

[Gordon Clark's review of Geisler and Feinberg's *Introduction to Philosophy* is an unpublished paper found within Dr. Clark's personal library at Sangre de Cristo Seminary. It appears to be a review he wrote from the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. c. 1980. - DJD, Nov 4, 2014]

Introduction to Philosophy. By Norman L. Geisler and Paul D. Feinberg. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980, 447 pp.,

Textbooks for college students in their first Philosophy course, as this book seems to be, are of two varieties. Coppleston, Jones, and this reviewer have written on the History of Philosophy. In these books each philosopher's system is expounded as a whole. Plato's view of art, his view of perception, of space, and of God are related systematically. Then Aristotle's or Kant's treatment of the same subjects are similarly integrated. But Castell and others take up, say, causality in one chapter and offer six different views of it. The next chapter may outline six different views of sensation or God. But the relation between sensation and causality remains slighted. The book under review is of the latter type and has chapters on Knowledge, Reality, the Ultimate, and Good or Right. This latter method allows for greater freedom to include the author's main views; and such authors use this freedom to a lesser or greater degree.

In their purpose to provide their type of Introduction to Philosophy the authors have succeeded rather well. The language, at least in its superficial meaning, is clear and distinct. There is at most a minimum of technical verbiage. To mistake the immediate meaning requires a particularly dull student.

The philosophic implications are of course another matter. This is the case when the authors dismiss some perplexity by a rather authoritarian statement. For example, the conclusion to the section in the Methodology of Philosophy (p. 52) states "There is not just one method of doing philosophy; there are many. It is obvious that some methods are better adapted to certain kinds of truth-seeking, as other methods are to other kinds." If this were merely an historical statement that various philosophers have used various methods – and the first of these two sentences could be so taken – yet few philosophers would accept the second sentence as obvious. Instead of making such an assertion so dogmatically one who favors unsystematic eclecticism ought to produce reasons for using Platonism here, Aristotelianism there, and Pragmatism somewhere else. Perhaps the authors think that the immediately following sentences are such reasons. In the opinion of the reviewer these sentences fall far short of showing that "It seems clearly wrong to insist that there is one and only one method by

which one can discover all [sorts?] of truth.”

Authors who use the problem method for an Introduction to Philosophy, sometimes fail in this matter of History which they have neglected.

On page 139, discussing the external world against subjective idealism, the authors say, “Descartes claimed that ideas must resemble their causes or objects because God is a most perfect being, and thus not a liar.” Early in Meditation III Descartes makes man the cause of his idea of a hippogriff, but does not make man resemble a hippogriff. Perhaps the authors would consider this a trivial response to their assertion. But far from trivial is Meditation VI. There Descartes not only gives examples of perceived qualities unlike the things to which uneducated people attribute them, but further insists the failure to perceive qualities does not prove that one is looking at empty space. Neither of these instances imply that God deceives me, or is a liar, for God did not give me a sensory apparition for the purpose of knowing the world: the purpose of sensation [as Augustine had previously held] is to warn me against harmful situations. This warning does not require a knowledge of the nature of the harmful thing. Besides all this, Descartes explicitly absolves God of deceitfulness in allowing us to be deceived of secondary qualities, on the ground of the primary or geometrical qualities are really in them.

Christians will no doubt be more interested in The Relationship Between Faith and Reason (p. 255 ff). Though the accounts of Reason Only and Revelation Over Reason are not bad – they are a little too brief – the section on Revelation Only is pitiful. It is confined to only one form of the theory, the worst form, and pays no attention to forms that are entirely free from the deficiencies mentioned.

Perhaps some readers of JETS will think that these criticisms are trivial, unfair, or irrelevant. They do, however, give information on the contents of the volume, and such is what a review is supposed to do. Whether the criticisms are unfair, the reader must judge for himself. But if they are tedious only one more will be made.

Thomas Aquinas has a Theory of Knowledge of God by analogy. It is a denial of univocal predication. An objection to this theory is that an analogy must have a univocal basis. Unless there is a similarity between the two parts, unless somewhere a predicate can be attributed univocally to both, no analogy can be constructed. The authors try to demolish these critics by distinguishing between the univocity of a predicate itself and the univocity of the proposition as a whole. This distinction, I believe, comes from an interpretation of Aquinas sponsored by Loyola University, and is different from the interpretation of Etienne Gilson in his intellectually heavy volume on The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. A review, while no place to discuss the details of this intricate matter, is nonetheless justified in pointing it out. In any case, it seems to me, neither interpretation avoids the force of the refutation.

Anyone more in accord with the philosophy of Geisler and Feinberg than I am would have written a more enthusiastic review.

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