

"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

the discussion of the modern world. The first essay in this section, "Bonhoeffer and Modernity" by Wolfgang Huber, is one of the most provocative in the entire collection. Huber calls for a distinction between a "modern theology," a theology that "applies the premises of modernity to theology," and a "theology of modernity," a theology that "tries to clarify the problems of modernity by theological means" (10). For Huber, modern (or postmodern) theology has failed because "postmodern" applies only to those people who are either affluent or to those who profit from affluent societies. In lieu of a postmodern theology, Huber offers an ethics of responsibility which emerges from a *theologia crucis*. Other essays in this section include Steven Schroeder, "The End of History and the New World Order"; Barry A. Harvey, "A Post-Critical Approach to 'Religionless Christianity'"; and Douglas John Hall, "*Ecclesia Crucis*: The Disciple Community and the Future of the Church in North America."

Part two, "Social Analysis and Liberation," endeavors to expand Bonhoeffer's account of modernity into a critique of the problems of economic and social inequities. Otto A. Maduro's essay, "The Modern Nightmare: A Latin American Christian Indictment," is a caustic criticism of modern, liberation theologies that rely on the historical, economic, and social perspectives of the West—Bonhoeffer, of course, being representative. For Maduro, modern, liberation theologies are a product of North Atlantic intellectuals—those same individuals who are part of the oppressive system, "sharing the same lifestyles as the modern elites unaware of and distant from the victims of modernity" (80). Other interesting essays in this section include Geoffrey B. Kelly, "Bonhoeffer and Romero: Prophets of Justice for the Oppressed"; Stephen J. Plant, "Ethics and Materialist Hermeneutics"; and Clifford Green, "Bonhoeffer, Modernity and Liberation Theology."

The theme of part three is "Refiguring the Community." These essays explore the important issue of nationalism and the role of the church. Included here are works by Luca D'Isanto, "Bonhoeffer's Hermeneutical Model of Community"; L. Gregory Jones, "The Cost of Forgiveness: Grace, Christian Community and the Politics of Worldly Discipleship"; Vigen Guroian, "Church and Nationhood: A Reflection on the 'National Church'"; and Luca Bagetto, "The Exemplification of Decision in Dietrich Bonhoeffer." Although these authors are largely unknown by North Americans, their essays are, nevertheless, worthy of attention.

Part four, "Postmodernist Perspectives," aims at understanding "how Bonhoeffer's new theological and anthropological horizons come to expression, and in turn take form in a certain discourse" (xii). Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr. (editor), "Style and the Critique of Metaphysics: The Letter as Form in Bonhoeffer and Adorno," provides an interesting approach to interpreting Bonhoeffer's critique of metaphysics. Floyd suggests that Adorno's position on the essay as form is similar to the style used by Bonhoeffer in his letters: the essay expresses itself not just by the "systematics" of an argument, but also by the discontinuity and fragmented nature of the essay. For Floyd, the "anti-systematic" style of Bonhoeffer's letters points toward a "polyphonic form of theological practice" (240). Essays by Walter Lowe, "Bonhoeffer and Deconstruction: Toward a Theology of the Crucified Logos"; Hans D. van Hoogstraten, "Ethics and the Problem of Metaphysics"; and Robert P. Scharlemann, "Authenticity and Encounter: Bonhoeffer's Appropriation of Ontology" make this section the strongest of the five.

The fifth part, "Repentance and the Practice of Responsibility," has a personal feel to it, but at the same time raises some important questions. Jean Bethke Elshtain's essay, "Freedom and Responsibility in a World Come of Age," begins with an excerpt from her personal journal on the day she visited Dachau—an experience which ultimately led her to Bonhoeffer. Christian Gremmel's essay, "Bonhoeffer, the Churches and Jewish-Christian Relations," contains a lengthy reflection of the author's experience in a church on Christmas eve in Kassel, Germany. Although John de Gruchy's essay, "Christian Witness in South Africa in a Time of Transition," contains no personal anecdote *per se*, his call for responsible acts and critical solidarity, which emerge by confessing guilt and practicing restitution, certainly has a personal tone.

The editors have, in general, done an excellent job positioning the essays in a coherent manner. They also include a helpful introduction to explain the theme of each section, a profile of each contributor, a list of "Works Cited," and a very thorough index.

There are, however, certain deficiencies, although they may not be solely accredited to the editors. First, the contributors are generally white North Americans or Europeans, except for Maduro. Thus, the perspective is decidedly "post-modern"—to echo Maduro's critique. Second, there are no women represented, other than Bethke Elshtain. Third, the essays in this collection offer little critical reflection on Bonhoeffer—again, with the exception of Maduro. The editors were undoubtedly aware of these concerns which may raise the larger issue: Who is working on Bonhoeffer?

In any case, this is a substantial collection of essays. It will be a valuable resource to any student of Bonhoeffer and will also be of great benefit to those interested in the larger discussion of the (post)modern world.

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*Escape from Paradise: Evil and Tragedy in Feminist Theology.* By Kathleen M. Sands. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994. ISBN 0-8006-2636-2. Pp. xii+212.

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Kathleen M. Sands begins her provocative study, *Escape from Paradise*, with a metaphor from Marilyn Robinson's novel *Housekeeping* (1980), that of the mermaid in the ship's cabin. A woman sits each evening submerged in the dark of her home, refusing to dispel the vast darkness outside by placing lights in the windows. She sits like a mermaid in a ship's cabin, "sunk in the very element it was meant to exclude" (1). This image informs Sands' development of a tragic heuristic as her contribution to the mystical, aesthetic, and moral tasks of theology.

What brings Sands to the deep waters of the tragic? She begins by flooding theology with elements she believes it has perennially excluded: a tragic consciousness and an encounter with the mystery of evil. Thus, the unmooring of the Absolute Good, whether God, nature, or any other transcendent or immanent