-54.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *GR&A*, IV, 7-23.

Henry, who speaks of Christ, the incarnate Word, as the “center” or “focus” of the Bible, the inscripturated word.<sup>17</sup> Some Southern Baptists accused the revision committee of engaging in bibliolatry, of worshiping the Bible in place of Christ. Of course, this was denied by conservatives, who countered that moderates were robbing Scripture of its full authority by opposing Christ to Scripture.<sup>18</sup> We might push the discussion further and inquire whether the Christ moderate Southern Baptists oppose to Scripture is the same Christ conservative Southern Baptists worship.

### Which Revelation?

#### *Jesus' View of Revelation*

One of the most enlightening essays contained in Henry's magisterial *God, Revelation and Authority* concerns the doctrine of revelation which Jesus affirmed. It is best to construct our doctrine of revelation upon that which our Lord expressed. In this way, the doctrine of revelation established by Jesus will serve as the foundation for our subsequent doctrine of Jesus. An ontological presupposition—Jesus is Lord—will establish epistemological boundaries, which will, in turn, define the ontological Jesus. Does such obviously circular reasoning bother you? If so, join company with James Barr, who dismissed the evangelical worldview for being a self-contained circle. Henry did not disagree but cleverly responded, “He seems to forget that the same characteristic applies also to modernist, neoorthodox and existentialist alternatives.” Every worldview is circular in reasoning. Such circularity, however, need not descend into subjectivity and absurdity. On the contrary, “Historic Christian theism . . . insists that its circle of faith be completely answerable to transcendent revelation and logical consistency, and in no way considers logical inconsistency an ideal to secure support for spiritual commitment.”<sup>19</sup> With the presuppositionalist position established and defended on a transcendently-qualified *tu quoque* basis,<sup>20</sup> let us consider the doctrine of revelation.

What was Jesus' doctrine of revelation? The first-century Hebrew

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 78, 98, 208; IV, 189. Cf. Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 2 vols (New York: Harper Collins, 1978), II, 273-74.

<sup>18</sup> Russell D. Moore, “Mohler is right, CBF members say on question of Biblical authority,” Baptist Press, 30 June 2000; *idem*, “For the Bible tells me so: Have Baptists replaced Jesus with a book?” *The Southern Seminary Magazine*, November 2000, 6-9; Kenneth S. Hemphill, “Is the 2000 Confession Guilty of Bibliolatry?” (Fort Worth, TX: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary faculty paper, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> *GR&A*, IV, 71. Cf. IV, 76-77.

<sup>20</sup> For an analysis of the *tu quoque* argument, see Wentzel van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith: Constructing Theories in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 38ff.

view was “that Scripture is sacred, authoritative and normative and that it has, in view of its divine inspiration, a permanent and impregnable validity.”<sup>21</sup> Henry says Jesus appropriated the Hebrew view but modified it in five ways. First, Jesus warned against sinful hermeneutics which distort the meaning of Scripture. In Mark 7:9, he castigated the Pharisees: “Disregarding the commandment of God, you teach the doctrine of men” (Holman Christian Standard Bible). In Matthew 5, rather than limiting the moral law to external issues alone, he deepened the meaning of the moral code by addressing internal motivations.<sup>22</sup> Second, Jesus of Nazareth pointed to the Old Testament witnesses of the promise which is personally fulfilled in himself. In John 5:39-47, he rebuked the Jews: “You pore over the Scriptures . . . yet they testify about me. . . . For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.” In Luke 24:25-27, on the way to Emmaus, he exhorted the unwitting disciples, “O how unwise and slow you are to believe in your hearts all that the prophets have spoken. . . . Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted for them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” In John 5:46-47, he correlated the writings (*gramma*) of Moses with his own spoken words (*r(h)=ma*).<sup>23</sup>

Third, Jesus altered the prophetic introduction from the third-person singular, “Thus saith the Lord,” to the first-person singular, “I say unto you.” He thus authenticated the divine origin of Scripture while making himself its source and authoritative interpreter. Jesus never criticized the Old Testament, although he did criticize certain interpretations of it. Rather, he subtly identified the Bible as God’s very words.<sup>24</sup> Fourth, Jesus enabled human beings to fulfill the requirements of the written law by promising the internal dwelling of the Holy Spirit. He was establishing a new covenant which would transcend the old. In John 4:14, he promised the Spirit as a well of water springing to eternal life. In Luke 4:18-21, he assured the disciples the Spirit would permanently abide in them as a continuation of his own earthly ministry.<sup>25</sup>

Fifth, Jesus saw his apostles completing Scripture by interpreting the salvific nature of his own life and work. This would entail the “enlargement and completion” of the canon with apostolic pronouncements concerning propositions about His person. Henry reminds us the gospel of John uses *pisteu/cin*, the verb “to believe,” in

<sup>21</sup> *GR&A*, III, 28.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-33, 37.

<sup>24</sup> The statement which Jesus attributes to God in Matthew 19:5 is actually the biblical narrator’s account of creation in Genesis 2:24. Behind the human author, the narrator of Genesis is God. *Ibid.*, 38-41.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-44.

four ways: believing facts, believing people or Scripture, believing in or into Christ, and simply believing. Christian faith apparently has both propositional and personal characteristics. In John 14:11, Jesus demanded his disciples believe not only in him but also certain facts about him: *pisteu/ete/ moi o3ti*—“believe me *that* I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (italics mine). With those who stress personal truth apart from propositional truth, Jesus apart from Scripture,<sup>26</sup> Jesus himself obviously disagrees.

Parenthetically, this raises a number of questions relevant to our topic, each of which deserves a positive response. Does the Jesus who is available to us through the instrumental mediation of the Bible affirm the correlation of personal and propositional truth? Henry says, “Yes.” Does the Jesus of neo-orthodoxy or postmodernism or neo-Baptist thought denigrate propositional truth in favor of personal truth? The answer is undoubtedly, “Yes.” Does this, therefore, present the possibility that the Jesus of the Bible may be different from the Jesus defined through extra-biblical personal experience? Again, the answer must be, “Yes.”

The fifth modification of the Hebrew view of Scripture by Jesus, the enlargement of the canon, is found in a number of places. In Matthew 16:16, Jesus said Peter’s confession was the result of divine revelation. In Matthew 13:52, he entrusted to the apostles the storeroom of truth. In Matthew 28:20, he ordained the apostles to teach all his commandments. In Revelation 1:1, the Apostle John’s Apocalypse is identified as “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” In John 14:25-26, Jesus promises that he will communicate with the apostles through the ministry of the Holy Spirit: “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.” Jesus promised the Spirit would guide the apostles in the enlargement of the canon.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Henry concludes that Jesus “committed his apostles to the enlargement and completion of the Old Testament canon through their proclamation of the Spirit-given interpretation of his life and work.”<sup>28</sup>

### *Mediation, Anti-mediation and Instrumentality*

Two risks were taken in the last few paragraphs. First, we have coined a new term, “neo-Baptist.” By neo-Baptist, I mean the re-orientation of the

<sup>26</sup> Frank Louis Mauldin, *The Classic Baptist Heritage of Personal Truth: The Truth as It Is in Jesus* (Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> The apostles themselves recognized that their words were God’s words. In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul praised God, “because when you [Thessalonians] received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the message of God.”

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-47.

Baptist identity away from the biblical regenerate church toward the experimental anthropocentric individual. I have developed this line of thought elsewhere and point you to that essay for clarification.<sup>29</sup> Second, we have taken the unusual risk of mentioning the word “mediation” which, ever since E. Y. Mullins’ broad-brush association of all mediation with the Roman Catholic types, has been considered anathema among Southern Baptists. This is unfortunate, for it forced him to hold an ambiguous doctrine of revelation.

On the one hand, Mullins affirmed the necessity of Scripture for our knowledge of God; on the other, he elevated the concept of “direct access to God.”<sup>30</sup> This view emerges clearly in Mullins’ systematic theology, where he identified two channels of revelation: “It is the union of the two forms of knowledge which completes our view of Christ. Our construction of Christian doctrines rests on a fact basis entirely: first and primarily, the facts of the New Testament records, and secondly, our direct and immediate experience of Christ as redeeming Lord.”<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, although he gave lip-service to the primacy of scriptural authority, he practically elevated experience. Later in life, Mullins tried to reconcile direct access with the mediation of Scripture philosophically, but unresolved contradictions in his system remained.<sup>32</sup> These contradictions ultimately divided Southern Baptists: one group followed the idea of unmediated access to its ultimate conclusion; the other honored the instrumental sufficient and authoritative mediation of Scripture.

Henry knew the work of Mullins generally and the work of A.H. Strong intimately, having written a doctoral dissertation on Strong’s philosophical shift. Strong left his common sense realist roots and embraced the Boston school of monistic personalism, which Strong modified and labeled, “ethical monism.” Like his Southern Baptist colleague, Mullins, this Northern Baptist theologian feared the

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<sup>29</sup> Yarnell, “Changing Baptist Concepts of Royal Priesthood,” in *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism*, ed. by Deryck Lovegrove (London: Routledge, 2002), 236-52. See also the excellent collaborating research of Stan Norman, who distinguishes the older Reformation Tradition from the relatively recent Enlightenment Tradition among Baptists. R. Stanton Norman, *More Than Just a Name: Preserving Our Baptist Identity* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001).

<sup>30</sup> Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion: A New Interpretation of the Baptist Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1908).

<sup>31</sup> Mullins, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1917), 164.

<sup>32</sup> For instance, Mullins tried to base his theology of revelation upon the radically mystical Protestantism of Auguste Sabatier while holding to the objective standard of Scripture. The Christ of Scripture is inerrantly correlated with the Christ within. He grounded the objective truth of Scripture in subjective criteria. Mullins, *Freedom and Authority in Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: Griffith & Rowland Press, 1913).

instruments of grace might impinge upon the glory of Christ. According to Strong, “Church and ministry, Bible and doctrine, are [Christ’s] servants. But the servants have sometimes taken the vineyard for themselves and have driven out the Lord. . . . Neither church nor ministry, Bible nor creed, is perfect.”<sup>33</sup> Strong needlessly opposed Christ to Scripture, rather than simply affirming that Christ was epistemologically available through Scripture. We can agree with Strong on the errancy of those instruments known as church, ministry and creed, but must part with him on the errancy of the Bible. Henry expressed disappointment with Strong for having “weakened the objective authority of Scripture in the interest of the living Christ,” although he recognized that Strong was not entirely consistent in doing so.<sup>34</sup> The unresolved tension in the theologies of both Strong and Mullins would ultimately cause an epistemological divide among Baptists, between those affirming the Christ of the Bible and those affirming the Christ of personal experience.

Henry came down strongly on the side of those Baptists who affirm the Christ of the Bible. He proclaimed Christ as “the only divine mediator,” but did not do so at the expense of the perfect instrument of the Mediator. Because Henry refused to oppose the sole mediation of Christ to the instrumental mediation of the Bible, he could affirm rather nonchalantly, “The conception of Jesus as mediator has its basis in the Gospels and behind that in the Old Testament.”<sup>35</sup> When neo-Baptist theologians follow the logic of their anti-mediation bias to its conclusion, they have trouble with this statement. This explains why some Baptists want to affirm that the Bible is “just a book” and that they can know Jesus apart from the inerrant word.<sup>36</sup> For the conservative evangelical, the Bible is the channel of propositional and personal truth; for the neo-orthodox theologian, one encounters personal truth in an event vaguely associated with the Bible.

### *Henry’s Spirit-Based Epistemological System*

Carl Henry has been criticized for paying “little attention” to the Holy Spirit, or for giving the Spirit “a subordinate role” in his writings.<sup>37</sup> This writer would contend otherwise. Henry recognizes the essential place of

<sup>33</sup> Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism* (Philadelphia, PA: Griffith & Rowland Press, 1899), 134-36, 158-59.

<sup>34</sup> Henry, *Personal Idealism and Strong’s Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1951), 205.

<sup>35</sup> *GR&A*, III, 61. The imperfect mediators of the Old Testament—prophets, priests and kings—were superseded by the perfect mediation of the Christ revealed in the New Testament.

<sup>36</sup> Moore, “Mohler is right.”

<sup>37</sup> Mohler, “Carl F.H. Henry,” 292; Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry*, 126.

the Holy Spirit within a coherent system of revelation. Of the fifteen theses in the first section of *God, Revelation and Authority*, two are dedicated to the role of the Holy Spirit, theses 12 and 13, and these comprise the bulk of the largest volume in that six-volume set, filling over 400 pages of text.<sup>38</sup> Although the Holy Spirit is not named on every page, he is certainly behind every thought. Moreover, Henry did not set out to write a systematic theology; rather, he developed an apologetic for the orthodox method of Protestant theology. Henry must not be read by the beginning student seeking a well-balanced theology, and must not be judged as a systematic theologian.

Henry is an apologist, displaying some of the inherent weaknesses of that enterprise. Barth once criticized Schleiermacher for not understanding that the apologetic task provides an untenable foundation for theology. The apologist attempts to “take up a position which is in principle beyond that of both parties,” and is therefore forced to “at least carry a white flag in his hand when approaching the other for a parley.” “To put it unmetaphorically: as long as he is an apologist the theologian must renounce his theological function.”<sup>39</sup> Although we may disagree with Barth’s radical opposition of apologetics and theology, we must concede there is some distinction to be made between the two Christian tasks. Henry’s primary task as an apologist was to lay the epistemological groundwork for theologians. His theology, whether it be Christology, pneumatology or ecclesiology, will necessarily be presented in an unsystematic way. To discover Henry’s theology, one must peer behind his apologetics, and when that is done, an orthodox theologian, especially in his pneumatology, is quite evident.

Henry summarizes his doctrine of the Holy Spirit as he (the Spirit) relates to revelation in a threefold manner. The Holy Spirit is involved “in the communication of revelation (inspiration) and in the interpretation (illumination) and the appropriation of revelation (regeneration).”<sup>40</sup> Henry is adamant, against Barth and others who confuse inspiration and illumination, that “the Spirit’s original inspiration of chosen prophets and apostles” and “the Spirit’s ongoing illumination of readers and hearers of that word” must be considered separate doctrines.<sup>41</sup> He might also have stressed the distinction between regeneration and illumination. Cognitively understanding the word of God is not equivalent to the personal appropriation of that word. This

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<sup>38</sup> *GR&A*, IV, 129-541. For a broader but concise treatment of the Holy Spirit, cf. VI, 370-401.

<sup>39</sup> Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background & History* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1973), 442.

<sup>40</sup> *GR&A*, III, 203n.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 259.

could have allayed the criticism of Donald Bloesch, who believed Henry “argues that the truth of revelation can be known prior to commitment to Christ.”<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, Henry did at least once affirm, “Scripture is not of course savingly efficacious apart from the Spirit’s bestowal of personal faith whereby the Bible becomes a means of personal grace.”<sup>43</sup>

Inspiration is defined by Henry as “a supernatural influence upon divinely chosen prophets and apostles whereby the Spirit of God assures the truth and trustworthiness of their oral and written proclamation.” The Bible, therefore, “inscripturates divinely revealed truth in verbal form.”<sup>44</sup> Three New Testament passages support Henry’s doctrine of revelation: 2 Timothy 3:14-16, which speaks of *qco/pneustoj*, the divine spiration or God’s breathing out of truth to and through the writing apostles; 2 Peter 1:19-21, which indicates that Scripture is sure because it is not grounded “in human inquiry and investigation or in philosophical reflection,” but in transcendent action; and, John 10:34-36, where Jesus said Scripture is indestructible.<sup>45</sup> Henry criticized Strong for allowing inspiration to be focused on the writers rather than on the writings that came from them. He criticized others for devaluing inspiration into a mere “heightening of psychic powers or creative energies.”<sup>46</sup> He reserved his harshest criticism, however, for Karl Barth, who, “in effect fosters a revelation-mysticism or gnosticism.” “What needs to be emphasized against Barth’s view is that today—and ever since the end of the apostolic age—the church and the world have had special revelation only in the verbal text of the Bible.”<sup>47</sup> Henry concludes, “To maintain silence about the divine inspiration of the Scriptures is, in effect, to attenuate the work of God and to minimize the ministry of the Spirit.”<sup>48</sup>

A derivative doctrine of divine inspiration is biblical inerrancy. Henry believes “the Holy Spirit superintended the scriptural writers in communicating the biblical message in ways consistent with their differing personalities, literary styles and cultural background, while

<sup>42</sup> Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, II, 267. Cf., Bloesch, *A Theology of Word & Spirit: Authority & Method in Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 252-54. In turn, Henry criticized Bloesch for coming too close to Barth. *GR&A*, IV, 281-82.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-33. The 2 Peter passage states that “no prophecy of Scripture comes from one’s own interpretation” and that “moved by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God.” Although Henry sees only inspiration in this passage, both illumination and inspiration can be detected here. See Edwin A. Blum, “2 Peter,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 12 vols., ed. by Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976-92), XII, 275.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 142-43.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

safeguarding them from error.”<sup>49</sup> He agrees with the Evangelical Theological Society, which he helped found in 1949, that “the Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs.”<sup>50</sup> Inerrancy applies to the historical and scientific assertions of Scripture, although these are not necessarily the Bible’s primary focus. However, those who emphasize “biblical trustworthiness” without biblical inerrancy introduce a measure of ambiguity which may cause “a significant shift in the conception of scriptural authority.”<sup>51</sup>

Following from the doctrine that the original autographs are kept inerrant by the perfecting work of the Holy Spirit is the doctrine that the Holy Spirit helps keep extant copies of the original autographs—and we do not possess the originals—infallible.<sup>52</sup> This does not mean that they are inspired but that the copies “retain the epistemic consequences of divine inspiration of the inerrant prophetic-apostolic autographs.”<sup>53</sup> The pneumatological doctrine of inspiration, along with its subordinate doctrines of inerrancy and infallibility are only the first links in an epistemological chain which assures the integrity of divine revelation.

Henry is adamant that these doctrines are pneumatological, and that pneumatology is incredibly important. “To neglect the doctrine of the Spirit’s work—inspiration, illumination, regeneration, indwelling, sanctification, guidance—nurtures a confused and disabled church. The proliferating modern sects may, in fact, be one of the penalties for the lack of a comprehensive, systematic doctrine of the Spirit.”<sup>54</sup> He spells out what he means by this in a chapter entitled, “The Spirit and the Scriptures.” There are three modern errors among Christians: liberals reduced the Holy Spirit from a person to an influence and removed the transcendent aspect of inspiration; in defending Scripture, some evangelicals unnecessarily restricted the Spirit’s role to inspiration alone; on the other hand, Barth unnecessarily broadened the doctrine of inspiration.<sup>55</sup> In response, Henry emphasizes the doctrine of illumination. Illumination is not to be confused with inspiration. Inspiration ended with the apostles while illumination happens to people today. In illuminating, the Spirit says nothing new in relation to Scripture; rather, he enables a correct interpretation of Scripture.

According to Henry, Karl Barth’s error was to use the fear of

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 244-46.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 256-57.

bibliolatry and the exaltation of the Spirit to create a broken Bible.<sup>56</sup> Leaving aside the issue of whether or not Henry misinterpreted Barth, let us hear Henry's critique.<sup>57</sup> Against Barth, Henry honored the Spirit without opposing the Spirit to the written word. Henry says that a number of Barth's presuppositions forced him to propose an ill-advised dichotomy. The primary problem is his belief that all revelation is saving revelation. The equation of regeneration with revelation encouraged Barth to deny general revelation, to compromise the objectivity of the Bible, and to locate revelation within the divine-human encounter. This means that the presence of Christ within became equated with revelation and inspiration, while the Scriptures are not the word of God but only "become" the word of God when revelation occurs. This denigration of Scripture and this false elevation of the Spirit thus invite speculative "flights of fantasy," and, to quote Howard Loewen, a "subjectivization of the Word." The Bible is made fallible and moves from "being" the word of God to only "containing" the word of God. In this way, "Barth confuses inspiration and illumination."<sup>58</sup> Henry reminds us that during the sixteenth century, the reformers battled more radical reformers "who considered themselves recipients of direct divine revelation on a par with Scripture." The reformers instead affirmed that the Spirit aids the believer in understanding the Scripture but does not offer a new revelation.<sup>59</sup>

After illumination, the next major component in Henry's Spirit-based epistemological system is his doctrine of "Spirit-anointed couriers."<sup>60</sup> God commissions all Christians to communicate the gospel, whether that be through personal witness or pulpit proclamation. According to Henry, the Spirit and the word work together in the sermon "to reshape mind and life in the image of Christ."<sup>61</sup> Indeed, in worship, even in the ordinances, "the Spirit lifts the hearts of the faithful to the eternal realm where dwells Christ." Of course, the ordinances are properly placed in the context of proclamation of the word.<sup>62</sup> Proclamation then leads into the final component of Henry's pneumatological epistemology, the doctrine of regeneration. "Bestower of spiritual life, the Holy Spirit enables individuals to appropriate God's truth savingly and attests its power in their personal experience."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 258-59.

<sup>57</sup> Thanks are due to Dr. Mark DeVine, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Midwestern Seminary, for illustrating this problem.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 259-67.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 266. Cf. the supplementary note on Calvin, 290-95.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 476.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 479.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 480, 488.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 494ff.

To summarize Henry's Spirit-based epistemology, the Holy Spirit, by inspiring the authors of an inerrant and infallible Bible and by illuminating or interpreting the Bible to us, makes Christ epistemologically available to us. The Holy Spirit, moreover, through Christian proclamation of the word, makes Christ soteriologically available to us in regeneration. This relatively tight doctrine of revelation means one may not oppose personal experience or the Spirit or Jesus Christ to the Bible. One may not oppose the Jesus of experience to the Jesus of the Bible.

### **Whose Jesus?**

With the evangelical doctrine of revelation outlined over against non-evangelical, especially neo-orthodox or neo-Baptist, doctrines of revelation, it would be beneficial to contrast two possible Christologies which issue forth from two different doctrines of revelation. For illustrative purposes, we will compare the Jesus of Carl to the multiple Jesuses of Bob. Robert B. Setzer Jr. is an avowedly moderate Baptist pastor with degrees from Gardner-Webb, Southern Seminary and Princeton. Setzer has declared his rejection of propositional revelation in favor of personal truth, with such statements as, "Others may wish to reduce the gospel to certain timeless truths, but John knew better," and Christianity is "not a faith in a body of teaching [but] faith in a person."<sup>64</sup>

#### *Carl Henry's Jesus*

The Jesus that Carl Henry knows is the Jesus of the Bible. A lengthy quote from Henry is relevant here:

There is no justification for ranging the Living Word and the Written Word in absolute antithesis. The Written Word itself demands personal faith in Christ (John 20:31). But the indispensability of personal faith in Christ in no way implies the dispensability of the Scriptures as the Word of God written; apart from Scripture we can say nothing certain either about Jesus Christ or about the necessity of personal faith in him. To displace the truth of Scripture would of necessity lead to heretical if not idolatrous views of God and Christ; without the truth of the prophetic-apostolic word we would not know which of the many "christs" we should honor (cf. John 5:43). It is Scripture that preserves the demand for trust in the life and work of the incarnate, crucified and risen Logos of God as the ground of our redemption (John 5:39).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Encounters with the Living Christ: Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999), 7, 165.

<sup>65</sup> *GR&A*, IV, 203.

This profound statement needs to be unpacked in three ways. First, note the epistemological inseparability of Christ and Scripture. The living Word is discovered in and through the written word. This is an epistemological inseparability, not an ontological inseparability, for an ontological inseparability would be bibliolatry. The Word incarnated is known through the word in-scripturated. Henry agrees with B.B. Warfield in refuting those critics who try to create a partial authority for the New Testament by following one of four formulas: opposing Christ's teaching to apostolic teaching; opposing apostolic accommodation or ignorance to apostolic beliefs; opposing apostolic opinion to apostolic teaching; and, opposing scriptural phenomena to apostolic doctrine.<sup>66</sup> Again and again, Henry tells us it is not Jesus *versus* the word, but Jesus *through* the word.<sup>67</sup>

Second, note that the Christ whom Henry teaches is the Christ of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. He implies an historical approach to Christology in *God, Revelation and Authority*, where he castigates heresy,<sup>68</sup> quotes creeds as authoritative<sup>69</sup> and stresses both the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ.<sup>70</sup> He makes this approach explicit in *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*. Although the Bible is our primary source of knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth, not all appeals to Scripture are correct. For example, both "kenotic" and "moral union" Christologies appeal to Scripture, although with "tendential assumptions on the scriptural data."<sup>71</sup> These assumptions are rooted in historical critical methodologies, and Henry painstakingly helps us wade through the modern critics back to a serene historical-biblical faith in the God-man, Jesus Christ. Against the discovery of multiple Christologies in the New Testament, Henry finds "a consistent and coherent witness" to the one transcendent God who manifests himself to humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>72</sup> In spite of this single witness of Scripture, modernity finds itself confused and unsure about the identity of Jesus.<sup>73</sup> Henry projects a certainty about the identity of Jesus, although he is open to further discovery in the Bible about all that this one Jesus is.

Although the Bible presents its Christology both "from above" and "from below," the Christology "from below" concerns the disciples' epistemological discovery rather than any ontological movement by a man into the Godhead. Modernity objects to the Christ "from above," not

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 253-55.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., III, 75-98.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. II, 167, 318; III, 192-202.

<sup>69</sup> E.g. IV, 130, 237, 445.

<sup>70</sup> E.g. III, 99-117.

<sup>71</sup> *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, 46.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 58-59.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 63.

on exegetical grounds, but on modern assumptions against transcendence and eternity.<sup>74</sup> The second person of the ontological Trinity was incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth. God became man. Henry offers up a litany of passages which affirm the incarnation.<sup>75</sup> However, mere recitation is insufficient. He also searches out the meaning of the incarnation, especially how Christ can be both God and man. The biblical incarnation is explained, not in nineteenth-century kenotic terms, but according to the “two-minds” view of Thomas V. Morris, who seeks to reflect the Chalcedonian formula. The “two-minds” view asserts that Christ simultaneously had “a limited human consciousness and an overriding divine mind.”<sup>76</sup>

In case one failed to note the Chalcedonian definition of Christ, Henry quotes the creed in full and devotes an entire chapter to its explication. He accentuates that Jesus is the Son of God “in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.”<sup>77</sup> Citing Craig Blaising, Henry dismisses modern objections to a commitment to Chalcedon.<sup>78</sup> Today’s Christological parties are easily separated between those who will affirm Nicea and Chalcedon and those who refuse to do so.<sup>79</sup> Of course, this is no mindless creedalism, for “even an announced intention to remain faithful to Chalcedon provides no assurance of successful fulfillment of this objective.”<sup>80</sup> Rather, there must be an engagement with the Jesus of the Bible and the historic creeds are there to aid in that engagement. The Chalcedonian formula does not have the final word on Christology, but it can be the beginning of a great era in Christological conversations.<sup>81</sup> Henry shows that even the wisest of Christian teachers, such as his own mentor, Gordon Clark, struggle to the end of their lives with how to understand Jesus Christ is both “truly God and truly man.”<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, there is but one Jesus Christ and he is the God-man.

The third thing to notice in the lengthy quote from Henry is that he exalts the Christ while recognizing there are counterfeit christs. Some people, when they hear the name “Jesus,” automatically assume a

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 75. Cf. *GR&A*, III, 116; *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, 98-102.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>76</sup> Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 149-51; quoted in Henry, *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, 87.

<sup>77</sup> *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, 89.

<sup>78</sup> Craig A. Blaising, “Chalcedon and Christology,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138 (1981): 326-37; quoted in Henry, *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, 90.

<sup>79</sup> *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, 93-97.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>82</sup> Clark makes some daring moves, such as dismissing the term “substance,” redefining person to mean “the propositions he thinks” and apparently embracing Nestorianism (*Ibid.*, 104-111).

univocal definition. Unfortunately, this is simply not the case. There are various understandings of who Jesus Christ is. John Hayes discovered multiple views of Jesus in the twentieth century, from the Christ of orthodoxy to the political revolutionary to the sexual being of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.<sup>83</sup> Richard Grigg found at least nine different Christs being worshiped today, from the ethical teacher to the source of personal success to the apocalyptic Christ.<sup>84</sup> Henry distinguished between “the living Logos” and “defunct counterfeits,” the latter primarily being the result of disordered reason. Henry believes that man’s mind is created to be logical because it is created in the image of, and for relation with, the eternal reason, the *Logos*. Although he recognizes the term *logos* originally denoted a Greek philosophical concept, he unabashedly adopts it on the basis of its inclusion in the New Testament as a description of Jesus Christ.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, he believes “the eternal and self-revealed Logos, incarnate in Jesus Christ, is the foundation of all meaning, and the transcendent personal source and support of the rational, moral and purposive order of created reality.”<sup>86</sup> The *Logos*, however, is transcendent and becomes fully immanent only in Jesus of Nazareth. Mankind can perceive the *Logos* through general revelation, but cannot soteriologically know him except through special revelation.<sup>87</sup>

If the *Logos* enlightens every man (John 1:9) through his mind, and that man seeks to know the original *Logos*, yet such enlightenment is darkened by sin and rejects the biblical revelation, it follows that man will fashion his own *logoi*. These are created by philosophical efforts to attain truth apart from revelation. Henry describes these *logoi* as “a vast assortment” of failures. “Each and every such phantom logos has its day and is soon spent.”<sup>88</sup> False *logoi* have been created by deists, Hegelians,

<sup>83</sup> John H. Hayes, *Son of God to Superstar: Twentieth Century Interpretations of Jesus* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1976).

<sup>84</sup> Richard Grigg, *Imaginary Christs: The Challenge of Christological Pluralism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 2-5. Grigg’s support for the coexistence of multiple Christs is driven by an anthropocentric bias that will not allow for human access to a singular authoritative divine revelation. He even leaves open the possibility for simultaneous allegiance to Christ and Buddha (12-13, 97-104).

<sup>85</sup> *GR&A*, III, 192-93. Henry does not seem to recognize that there is also a Hebrew background to the New Testament *logos*. The Hebrew *dabar* emphasized action, while the Greek *logos* emphasized reason. The two “words” intersected in the Johannine definition of *Logos*. George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary 36 (Waco: Word, 1987), 6-10.

<sup>86</sup> *GR&A*, III, 195.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 207-11. Strong and Mullins also taught the suprahistoric Christ; however, they were not careful to separate the non-salvific general revelation of Christ from the salvific special revelation of Christ incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth. Strong, *Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism*, 160-61; Mullins, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression*, 44-46.

<sup>88</sup> *GR&A*, III, 192.

and Protestant modernists. Again, the neo-orthodox come under Henry's guns for special denunciation. When neo-orthodox theologians radically internalize the *Logos*, he loses his transcendence and becomes "clouded and obfuscated."<sup>89</sup> Henry goes on to criticize other theological movements on the left and concludes, "severed from unconditional meaning every preferred meaning is but an idolatrous logos." These multiple immanent *logoi* rob us of the transcendent *Logos*. In conclusion, Henry believes these multiple *logoi* lead "more and more" to the demonic: they are "contra-Logos" *logoi*, "a succession of imposter-logoi," who open "the dikes of intellectual [and we might add spiritual] disaster."<sup>90</sup>

### *Robert Setzer's Jesuses*

At one point in his critique of modern Christologies, Henry quips, "It takes an unusually fertile mind to hold that the New Testament itself espouses a society of rival Jesuses. Such an approach strips the New Testament of any objective authority, deprives the Church of an 'orthodox' Christology, and considers varying modern doctrines of Christianity's Founder to be theologically acceptable."<sup>91</sup> If not for its having been written seven years earlier, Henry's jab might have been describing Setzer's theological project. Having taken the point in attacking the 2000 revision of article one of the *Baptist Faith & Message*, Setzer will be used to illustrate the importance of Henry's concerns.

As noted above, Setzer is opposed to definitions of the faith; the propositional is jettisoned in favor of the personal. Setzer admits to difficulty with believing in the Jesus of the Bible.<sup>92</sup> He also admits this is due to his academic indoctrination into acidic forms of biblical criticism. After first imbibing the wine of the critics, he doubted whether the words attributed to Jesus really were the words of Jesus. Finally, he says, concerning Jesus, "I lost him." Fortunately, this Southern Baptist pastor came to believe in Jesus again. Unfortunately, he refers to this second experience as a second regeneration: "And for the second time in my life, I was reborn." He appears to have experienced what Hebrews 6:6 has deemed impossible: Setzer was born again *again*.<sup>93</sup>

There are other heterodoxies, if not heresies. He admits Scripture teaches the doctrine of the deity and humanity of Christ, but appears to embrace a form of monophysitism: "God *melled* that glorious Word into

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 196-99.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 200-1.

<sup>91</sup> *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, 57.

<sup>92</sup> *Encounters with the Living Christ*, 68.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., xiii-xvi, 147-48.

the humanity of one Jesus” (my italics).<sup>94</sup> He is aware of the biblical and historical basis for the doctrine of the Trinity, but considers it somewhat irrelevant to modern thought. He alternates between modalist analogies and a view that Jesus is not entirely God but a piece of a God who is greater than him, a perverse sort of Arianism.<sup>95</sup> He embraces a form of Patripassianism by providing an affirmative answer to the question: “Dare we say that at the cross of Jesus Christ, God’s heart ‘stopped’ on the table?”<sup>96</sup> He also anathematizes the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.<sup>97</sup>

These aberrant views of Christ and God are driven, of course, by a non-evangelical doctrine of revelation. For Setzer, as for many neo-Baptists, the individual soul appears to have a pre-regeneration access to God; all a soul need do is activate its own trust in Jesus. The elevation of the pre-regenerate soul and concomitant denigration of the deity appear in a number of places in Setzer’s work. God could not know the human heart unless part of him became a human. Setzer stresses the universal Fatherhood of God, but has no apparent place for the particular Fatherhood.<sup>98</sup> The universal immanence of God is emphasized to the near exclusion of his transcendence: “That inner spring of God’s Spirit is hidden within us all.” “The Holy Spirit is God’s heartbeat in our souls.”<sup>99</sup> Although the biblical language forces him into a recognition of divine grace, the human soul is saved by its self-activation of belief in Christ. The Christian life of discipleship is a supremely human activity; divine grace receives little attention.<sup>100</sup> Due to his anthropologically-focused Christian faith, Setzer has little need for a transcendent revelation, especially a propositional biblical one.

With such internal criteria for revelation, it should be no surprise that Setzer has experienced a number of different Jesuses in his life. “My Jesus,” as Setzer refers to *our* Lord, has appeared to him as “a

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 3. The Council of Chalcedon met in 451 to answer the heresy of monophysitism as taught by Eutyches.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 66-67, 110-13. According to Henry, the Trinity is more than an economic manifestation, God is essentially three-in-one. Those who teach the functional Trinity without affirming the ontological Trinity often lay the groundwork for unitarianism. Henry, *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, 78-79.

<sup>96</sup> *Encounters with the Living Christ*, 102. According to Tertullian, Praxeas promoted the modalist doctrine of Patripassianism: “By this Praxeas did a twofold service for the devil at Rome: he drove away prophecy, and he brought in heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete, and he crucified the Father” (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, III, 597).

<sup>97</sup> *Encounters with the Living Christ*, 142.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 7, 132.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 49-52, 114.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., xx, 15-16, 170. For his anthropology, he is dependent upon secular rather than biblical psychology, and is drawn to the “rugged individualism” of those denominations which downgrade ecclesiology (24, 137, 156).

Superman” or “a hip, older brother” with “long hair and sandals,” even “an Eastern sage, a kind of first-century Dali [sic] Lama.” Setzer’s view has improved over the years. Now, he sees Jesus as “the human face of the Eternal . . . God dressed up in working clothes.” Yet, this view may change again, for the Bible cannot tell the entire truth about him.<sup>101</sup> This brings us back to the questions we have posed: “Whose Jesus? Which revelation?” If your Jesus is based on an internal, individual, experiential revelation, your Jesus may change from one moment to the next. The only possible way Carl’s Jesus can be the same person as Bob’s Jesus is if Jesus has multiple personalities. Their contrary doctrines of revelation have led them to contradictory views of Jesus.

### Conclusion

As we noted above, Henry has been accused of being imbalanced, especially in his reliance upon reason. However, Henry was pursuing the apologetic task. Moreover, he does see the dangers of fallen reason, and occasionally limits the claims of philosophy:

Revealed theology differs decisively from secular philosophical systems. But while revelation in the biblical sense is a way of knowing to be sharply contrasted with philosophical reasoning, it is not antireason, but rather is a profound Logos-revelation or intelligible Word-revelation. Not only is divine revelation rational, but it is, in Christian purview, the ground of all rationality.<sup>102</sup>

Carl Henry may have his imbalances. What theologian does not? Personally, I would take him to task for not treating ecclesiology in depth.<sup>103</sup>

However, we cannot deny his importance for evangelical theology. In my Baptist history lectures, students are given a paradigm of Baptist theological development. Although Baptists in every age are concerned with soteriology and believers’ baptism, there are characteristic concerns of Baptists during different eras. In the seventeenth century, Baptists were consumed with the issue of ecclesiology exemplified in the theologizing of the erratic John Smyth. In the eighteenth century, Baptists were concerned with theology proper as the voluminous works of the meticulous John Gill testify. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, Andrew Fuller helped reorient Baptists toward evangelism and

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<sup>101</sup> Setzer, “Meeting Jesus,” in *Real Baptists: Spotlighting Changes in the Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville: Baptist Center for Ethics, 2000); available on the internet from <http://www.baptists4ethics.com>; accessed September 12, 2000.

<sup>102</sup> *GR&A*, I, 196.

<sup>103</sup> Mohler, “Carl F.H. Henry,” 292.

missions. At the dawn of the twentieth century, the beloved E. Y. Mullins led Baptists toward an emphasis on personal freedom. In the middle of the twentieth century, the overriding concern became the doctrine of revelation and the representative Baptist theologian for this era can be none other than Carl Ferdinand Howard Henry.