

to *Protestant Christianity* by John Dillenberger and Claude Welch. Compared with these two books the one by Scott is not as coherent; it is rather fragmentary inasmuch as each theologian forms a case study and the various streams of thoughts and movements within Protestantism are not brought together. While each chapter ends with a short conclusion, a concluding chapter and summary would have been most helpful.

The unique merits of the book lie in the fact that the author is a Roman Catholic who seeks to appraise historical Protestantism and then wishes to share his findings with his fellow believers. This being the case, the author ought to be commended for his positive and unbiased treatment of the subject matter. Thus, for example, the chapter of Anabaptism is written more objectively and sympathetically than often is the case by writers of the classical Protestant tradition.

The irenic spirit in which this volume has been written gives all good reason to believe that the book, as the author intended, should make "a contribution to the developing dialogue between Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians." As long as it is understood that the book is "an initial introduction," it will be most helpful for any reader who wishes to acquaint himself with the formative and formulative period of Protestantism and the giants among its thinkers within the modern period.

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Van Buren, Paul M. *Theological Explorations*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968. 181 pp. \$ 4.95.

The writer of *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* has from time to time let it be known that he has changed his position since he wrote that book. We are still awaiting the constructive statement of that new position.

This "meantime" book is a series of essays on various themes, with no attempt at unity. The book is rather a conversational piece—indeed, specific sorts of conversation are attempted: with Bonhoeffer, who is brought into comparison with William James on the basis that both were concerned with "the hypothesis of a limited God within a pluralistic universe" (p. 125); with James himself, whose radical empiricism is found to be the basis of his pragmatism, and which meant for him "that we must take seriously and start always from a position open to all of our experience" (p. 143). This latter involves the recognition of the self-referential character of all truth, as well as the acceptance of the "metaphysical risk" that the ultimate is the "telos that may yet appear, the unity of things that may yet arise" (p. 145).

The third attempted conversation is with Gordon Kaufman, to whose employment of the term "transcendence" van Buren objects. Why, he asks, should we be so concerned about some ancient ways of speaking, *e.g.*, the mythological forms which the Hebrews used to express transcendence, when we are really interested in talking about human experience (p. 167)? Are we not confining our speech to the experience of the few, the strange ones, the Augustines? More basically, is not the sense of limitation (Kaufman's category for the making meaningful of the concept of God) too narrow a base from which to move to speak about God? Van Buren suggests that "wonder" is a more satisfactory starting point. To Kaufman's duality of experience and its limits, van Buren proposes the duality of the ordinary seen as ordinary and the ordinary as extraordinary (p. 170). The essential question, which van Buren raises at this point and then drops, is that of the justification of the ways in which we see. He renews his suggestion, made in the *Secular Meaning*, that the term "God" be dropped for a while. Kaufman's point is that the term does have a reference point in the duality he selects from human experience. Van Buren admits, "I do not see a clear connection between a sense of the ordinary as extraordinary and speaking of the gods" (p. 174). So the word "transcendence" is meaningless.

What, we might ask, are the explorations of? The answer to this appears to be that we are examining an empiricism which can be (because it is) accepted by contemporaries, but less rigid than the traditional British type. We demand that the network of our understanding, whatever that understanding be about, "should 'touch base' in sense experience at important points" (p. 46). An empiricist will demand "enough contact with experience to give a grounding for the whole subject of discussion" (p. 47). We have shifted here from a narrow definition of experience as a basis for theology—or non-theology! A "theological method" acceptable to the empiricist is one in which "we begin with the theological assertions and assume that we are already playing on the field of experience" (p. 58).

It is difficult to see how the concept of God can be dropped, even temporarily. The word is used!

The problem is that of the respective validity of differing perspectives, different ways of viewing. The important question for the believer is whether, with the radical shift of focus in our way of looking at things, theology and faith can survive.

If the assumption that in the language of theology we are playing on the field of experience continues to be held, it will have to show its meaningfulness by reference to particular areas of experience. If it is not to be secularized and so cease to be *theological* discourse, it will have to show that a restrictive empiricism which assimilates purported religious discourse to secular discourse is inadequately conceived. What is at stake is the status of theology itself. Van Buren is still making up his mind. Whether, as he claims, such a state is normative for the theologian would be a matter of dispute. If he still has to make

up his mind as to what theology is, we can hope for another tentative theological construction in the future. In the meantime we have to make up our own minds, or live with our minds in process of moving on from the last decision.

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Von Campenhausen, Hans. *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries*. Tr. by J. A. Baker. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1969. vii + 308 pp. \$ 8.95.

This publication is an English translation of the author's *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953). The translator has done a valuable service indeed in making this work available in eminently readable English. On rare occasions the language may even become too colloquial, as for example in the expression on p. 68, "Paul makes no bones about recognizing this arrangement. . . ." On the whole, however, the language is superb.

Inasmuch as this work has been in existence for some years in the original German, no full-scale review of it will here be necessary. However, a few comments will be in order.

First of all, that this work has become and will continue to be one of the standard treatments of the subject seems assured by the author's thorough acquaintance with and wide attention to both the primary and secondary literature relating to the subject. He moves as a master in the field and not only gives the reader provoking food for thought in the text itself but also furnishes a valuable introduction to the sources by means of extensive footnote references. In any serious study of ecclesiastical development during the earliest Christian centuries, this book is one which cannot afford to be overlooked.

Second, the thesis presented in this work is certainly subject to debate, but this is not surprising in view of the gaps in knowledge pertaining to the field. For the reader unfamiliar with the author's thesis, a reading of the concluding chapter entitled "Retrospect" (pp. 293-301) will give a quick synopsis. Briefly stated, some of the high points of the thesis are as follows: The apostle Paul developed a charismatic church order which was devoid of office except for "the quasi-office of his own apostolate" (p. 296). Alongside this Pauline church, there "grew up at the same time the opposite type of congregation, led by presbyters" (*ibid.*). The two forms began to fuse early, Luke playing an important role in this fusion. Official authority tended to gain ascendancy, and this "trend toward an unbalanced ascendancy of office is the one uniform feature in the otherwise widely varying concepts of power and authority in I Clement, the Epistles of Ignatius, and the Pastoral Epistles from Asia Minor; and in the course