Systematic Theology, Vol. 1: Prolegomena

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Description
What is the foundation of theology?

In this monumental work—the “first things” of a multi-volume, comprehensive theological system—Norman R. Gulley argues pervasively and persuasively that Scripture, and Scripture alone, must be the sole foundation of authentic evangelical Christian faith. According to Gulley, theology should not depend on philosophy, science, reason, tradition or experience but on Scripture alone. His argument stands in contrast to recent influential evangelical theologians who consider Scripture only a witness to revelation, and not revelation itself. According to Gulley, God is thus removed from His Word in the same way others have removed Him from His world. He argues that this emptying of Scripture of its propositional, cognitive revelation deconstructs the basis of the evangelical movement.

Gulley’s view of sola scriptura drives his detailed, sweeping and balanced critique of the major underlying themes, issues and philosophies that have informed some other theological systems. From Parmenides and the timeless view of God in ancient Greece to a detailed analysis of 21st-century dispensational theology, Gulley ranges easily over millennia, showing how different concepts and philosophies have affected the premise of sola scriptura for good or ill.

Aptly subtitled Prolegomena, this ambitious work functions as an excellent introduction to theological thought. It is designed for general use and for the serious student of theology who will appreciate the opening summary of each chapter’s contents, and the concluding study questions. It also serves as an introduction to the next volume which unfolds Gulley’s system within the biblical cosmic controversy worldview.

ISBN
9781883925376

Publication Date
2003

Publisher
Andrews University Press

City
Berrien Springs, MI

Recommended Citation
This first volume is subtitled Prolegomena. Reading through this book is something of an achievement for me. I got most of the set of Chafer’s Systematics back in 2004. I remember then thinking that I would wait until I had the full set before I read though any of the volumes. My thinking was that I did not want to have an incomplete view of Chafer. I was finally able to get the final two volumes at McKay this year and launched into what will probably be a reading project over the next few years. This first volume is subtitled Prolegomena, Bibliology, and Theology Proper. I thought that the author’s Part 1 - Prolegomena’s Chapter 1 - Idea of Theology’s I. Definition’s II. Aim’s III. Possibility’s IV. Necessity’s - The Necessity of Theology Has Its Grounds’s V. Relation to Religion’s Chapter 2 - Material of Theology’s I. Sources of Theology’s II. Limitations of Theology’s III. Relations of Material to Progress in Theology’s Chapter 3 - Method of Theology’s I. Requisites to the Study’s II. Divisions of Theology’s III. History of Systematic Theology’s IV. For a modern instance of this use of the term “theology” in the narrow sense, see the title of Dr. Hodges first volume: “Systematic Theology, Vol. I: Theology.” But theology is not simply “the science of God,” nor even “the science of God and man.” It also gives account of the relations between God and the universe.