Systematic Theology, Vol. 1: Introduction/Bible by Norman Geisler

A Most Excellent Introductory Volume

The Culminating Work of a Lifetime of Study and Research As Dr. Norman Geisler explains and defends the essentials that make Christian belief possible—the preconditions—he lays a thorough foundation for Christian faith that will instruct theologians, pastors, and students for years to come. Building on that foundation, Geisler’s bibliology, including the inspiration and authority of the Bible, has been called the most extensive defense of the consistent evangelical view of Holy Scripture available.

My Personal Review:
As the first systematic theology book I've read, I didn't really know what to expect going into it; and being the first volume of Dr. Geisler's nearly 3,000 page, four volume masterpiece in Systematic Theology, the task seemed daunting to say the least. However, having read a few of Dr. Geisler's other works before this, I knew it would be a wealth of knowledge that would be well worth the time and effort invested in reading it, and would no doubt exceed my expectations in the process. So far, it appears I was right.

Not only is this first volume extremely thorough, but it is clearly written, heavily referenced, and incredibly organized. It is structured in a logical fashion in which there are little "a priori" assumptions. Instead, it starts at the most foundational level and builds from there, brick by brick, justifying every step of the way. In the first half, the Prolegomena (preconditions), Dr. Geisler lays out all the preconditions necessary for Christianity. I found this half to be delightfully philosophically rich in that it introduced and expanded upon, in great detail, every philosophical viewpoint and presupposition I could possibly think of and some I'd probably never have thought of - and in understandable language. In the second half, Dr. Geisler outlines not philosophy, but the Bible itself. Here, he links the philosophical views in the first half to their corresponding perspectives regarding the Bible and its origin, its historicity, its meaning, its theology, etc., and ultimately its purpose for us as humans. In both halves, the various viewpoints were represented and analyzed well, being critiqued or supported as seemed fit; and although Dr. Geisler is very clear on where he stands and why, he did a great job of laying out all the evidence, thus allowing the reader to draw their own conclusions from where the arguments lead. I also found the appendix on "Objections to Theistic Arguments" to be tremendously beneficial as well - something I wouldn't expect to see in a book on systematic theology.
Overall, I loved it and cannot wait to read the next three volumes, however long it takes. I would highly recommend this collection to any Christian who desires to take the time to think critically about their faith, as well as to simply learn what they believe and why they believe it. The wealth of knowledge available is truly overwhelming, but with patience and perseverance, this "culminating work of a lifetime of study and research" will leave you with a faith that is grounded, strengthened, justified, confident, defensible, and enriched. You will not be let down.

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