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Review: Systematic Theology:
Prolegomena

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three major areas of human concern: the *storm-god* as the dominant environmental force upon which people depended for their survival, usually with dualistic characteristics and accompanied by various semidivine attendants that serve as his functional markers in the various geographic contexts; the *storm-god* as the foundation of centralized political power, usually legitimizing and validating the authority of the king as the instrument of divine government; and the *storm-god* as the foundation of a continuously evolving sociocultural process, symbolically projected through his accompanying semidivine attendants, basically the bull, dragon, eagle, lion, and the goddess of fertility (281-291). Almost as an afterthought, Green surprisingly notices in the last page of his final chapter that YHWH does not fit very well into this never-ending chain of changing names and functions of ANE deities and their semidivine attendants, and that there are three unique traits that differentiate the Hebrew *storm-god* YHWH from all the other *storm-gods* of the ANE: he is the Creator God of all, he acts in history and not in mythology, and he is the only god who does not need any semidivine attendants (292).

Green has to be congratulated for his attempt to reach a synthesis on such a diverse and methodologically difficult-to-capture theme as the *storm-god* in the ANE. The result is a work that has accumulated data from various disciplines (e.g., history, iconography, and epigraphy) and that has produced a coherent theory about one of the most important motifs in the religious *Weltbild* of the ANE. The multidisciplinary and sociocultural methodology is consistently followed through until the fourth chapter, where the author has to replace the iconographic and epigraphic sources with biblical texts, nevertheless applying the same mythological perspective in the reading of these passages, and consequently arriving at a mythological and evolutionist interpretation of YHWH, which the author himself seems to refute with his final observations.

Browsing through the extensive bibliography (293-333), one cannot help but notice that the majority of entries stem from the 1980s, with a few exceptions reaching as far as 1993, which raises the question of whether Green's research should not have been updated before going to press. A closer look at the iconographic sections does nothing to improve this impression: most of the iconographic data is based on Vanel's important but outdated work, which was published in 1964, and represents the "prehistory" of iconographic research. The author ignores completely Othmar Keel's and other publications from the Fribourg school, which over the years have developed a methodology of iconographic interpretation and, even more, have presented fundamental iconographic material for the discussion of the *storm-god* motif that has been ignored by Green. It is also surprising to see the low quality of reproductions of line drawings of iconographic objects from Vanel—especially if one considers that Green's book has been published by Eisenbrauns. I have a photocopy of Vanel in my archive that appears to be of better quality than some of the illustrations provided in Green's book.

While Green has covered geographically most of the ANE with a strong emphasis on Mesopotamia, one awaits an explanation for the exclusion of the Egyptian evidence with relationship to the *storm-god*, considering that the motif is widely represented in this region by the god Reshef, who also underwent a local Palestinian adaptation process (e.g., Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Ba'al*, OBO 140 [Fribourg: University Press, 1994]).

The contribution of *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* is most significant with regard to the synthesis and interpretation of the epigraphic material, especially from Mesopotamia and Syria. However, there is a lack of updated bibliographical material, and the chapter on Canaan lacks epigraphic and iconographic data. When the author

tries to force his perspective of the religious history of the ANE onto the data, which does not correspond to his established methodology, the resulting interpretations appear unsatisfactory. Aside from these specific comments, I would recommend the book for the bookshelves of students of epigraphy, iconography, and religious history, since it brings together a wealth of divergent material from various disciplines that almost transform it into a reference work.

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Gulley, Norman R. *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2003. xxx + 810 pp. Hardcover, \$49.99.

Norman Gulley is Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee, and past president of the Adventist Theological Society.

In fifteen chapters, Gulley introduces the issues that precede theology proper. He is thoroughly evangelical, fully conversant with ancient and modern sources and ideas, and capable of elucidating very difficult subjects. Millard Erickson pens the foreword. Helpful are initial purpose and summary statements, chapter outlines, and introductions and conclusions for each chapter. The bold headings provide not only structure, but good aesthetics as well. The layout of each slightly larger than 9" by 6" page is pleasant to the eye; the print is crisp and readable with ample white space. The text runs across each page in one large column with centered bottom page numbers.

Gulley first shows the impact philosophy and science have had on theology by introducing the idea of a timeless God, who cannot break into our phenomenal world. Later, to Descartes, Hume, and Kant, God was inward, subjective, and unknowable. Man's reason was elevated above the Scriptures. Resulting philosophies, such as pragmatism, existentialism, and logical positivism, are critiqued next, with a discussion of various aspects of theological language. These philosophical theories, Gulley asserts, cannot rival the understanding of truth and absolutes that come from biblical revelation. He perceptively evaluates Grenz and Guy, finding their view of community wanting, carefully meeting their points one by one.

In chapters 4 through 6, Gulley defines and gives the parameters of theological study. He argues that the Scriptures are the sole basis for theology, and it has its own presuppositions and methods. Gulley remarks: "The disciplines of science and philosophy begin with a given, a first principle. In theology that given is a self-revealing God in Scripture" (246). Gulley notes the place of general revelation, its strengths and limitations, and also the importance of seeing the propositional nature of Scripture. His understanding of Barth, Torrance, and Bloesch is remarkable. He kindly but firmly demonstrates their weaknesses with clear and cogent explanations.

Gulley insists on both the divine and human aspects of the Word. But rather than use the word "inerrant" to describe Scripture, he prefers the term "trustworthy." "Scripture is trustworthy because Scripture is revelation" (329). He writes: "It must be admitted that Scripture has a human side with errors that defy resolution at this time. However—and this is crucial—these are not major errors" (330). I will discuss below some objections to this statement and offer some points for clarity.

Chapter 9 considers authority. God is Creator, and "by virtue of His position He is the source of all other authorities. . . . The Bible is as authoritative as He is because it represents His truths" (361-362). Gulley rejects authorities such as church, reason, and

experience, rightly concluding that “*sola Scriptura* declares Scripture to be the only judge of authority . . . [and] it is the sole authority in judging all other claims to religious authority” (382).

Having established Scripture as the sole framework for doing theology, Gulley then reaches the apex of his book—the biblical worldview—which he terms the cosmic controversy, namely, the battle between Christ and Satan (chap. 10). The issue before the universe, according to Gulley, is the justice of God. From Satan’s fall to the final judgment God is showing not only his love, but his justice to a watching universe. Isaiah 14, Ezek 28, Job 1–2, and Christ’s death on the cross, revealing God’s love, emphasize these ideas. Satan’s rebellion and hatred were exposed at Calvary. Central to this worldview is the free choice all human and angelic beings have. There are subsidiary ideas as well. For instance, Gulley holds that God created a vast system of intelligent beings that inhabit “innumerable populated planets in His vast interconnected universes” (431–432); the final judgment issues in the annihilation of all fallen angels and unsaved humans (446); and that Michael the archangel and Christ are one and the same (434).

Gulley next offers an excellent critique of postmodernism. He shows its origin, reviews its proponents, and artfully exposes its fallacies, countering with the sure foundation of God’s Word. Two additional chapters present a history of hermeneutical views from early rabbinical interpretation to postmodernity with analysis and conclusions. Gulley is thorough in his treatment and consistent in upholding the *sola Scriptura* principle. The Bible must be allowed to interpret itself.

Having laid the groundwork for biblical interpretation, Gulley, in his final chapter offers a critique of dispensational hermeneutics, which sees a separate place for a future redeemed Israel in the land of Canaan. He argues that God’s promises are conditional (Deut 28), that Israel broke the conditions, and that the church is “the new Israel of God” (742). He chides dispensationalists for holding a literal view that Israel must one day inherit the Promised Land. He compliments progressive dispensationalists for some advances toward his view, hoping for greater future movement.

Gulley, abreast of so much diverse scholarship, is to be thanked for his monumental work, his clarity of expression, and the cogency of his logic. His irenic tone reflects his compassionate spirit, yet he never wavers from his message. I offer the following observations with a sense of gratitude to Gulley for the stimulating writing he has produced.

In a passing remark on Christ’s incarnation, Gulley posits Christ’s “relinquishing of omnipresence” (83), and practically a nonuse of other divine attributes. Care must be taken in this regard, since prior to the cross Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20), and John 3:13 (NKJV) also speaks of his omnipresence.

Gulley several times refers to the Bible containing “errors,” but believes the Scriptures are still trustworthy (330, 332, 335). But if the Bible has some errors, how can I be certain it is not also erroneous about its purpose and saving content? It would be clearer to consistently say that there are alleged errors, or apparent contradictions or inconsistencies. The Matt 27:9 passage that Briggs touts was ably answered in Edward Young’s *Thy Word Is Truth*. He offered five or six possible solutions, noting that we may still not know the answer.

In spite of the evidence Gulley gave, it is not totally convincing that Isa 14 and Ezek 28 are about Satan’s fall rather than poetic descriptions of the king of Babylon and the leader of Tyre (398–427). That, however, does not void the cosmic controversy. It

is still taught in Scripture. It might be a stretch to say that the Book of Job opens “at the United Nations of the Universe, which was convened before God. . . . This could have been a meeting of different leaders from the inhabited planets throughout the universe” (431). Do these other worlds have fallen beings, and has God made salvation provisions for them? Job 1:6 could take place on earth, with Job being one of the “sons of God” who came to worship God. This section seemed somewhat speculative.

Though verses were listed, the argument for annihilation, rather than eternal punishment, seemed to be based primarily on reason rather than on the *sola Scriptura* principle (412–413, 427, 446). Why could not free creatures be eternally punished, though eternally separated from God, because they choose to sin forever? Why did Jesus repeatedly warn about being cast into hell where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:43–49)? Jesus taught degrees of punishment in Matt 10:15 and 11:21–24, but annihilation knows no degrees.

Dispensationalists will not find Gulley’s arguments against a future place for a redeemed Israel convincing, believing that many of God’s promises are unconditional. In the midst of their captivity, God promised Israel and Judah that he would restore them in belief to “dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt” (Ezek 37:25, NKJV). Jeremiah 31:31–34 may have different interpretations, but it is addressed to Israel and Judah. Again, long after the Jews had asked for Jesus’ death, Paul still distinguished between Israel and the church (1 Cor 10:31). Galatians 6:16 is perhaps best seen as distinguishing between the church and Israel, where *kai* simply means “and” (NKJV, NASB, NRSV, ESV).

I believe Gulley confuses “God-breathed” with “being carried along” when he applies *theopneustos* to the writers (163, 310). He says: “The Holy Spirit moved the prophets. They were God-breathed” (314). The product was God-breathed, while it was the writers who were carried along. 2 Timothy 3:16 notes the *product*, the Scriptures; 2 Pet 1:21 the *process*, men carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Gulley’s book has no bibliography. This does not mean, however, that he is unfamiliar with his sources. On the contrary, the 2,440 footnotes average 163 per chapter. There are indices of Names, Scriptures, and Subjects. The Names index is somewhat faulty, completely omitting Thurneysen (234); Tenney, who is quoted (285); Paul Althaus (287); and Chemnitz (quoted for 5 lines, p. 300, and also p. 364). Entreaty is likewise quoted for seven lines (300) but is omitted. The index listed Hordern’s appearances from p. 61 on, but he is also found on pp. 54–55, 58–59, and 60, which are missing. Bromiley, quoted and cited for three points (299), is absent from the Index of Names. The Subject Index is helpful but somewhat sketchy. “Hell” has no separate entry but is found under “Justice.” Though there is considerable discussion of “kingdom” in the final chapter, the index omits it. Only eight Bible books are not quoted, an indication of how extensively Gulley uses Scripture in his prolegomena.

It is always a concern that a volume based on much research handles its sources properly, so I checked a few quotes. This volume had its share of quoting errors. One of the worst, but very common, was to have “Armenian” where the original had “Arminian” (78). Page 197 saw five minor copy mistakes in C. S. Lewis, the largest being a substitution of “fantasies” for “fancies.” On p. 80, n. 144, Gulley has nine words in italics besides just the two in the original quote. Four verses referenced to John’s Gospel (134, line 9), are actually found in 1 John. The correct page for Henry’s quote on p. 86 is 372, not 373. “Or” replaces “of” in the seventh line of Calvin’s quote (307), and on the next page David’s words are attributed to Samuel. Four verbs from Rev 20:7–10 are found in the present tense rather than the NIV’s past tense (445–446). The word

"concerning" is missing from the end of the second line of Reymond's quote (673). Revelation 16:13-15 does not end with the word "awake," so an ellipsis should indicate that part of the verse is omitted (72). Gulley may have created some confusion with references to the *New Scofield Bible* (736) and the *New Scofield Study Bible* (727-728), as well as the unexplained abbreviation, *NSJB*, on the latter two pages. The proper nomenclature is *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, which he has correctly indicated on p. 427, and which I believe Gulley had in mind in those final pages of his text. There is a quote of thirteen words on p. 89 without footnoting either source or page, and similarly on p. 90. I found only a few uses of secondary citations (306, 336, 339-340). Occasionally, there were imprecise page references, as when a single sentence is quoted (195), then unhelpfully referenced as from pp. 55-68.

Similar to quoting errors are possible typos and other mistakes. Page 462, n. 21, has 1955 for a date, whereas 1995 is correct on p. 479, note 112. The god of this "word" should be "world" (423), while the correct title of Lewis's book is *The Case for Christianity*, not *The Case of Christianity* (197). The date of Arndt's book is 1962, not 1932 (345). The biblical quote on p. 243 from "John 16:12-15" actually begins with verse 7. Page 232 should omit the second time "one" appears in line five. It seems strange to say "the Word of God is ciphered through religious experience" (206). On p. 253 the second paragraph begins, "No one argues that there is more to God and truth than He reveals in both nature and in Scripture." But, in fact, most would agree with the opposite. I believe a "not" should be inserted after "is."

In the page break between the sentence spanning pp. 254 and 255, a "the" fell out and should be reinserted before "Holy Spirit." The Greek word given to correspond to "Scriptures" should also be plural, not singular, in the fourth line of p. 276. Most frequently when quoting OT verses, a particular name of God appears correctly as "LORD" (198-199, 274); but on p. 151 and twice on p. 279, the second through fourth letters are not diminished (LORD). Strangely, two quotes from Lemke about von Rad (183) are actually attributed in nn. 136 and 137 to von Rad himself. Lemke's volume should be referenced there.

Page 310 says that research lay behind the writing of the Book of Acts, which is certainly true, but Luke 1:1-4 is the given proof text. The words "apostemh" and "doxa" in note 101 (170) apparently were meant to be in Greek characters, but remained in English letters before also being transliterated into italics.

It is accurate to say the KJV contains only thirty-nine OT books (317), but it originally had the Apocrypha in 1611. A glaring error, though hopefully not intentional, was the statement on p. 318 that the Catholic Church accepts the *New Testament Apocrypha*, which then influenced "its veneration of Mary" and several other doctrines. No church, to my knowledge, treats the NT apocryphal writings as canonical. Alexander the Great lived in the fourth century B.C., not A.D., as reported on p. 524.

The inclusion of accents on Greek words is sporadic, found on only one word on p. 194, and incorrectly over a consonant on p. 73. I wondered why Hartshorne's death date of 2000 was not included (77), since publication came in 2003. Otherwise, birth and death years were helpful in placing persons and their views.

Spelling errors spoil many books. Fortunately, few were found. However, there were: "disguise" (disguise, 128); "strenthening" (strengthening, 130); "perspecuity" on pp. 208 and 299 (but "perspicuity," spelled correctly on pp. 644 and 666); "claimes" (claims, 303); and "dubius" (dubious, 582). The Greek word γράφει (misspelled three times, p. 667) should be γράφει. The transliteration "aiwnas" (431) should be "aionas." An English "w" cannot be used for a Greek omega.

The abbreviations used for states in the footnote publication data seemed old-fashioned with no standard. Examples are: Mich., Calif., Conn., Ind., Ore., Tex., and N.J., but also Md., Id., and Ga. Most inconsistent was the use of Penn., and also Pa., (538, 544), and Ken., (477, 656), but also Ky. (512). Why not follow the standard postal two-capital-letter abbreviations? Copyright dates should be the original copyright, not reprint dates. One might think Gesenius (1988, p. 428) were still alive, as well as Berkhof (1996, p. 246). I suggest dropping the use of "etc." on pp. 154, 286, and 351 to enhance precision.

Even with these few technical shortcomings, Gulley's volume is to be admired, read, and pondered. I gained much from its reading and heartily recommend it to other theologians and serious students of the Word for a fine presentation of prolegomena.

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Gulley, Norman R. *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2003. xxx + 810 pp. Hardcover, \$49.99.

Prolegomena is the introductory volume of a proposed multivolume *Systematic Theology* of the doctrines of the Christian faith. The theological orientation of this study is indicated in the "Dedication" to two great evangelical theologians, Carl F. H. Henry and Millard J. Erickson, who are described as "scholars who have stood tall in presenting Scripture as revelation." Erickson has contributed an affirmative and gracious two-page "Foreword." In *Systematic Theology*, Norman Gulley, Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee, who studied under T. F. Torrance in Edinburgh, demonstrates a masterful command of the philosophical, hermeneutical, and theological systems of thought from the early church to the present and a marked ability to describe these in clear, concise passages of thought.

The volume commences with a seven-page "Preface," in which Gulley points directly to God's self-revelation in Scripture as the foundation of his system and outlines the concerns, method, and contributions of his study. *Prolegomena* is comprised of thirteen chapters which constitute a comprehensive survey of the foundational and methodological themes of systematic theology. The structure of the chapters indicates that the study is intended for, and admirably suited to, classroom use. Each chapter commences with a declaration of "Purpose," expressed in several one-line statements. This is followed successively by a brief "Summary" section, an "Outline" of the section headings of the chapter; a brief "Conclusion," and finally a set of "Study Questions." There are three exhaustively complete indices—"Name," "Scripture," and "Subject"—some sixty pages in all. There is no bibliography, but this is not essential inasmuch as the frequent brief quotations are clearly identified in the footnotes and are readily available via the indices and would have added many pages to an already large book.

This volume, subtitled *Prolegomena*, constitutes the most extensive and detailed such treatment of which I am aware. The concept of *prolegomena*, developed and popularized by theologians of the period of Protestant orthodoxy, usually consists of a chapter or two at the beginning of a systematic theology. Generally, *prolegomena*, meaning "things said before," have been thought of in two categories: things that must be said "previously," called external *prolegomena*; and things that must be said "first," or internal *prolegomena*. External *prolegomena* serve to locate and describe the theological undertaking in relationship to wider currents of thought and knowledge. Internal *prolegomena* define