

unhappily suspects that Pannenberg's contribution will not "fall like a bomb on the playground of the theologians."

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*Christian Theology: An Introduction.* By Alister E. McGrath. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1994. ISBN 0-631160-78-7. Pp. xviii +510.

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McGrath has given us a resource in Christian theology that is useful and instructive, both for the novice and for the seasoned theologian. The book is precisely what it presents itself to be: an introduction. The author presumes no prior knowledge of theology on the part of the reader.

The book is organized into three large sections. The first is historical, presenting as it were a panoramic vista of, identifying the most prominent peaks which have arisen in, the history of Christian thought. Individual theologians are introduced briefly and the content of their thought summarized carefully but concisely. The second section addresses the sources and methods of theology. The third presents the loci of theology in classic order. Contentious issues are presented carefully, with the strength of each position argued sympathetically and criticisms identified exactly. Each chapter concludes with questions for review and discussion, noting significant names and concepts.

McGrath's volume is liberally sprinkled with citations from classical and contemporary sources. One wishes, however, that he would provide us with the sources of those citations. Granting that an introductory work such as this may better serve its readers without the clutter of scholarly apparatus, one may wish nonetheless to refer to an edition of Augustine or Schleiermacher or MacQuarrie in order to engage the larger context of the point so deftly summarized; with few sources located, one is left to more serendipitous recovery of the origin of the citation.

Only occasionally does one find a factual error. Paul Tillich's *The Courage to Be* (1952), for instance, is not a volume of sermons, but the Terry Lectures delivered at Yale in 1950, in which Tillich sought to explain his appropriation of depth psychology as an alternative to political socialism as a vehicle which might be placed in service of existential theology for the transformation of culture. This may be a moot point that does not affect McGrath's argument. However, one appreciates McGrath as a theologian from whom one has come to expect exactness and precision, and one is rather surprised to find him missing the slightest turn.

More troublesome to this reader is the want in this volume, as so often in McGrath's theology, of a sense of the theologian as wrestler. McGrath's knowledge and presentation is encyclopedic. But there is a dispassionate quality to his writing that leaves one wondering what McGrath himself cares about, worries about, wonders about, or finds mysterious or troublesome. In his discussion of

"experience" as one of the sources (and it is to be granted that it is only one source) of theological reflection, McGrath acknowledges Luther's claim that it is by "living, dying and being damned" (*vivendo, immo moriendo, et damnando*) that one becomes a theologian; but in his own erudite and comprehensive presentation, one is left rather cold. Granted again, the book is introductory, and intended for readers who know none of the factual data of the theological tradition of Christian faith, and an introductory volume of only 500 pages leaves little room for anything other than terse and concise explanations and comments. Granted also, careful explanations so presented may serve as appropriate corrections to errors borne of the inappropriate enthusiasms often characteristic of new believers and novice theologians. Nonetheless, even at the beginning it would be well for those studying the tradition to be made aware that doubt is the obverse of faith and that struggle is a real part of the theological task and venture.

Finally, although the book seeks self-consciously to avoid any hint of denominational bias as a presentation of evangelical theology, it remains a Protestant book. That is to say that, while McGrath offers a fair presentation of the variety of theological positions in their historical and contemporary breadth, there is no sense of these voices as, in the words of Jaroslav Pelikan, "the great chorus" of theological reflection. While McGrath, an Anglican theologian, is certainly aware of ecumenical conversation, the book seems not to be self-consciously tutored by the trans-ecclesiastical convergences of liturgical study.

Despite these concerns, the book is a valuable contribution for teachers and beginning students of theology. In terms of the seasoned theologian, it is also helpful, reminding one who may have begun to lose perspective after being submerged beneath the amassed data of a particular issue, of one's place within the historical depth and contemporary breadth of theological discourse. Once again, McGrath's contribution is received with great appreciation.

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*The Theology and Practice of Responsibility: Essays on Dietrich Bonhoeffer.* Ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr. and Charles Marsh. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994. ISBN 1-56338-077-3. Pp. xiv+334.

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In August 1992 the Sixth International Bonhoeffer Conference was convened at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Bringing together an international cast of well-known and well-respected scholars, the general theme of the conference was Bonhoeffer's theological interpretation of modernity. These scholars, however, should not be viewed only as Bonhoeffer specialists; many have done influential work quite apart from their studies of Bonhoeffer. This book is a collection of essays from the conference, originally published in a single volume by *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*.

The editors divide the collection into five major sections. Part one, "Making Sense of Modernity," attempts to position Bonhoeffer as an important voice in