

## BOOK REVIEW

of

Carl F.H. Henry,

*God, Revelation and Authority*, volume III, *God Who Speaks and Shows: Fifteen Theses, Part Two*, Word Books, 1979.

This book is in the Evangel Library,  
and this review is by Larry D. Paarmann.

An overview of the six-volume set *God, Revelation and Authority* was given in the January 2003 issue of *Evangel News*. A review of volume I was given in the March 2003 issue. Volume II was reviewed in the April 2003 issue. Volume III, reviewed here, is the second of three volumes on fifteen theses. The fifteen theses all have to do with divine revelation. The three volumes of fifteen theses may be divided by primary concern with God the Father (volume II, seven theses), God the Son (volume III, three theses), and God the Holy Spirit (volume IV, the last five theses).

Thesis Eight is that God's revelation reached its climax in the incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth. Thesis Eight consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1 is titled "The Disclosure of God's Eternal Secret." Chapter 2 is titled "Prophecy and Fulfillment: The Last Days." Chapter 3 is "Jesus' View of Scripture." Chapter 4 is "The Only Divine Mediator." Chapter 5 is "The Content of the Gospel." Chapter 6 is "Jesus and the Word." Chapter 7 is "Jesus Christ – God-Man or Man-God?" Chapter 8 is "Shall We Look for Another?" Chapter 9 is "The Resurrection of the Crucified Jesus."

Thesis Nine is that the mediating agent in all divine revelation is the Eternal Logos – preexistent, incarnate, and now glorified. Thesis Nine consists of six chapters. Chapter 10 is "The Intelligibility of the Logos of God." Chapter 11 is "The Biblically Attested Logos." Chapter 12 is "The Living Logos and Defunct Counterfeits." Chapter 13 is "The Logos as Mediating Agent of Divine Revelation." Chapter 14 is "The Logos and Human Logic." Chapter 15 is "The Logic of Religious Language."

Thesis Ten is that God's revelation is rational communication conveyed in intelligible ideas and meaningful words. Thesis Ten consists of thirteen chapters. Chapter 16 is "Revelation as a Mental Act." Chapter 17 is "Cognitive Aspects of Divine Disclosure." Chapter 18 is "Wisdom as a Carrier of Revelation." Chapter 19 is "The Origin of Language." Chapter 20 is "Is Religious Language Meaningful?" Chapter 21 is "The Meaning of Religious Language." Chapter 22 is "Religious Language and Other Language." Chapter 23 is "A Theistic View of Language." Chapter 24 is "The Living God Who Speaks." Chapter 25 is "Neo-Protestant Objections to Propositional Revelation." Chapter 26 is "Linguistic Analysis and Propositional Truth." Chapter 27 is "The Bible as Propositional Revelation." Chapter 28 is "Doctrinal Belief and the Word of God."

It is a strange world where even among professing Christians so much effort and argument must be made to defend the idea that Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God, when such is so clearly proclaimed in Scripture, and that God, who can tell no lie, says what He means and means what He says in Scripture, and is fully capable of preserving His own written revelation. One would expect challenges to the propositional truth of Scripture from adherents of other religions or from atheists and agnostics, but one of Henry's burdens to try to reason with professing Christians about the common-sense trustworthiness of the Bible and to warn evangelicals of the dangers of so much wrong-thinking when it comes to revelation. Henry says in Chapter 17, "Many centuries before Thales (600 B.C.), the founder of Greek philosophy, such wistful longings for a sure word of God had already been fulfilled and made known to Hebrew patriarchs and prophets; this divinely revealed truth the Christian movement then dispersed to the Greco-Roman sphere, and in turn, to the entire world.

"Few developments have so disadvantaged biblical religion in confronting the world of secular thought as the impression that faith is merely a gratuitous believing, a private conviction about spiritual realities that lacks compelling evidence. . . . On Western academic campuses, philosophers of religion now often insist that to correlate authentic religious knowledge with divine revelation automatically discredits religious philosophy as a respectable academic discipline. . . . the modern failure to associate revelation with the objective reality of God on which the Bible everywhere insists has needlessly pitched the truth of revelation into a twilight of subjectivity."

Henry insists that a fundamental claim of Christianity is that we have a sure Word of revelation from God that is intellectually defensible, that this Word is needed, and that this sure Word is, or should be, sought by every reasonable person. It is a gift of enormous value, and we, as Christians, should not shrink back when this wonderful truth is challenged, but should proclaim it to a dying world so much in need of it. Jeremiah 9:23,24.