

Patterson, Bob E. *Carl F. H. Henry. Makers of the Modern Theological Mind.* Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983. 179 pp. Paperback, \$8.95.

Who are the "makers of the modern theological mind"? In 1972, the Word Book Publishers undertook an editorial series so as to answer this question, and to provide present-day readers with a reliable guide through the maze of theological ideas now afloat. Each major shaper of theological thought from Schleiermacher on is examined in a separate volume. The usual outline of these volumes is, first, a presentation of a biographical sketch of the theologian, and then notice of his method, his creative ideas, his place in the theological spectrum, and his weaknesses and contributions. The series is intended for laymen, for Ph.D. students preparing for comprehensive examinations, and for professionals in the field.

For the role of editor, the publisher judiciously chose Bob E. Patterson, presently Professor of Religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. The editor selects the authors for each volume from among professional scholars and theologians—preferably from among those who have studied with the theologian about whom they write. The authors stand in the line of the moderate to conservative Protestant tradition.

The collection thus far contains eighteen volumes. These treat Barth, Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, Hartshorne, Pannenberg, de Chardin, Brunner, Buber, Kierkegaard, Reinhold Niebuhr, H. R. Niebuhr, von Rad, Nygren, Schleiermacher, Küng, I. T. Ramsey, C. F. H. Henry, and Paul Tillich. The editor himself has authored two volumes in the series—the one on Reinhold Niebuhr, and now this recent one on Henry (which is the seventeenth in the series).

Several considerations have led the editor to recognize Carl Henry as being among the makers of the modern theological mind. For one thing, evangelicalism can no longer be ignored. According to a Gallup Poll, over forty million (28%) Americans belong to this interdenominational heritage; and "twice-born" men and women can be found among TV celebrities (Johnny Cash), have occupied the White House (Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan), and have held other key positions in our society. Without a doubt, somebody is behind this emergence of evangelicals; and Carl Henry, says Patterson, "is the prime interpreter of evangelical theology, one of its leading theoreticians, and now in his seventies the unofficial elder statesman for the entire tradition" (p. 9).

Following a well-documented biographical sketch, Patterson provides a description of Henry's restorationist approach to Christian theology. It is pointed out that according to Henry, modern Protestantism must reject the fundamentalism at its right, with its bigotry, anti-educational tendencies, and failure to apply Christianity to the whole of life. On the other side, through his books and editorials, Henry (who was the founding editor of

Christianity Today and remained its chief editor for eleven years) has called upon evangelicals to reject also the Neo-orthodoxy to evangelicalism's left, as being a school that retains too much of the liberal theology which it succeeded in defeating: In Neo-orthodoxy, confidence in the Bible is not restored; and the reality of miracles, of the devil, and of the second coming of Christ is explained away.

Patterson then proceeds to describe Henry's philosophical apologetics. The author rightly places Henry in the Augustinian and Calvinistic tradition. For Henry, the word of God and special revelation can give the answers which humanism, naturalism, and logical positivism have been unable to provide; and Christianity can be defended rationally, with Scripture being the ultimate principle or basis of verification. Henry's views of, and emphasis upon, revelation as God's speaking and showing, upon the Bible as the authoritative norm, and upon his doctrine of God—all of these receive adequate attention in Patterson's book.

Of particular importance is the last—and unfortunately, shortest—chapter, entitled, "Carl Henry and His Critics." The author notices that the critics regret Henry's unsteady hand in dealing with historical and critical issues in biblical exegesis. Patterson thinks this can be tolerated, since Henry is not a specialist, but more of a "generalist theologian."

A more serious objection to an almost exclusive rationalism has received adequate treatment. Patterson draws on Donald Bloesch (himself a fellow evangelical) and Bernard Ramm, who are Henry's most notable critics. Bloesch and many other evangelicals object to Henry's insistence that revelation can be tested for truth by logical categories, because then reason will become the final authority. They prefer to say that God can illumine the mind of the unbeliever to recognize and understand revelation, but revelation is not at the disposal of reason.

The book *Carl F. H. Henry* occupies a justified place within the series on the "Makers of the Modern Theological Mind." It is also a welcome contribution to theological research on at least two other accounts: First, an extensive investigation into evangelicalism's history, theology, development, and present status is definitely needed, and this volume makes a contribution in that direction. Second, Patterson's interpretation of Henry is for the most part objective. The book can be a good guide for students of evangelical theology.

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