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work, in rejecting its historical arguments, he must defend his use of the term *inerrancy* despite the inerrantists who maintain that only the strict view has the proper historical justification. Pinnock may legitimately do this as a systematic theologian. But he should hardly expect to persuade those who have invested their lives in defending what they believe is the church's historic tradition. Whether a "moderate definition" of inerrancy will "carry the day" as Pinnock bravely expects is doubtful, yet remains to be seen.

But this is a major work on the nature of Scripture. It deserves to be widely read and used as the best systematic evangelical treatment of the doctrine. It is a splendid statement since it combines biblical fidelity with a clear-eyed vision of how technical difficulties about Scripture can be approached using the best positive tools of theological scholarship from the perspective of faith. One should not lament (as some have and will) that Pinnock's views have changed since his 1971 work, *Biblical Revelation*. The direction of his development has been toward an honest, open appraisal of Scripture in light of its own witness and contemporary questions. Yet Pinnock has not wavered in his commitment to Scripture as God's authoritative Word which has as its "central purpose" to "bring people to know and love God." For this commitment we can all be grateful, and from this book we can all learn as we seek to be faithful to the Word of God.

A Critique of Carl Henry's *Summa*

by Alan Padgett

God, Revelation, and Authority
by Carl F. H. Henry (Word Books, 1976-1983, 6 vols., $24.95 each).

Carl Henry is well known to readers of *TSF Bulletin*, as the foremost representative of evangelical thought in America today. We have reason to rejoice that he has finished his *magnum opus*, a work of six large volumes. He has brought into the twentieth century that great movement in American Reformed thought which extends back to the Puritans, on through Princeton Orthodoxy, and down to Henry himself. His theology exhibits both the positive and negative aspects of this tradition.

Volume one (438 pp.) is subtitled, "God Who Speaks and Shows: Preliminary Considerations." Henry begins with a critique of culture and modern epistemology and philosophy, setting his own view over against that of others. These chapters function as a prolegomenon, and discuss the method which controls the rest of the work. In volumes two, three and four (373, 536, and 674 pp. respectively), Henry expounds at great length his "Fifteen Theses on Revelation." These are:
(1) Revelation is freely initiated by God.
(2) Revelation is given for human benefit.
(3) God nevertheless transcends his own revelation.
(4) The fact that God gave revelation assures that revelation has a unity.
(5) The nature, content, and variety of revelation are God's determination.
(6) God's revelation is personal.
(7) God reveals himself in nature and history, as well as Scripture.
(8) The climax of revelation is Jesus of Nazareth.
(9) The mediating agent in all revelation is the Logos of God (the Second Person of the Trinity).
(10) God's revelation is conceptual-verbal.
(11) The Bible is the reservoir and conduit of divine truth.
(12) The Holy Spirit is active in revelation by (a) inspiring the authors of Scripture, and (b) illuminating our reading and understanding of Scripture.
(13) The Holy Spirit also enables individuals to savingly appropriate revelation.
(14) The church approximates the kingdom in miniature, and models the appropriated realities of divine revelation.
(15) The self-manifesting God will unveil his glory in a crowning revelation of power and judgment.

In the final two volumes (443 and 566 pp. respectively), subtitled, "God Who Stands and Stays," Henry deals with the doctrine of God against the backdrop of the first four books. He argues for the traditional view of God found in Protestant orthodoxy of the seventeenth century, brought up to date merely by reacting to and criticizing modern "heresies" such as process theology, feminist theology, and neo-orthodoxy. Henry argues for a literal heaven and hell, a six-day creation, Angels, Devils, and a God who is immutable, impassible, and timeless.

I cannot deal adequately with Henry's multi-volume work in this review. The only adequate response would be another multi-volumed dogmatics! I wish to focus here on the "Fifteen Theses," since these form the heart of Henry's work.

There are many strengths in this, the largest systematics ever published in America. Henry has certainly done his homework, as is obvious from the many outlines of other books, and the large bibliographies at the end of each volume. To read Henry carefully is to acquire a theological education! There are many sections in which he has effectively argued for an evangelical position over against other options in modern theology. In the first volume alone, I commend and recommend the chapters on "Revelation and Myth," "The Ways of Knowing," "The Rise and Fall of Logical Positivism," "Secular Man and Ultimate Concerns," "The Meaning or Myths Man [*sic*] Lives By," etc. The problem with this, on the other hand, is that Henry tends to devote page after page to outlines and quotations from other perspectives. This often makes his books repetitive. More than once, I had to force myself to finish a chapter. From time to time, I had to perform redaction-criticism to discover what Henry himself thought amidst all the quotations and summaries! The bottom line is, these books have not been edited well enough. We might expect more from the founder and former editor of *Christianity Today*.

Much of Henry's theology is excellent, and there is a great deal to be learned from his *summa*. The discussions of Theses 1, 2, 7, 8, and 15, *inter alia*, are really very good. The rest of this essay will be negative, however. Such is the nature of a review! But what follows should be taken in the context of my positive regard for Henry's work.

A good part of the time, Henry complains about the illogic, confusion, and contradiction present in other theologians. We need, therefore, to examine his own philosophy.

When Henry uses the word *logic*, he always means Aristotelian logic. He does not appear to realize that there are other logics, such as Chinese or Hegelian. While symbolic logic works well for abstract thought, I believe that Hegelian logic, for example, has much to say for itself with respect to physical and human nature. In the real world, things are sometimes not so black and white as "A does not equal not-A": reality often involves elements of both. A modern automobile is neither M (metal) nor Non-M, but elements of both. While Henry might complain that Hegel is a "pagan" philosopher, surely he was much more Christian than Aristotle!

Perhaps the greatest weakness in Henry's philosophy is his undefended and naive dependence on Gordon H. Clark. Because of this, Henry's theology becomes rather "hyper-rationalist": truth is found *only* in propositions. True propositions are clearly known and easily accessible in an inerrant Bible, and Aristotelian logic reveals the machinations of the Divine Mind.

I believe, on the contrary, that the biblical notion of truth is not limited to propositions. For someone who believes in inerrancy, Henry has a strange tendency to read his views into the Bible, rather than perform legitimate exegesis. One instance of this eisegesis can be found in his discussion of the Logos in John (3:482-487; cf. any standard commentary on John). The Bible does speak about truth, and about the Logos, but this is first and foremost a Person for John (Jn. 1:14, cf. 14:6, "I Am the Truth"). Paul, also, does believe that the "love of the truth" will lead

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us to salvation and sanctification in the Holy Spirit (2 Thess. 2:12-15). But for Paul this truth is a story (God-spell) about a Person, not a set of inerrant propositions. We fundamentally believe in Jesus Christ, not in a set of propositions. While belief in Jesus surely *implies* belief in certain propositions (i.e., that Jesus lived, taught, died, rose, etc.)) *this is clearly secondary.* The foundational belief in the New Testament is always a belief "in," not a belief "that"; or, better, our belief "in" (personal trust) leads us to certain beliefs "that" (beliefs about certain propositions). Henry is aware of this and tries to deal with it (3:433), but the attempt only reveals the depth of his onesidedness.

We need not follow Henry in order to believe in objective, divine truth. Objectivity can be maintained in an eternal Person, the Living Word, as much as in a set of eternal, inerrant propositions (as T. F. Torrance has clearly shown in his many writings). Indeed, Henry's way of salvation owes far more to Plato and Aristotle than it does to Jesus. Henry confesses that belief in Jesus is "a kind of literary shorthand" (3:438) for belief in propositions! This can only lead to the idea of salvation-by-knowledge, a return to Gnosticism (not a secret gnosis, but a gnosis none the less!). Henry's dialogue with Torrance (3:216-229) discloses the weakness of his own position; his withholding of the name "evangelical" from Torrance is sheer prejudice. Thesis six claims that revelation is personal, but this boils down to the idea that God reveals his Names in the propositions of the Bible. This is *personal* self-revelation?

Another major problem with Henry's *summa* is that he has declined to see significant value in much of modern thought. This arises from his theological method. Henry's approach is what Nicholas Wolterstorff calls "foundationalism" (see his *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion,* 2nd ed., 1984). Wolterstorff, Alvin Plantinga, William Alston, and other evangelical philosophers have rightly rejected foundationalism, as did C. S. Peirce and J. H. Newman in the previous century. There is no pure Cartesian set of indubitable propositions from which we can derive philosophy and theology. Against Henry, I must insist that the Bible cannot be a foundation of inerrant propositions, upon which we build the edifice of theology. Henry has chosen not to draw upon the insights of modern philosophy, and his theology is based on this questionable theological method. If, as he claims, the Bible is the set of foundational, inerrant propositions, then all we need to do is arrange these propositions in systematic order, criticize other positions, and we have pure, timeless truth. Theology just doesn't work that way! Henry's theological method neither fits the phenomena of Scripture nor performs the actual task of philosophy and theology. (For a much better view, still upholding inerrancy, see Clark Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle,* reviewed elsewhere in this issue.)

In one important area especially—hermeneutics—Henry has failed to learn from modern thought. His view of interpretation can only be described as naive. He has read widely in this field, and as usual summarizes important books, but only to reject them (4:296-315). He insists that "revelation has a propositional-verbal character and can be directly extracted [!] from the scriptural text. . . . the Bible is a book of divinely disclosed doctrinal truths comprehensible to any reader" (4:300). According to Henry, exegesis presupposes a fixed methodology and is a scientific quest for objective and permanent knowledge (4:304). This view cannot stand up against the facts of science and Scripture. Kurt Godel in mathematics and Werner Heisenberg in physics *proved* that there is no objective knowledge of the sort Henry is looking for. In philosophy of science, M. Polanyi and T. Kuhn both clearly demonstrate that science is not "objective" in the sense of personal prejudice and interest playing no part in scientific discovery. The fact is that we cannot escape our life situation and our personal interests in order to obtain pure, timeless truths. Henry is dreaming the impossible dream.

On the other hand, I must commend Henry for his cautious acceptance in volume four of the historical-critical method. He rightly accepts form-criticism, for example (4:81f.) while rejecting conclusions based on false presuppositions. Henry takes Harold Lindsell to task for the latter's anti-intellectualism in rejecting the historical-critical method (4:393). He plainly states that "historical criticism is never philosophically or theologically neutral" (4:403). One only wishes he had come to this conclusion in his discussion of hermeneutics!

All in all, I feel Henry has done evangelicalism both good and harm in this *summa.* The good comes from his clear placing of evangelical options in the mainstream of current theology. Though some may ignore his work, they cannot claim that evangelical theology has not been ably articulated. On the other hand, Henry has harmed evangelical theology by his uncritical acceptance of the philosophy of Gordon H. Clark. This philosophy is simply not viable and will give some a poor excuse to reject Henry's theology out of hand. It also leads to a *summa* in which page after page is spent discussing the views of other scholars, only to reject them in the end. Henry places himself in a lonely corner, where just a handful of conservative theologians are willing even to dialogue with him. He has failed to profit from modern thought, and therefore has failed to write the modern exposition (not just *defense*!) of evangelical theology we so desperately need.

Erickson's Three-Volume *Magnum Opus*

by Clark H. Pinnock

Christian Theology
by Millard J. Erickson (Baker Book House, 3 vols., 1983, 1984, 1985, 1274 pp., $57.85).

Millard Erickson is now dean of Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and has labored for two decades to write a major systematic theology which would replace A. H. Strong in the teaching of ministerial students. This he has accomplished with great distinction, and has given to all of us a lucidly written and carefully organized evangelical theology. I do not think one has to be Baptist to recognise that here is the basic level textbook in Christian doctrine we have been needing for some time. It is quality work from first to last. Erickson is current in biblical studies, historical theology, and philosophical issues, and presents the fruits of his considerable labors to us in an eminently readable and edifying form. Almost wherever you look in the vast extent of this *magnum opus* you discover wise teaching on the major issues confronting our theological convictions today. And the preacher will find here the material for a lifetime of pulpit work. I am frankly filled with delight when I contemplate this magnificent production.

One can tell something about this work by noting the people to whom Erickson dedicates each of the three volumes: to Bernard Ramm his first theology professor, to William Hordern his doctoral mentor, and to Wolfhart Pannenberg who has been an inspiration to him. Ramm symbolizes the solid evangelical setting in which Erickson lives and works. Hordern represents the larger realm of theological thought adjacent to it. And Pannenberg stands for the high level of reflection which Erickson wants to engage in. Because he has incorporated the wealth of theological investigation from beyond his own confessional circles, Erickson has been able to create the masterpiece he has. Here is an evangelical theologian who has grown up in the family of conservative theology and not forsaken it, but has also moved beyond its confines in his search for good ideas. He has been able to integrate these insights into a framework which respects the authority of the Bible, employing them in the service of an evangelical witness and piety.

The way the author proceeds will not surprise anyone, though it does raise a question. He begins, after clearing up some preliminary matters, by exploring the issue of how we know God. He goes into general and then special revelation, and makes the case for Scripture as a product of the latter and the touchstone of authority in theology. On the basis of the canonical principle he then advances to an exposition of all the various top-

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