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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Hope against Hope: Moltmann to Merton in One Theological Decade by  
Walter Holden Capps

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## CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

*Ernst Troeltsch and the Future of Theology.* Edited by JOHN POWELL CLAYTON. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. xiii+217 pages. \$18.95. ISBN 0-521-21074-7.

This collection of six essays stems from a colloquium on Ernst Troeltsch recently held in England. The first two essays deal with Troeltsch's intellectual development and the attitude which dialectical theologians took toward him. The concern of the second pair of essays is to explore the enormous resources which Troeltsch's works provided for future development in systematic and historical theologies. The final two essays try to shed contemporary light on issues which formed focal points in Troeltsch's theology, such as Christianity's essence and its place among world religions, by bringing to bear on his points a number of subsequent theological insights. The essays are able articulations of the issues under discussion, substantial in length, and detailed in references and documentation. Given its complete and updated bibliography on Troeltsch, the book becomes a significant addition to the recent theological rediscovery of Troeltsch.

The work succeeds in reassessing Troeltsch's place in the theological situation preceding ours by showing the intellectual continuity from Troeltsch to Bultmann, with respect not only to their historical method but to their "existential" transcendence of history as well, and by disclosing the oversimplified or even ideological nature of the attack which dialectical theologians levelled against Troeltsch simply by ignoring him.

The task of assessing the significance of Troeltsch for the future of historical and systematic theologies to which this book is addressed is by no means an easy one. The authors make painstaking efforts but their conclusions are marked by timidity and disappointing reserve. Thus no matter how well the authors highlight Troeltsch's resources for further theological reflection, their penchant for suggesting what not to do theologically obscures both their own contribution and the rich material which prompted their studies.

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*Hope Against Hope: Moltmann to Merton in One Theological Decade.* By WALTER HOLDEN CAPPS. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976. xxiii+167 pages. \$4.75. L.C. No. 75-36456.

The 1970's have seen the reversal of nearly every cultural trend which characterized the preceding decade, perhaps nowhere more so than in Christian moods and theological styles. Walter Capps offers an interpretative scheme which views this turn as something more than mere reaction; his new book seeks to identify principles of contrariness which produce such polar religious shifts with predictable regularity.

Capps' kinetic model for religious studies, which builds on and refines the work of Nygren and others, is original and important. Though methodological

discussion is abbreviated due to the book's quasi-popular format, Capps' analyses of Jürgen Moltmann and Thomas Merton as paradigmatic figures for the religious dialectic of contemplation and action will be of almost equal value for the theological community and for the layperson.

But it is the revolution in lay spirituality which interests Capps most—not the so-called Jesus Revolution, but the turn towards inwardness and the new interest in monasticism, from the Camaldoli hermitage to William Irwin Thompson's Lindisfarne. He suggests Merton's *Asian Journal* may become for the next two decades what Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison* was for the preceding two: the beginning notes for a theological program, this time one in which contemplation will be recovered without losing the possibility of responsible action. Given the evidence Capps has presented, he may well be right.

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*Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought*. Vol. I: Life. By WILHELM AND MARION PAUCK. New York: Harper & Row, 1976. xii+340 pages, 19 photographs, index. \$15.00. L.C. No. 74-25707.

In this, the first of their two-volume study of the life and thought of Paul Tillich, Wilhelm and Marion Pauck attempt to depict Tillich's life against the background of his thought. In the forthcoming second volume, the emphasis is to be reversed. Judging from the first half of their study, the authors would seem to regard the concept of the ambiguity of human existence as the key to Tillich's theological system. This sounds promising, but the adequacy of their approach can be assessed properly only after the second volume becomes available.

The present volume consists of two parts of almost equal length, the one having to do with Tillich's life before 1933 and the other with his life after emigrating from Germany. Throughout the book, the authors have used to good effect much of the unpublished material available in the archives at Göttingen and Harvard. Extensive interviews with Tillich himself and with many people who had been closely associated with him (but excluding, it would appear, his wife and children) have enabled Professor and Mrs. Pauck to paint a more detailed portrait than might otherwise have been possible. The result is impressive and convincing.

There are a few surprises. For instance, Tillich's own published recollections of his reactions to having been dismissed in 1933 from his chair at Frankfurt are somewhat less ambiguous and compromising than the picture which emerges from his long letter to the Nazi education minister dated 20 January 1934 and published here for the first time on pp. 148-50.

There are also some missed opportunities. (1) Although some of Tillich's unpublished sermons are cited extensively in the chapter having to do with the first world war, the authors could have given a more rounded account of Tillich's gradual disillusionment during that war by attending, e.g., to the "Reich Gottes" motif in sermons from the beginning and from near the end of the 1914-1918 war. (2) The early relationship between Tillich and Karl Barth is insufficiently explored. No mention is made of the unpublished letter in the Göttingen archive from Tillich to Alfred Fritz which deals in part with his conversations with Barth in Göttingen during a visit to Emanuel Hirsch in the spring of 1922. (3) The