

For a genre which requires a high concentration of technical terms, the book is written clearly and provides a substantive survey of both the perspectives themselves and the major criticisms offered of them. It deserves a thoughtful readership and will prove useful as an ancillary text in college and seminary classrooms. A final evaluation will turn on whether the reader believes Grenz has found his way out of the millennial maze or is, in fact, still caught in it.

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Grenz, Stanley J., and Roger E. Olson. *20th-century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992. 393 pp. Cloth, \$27.99. Paper, \$18.99.

For the greater part, evangelical theologians have pursued their craft within the evangelical circle using methods and sources congenial within the fellowship. To be sure, one thinks of the apologetic stance of Bernard Ramm and more recently of Clark Pinnock and a few others who have essayed forth to directly engage modern thinkers outside the evangelical camp, but such are relatively few. A study of the major thinkers and contours of post-enlightenment theology of the proportion and style of *20th-Century Theology* is without precedent in American evangelicalism.

One thinks of several possible models for this study. Perhaps Karl Barth's *Die Protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* of fifty years ago is one such—both are penetrating and fair and, in a sense, friendly studies of "big-person" representatives of theological positions. Or going further back, H. R. Mackintosh's *Types of Modern Theology* or, more recently, John Macquarrie's *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought* may have been influential. There are some parallels in all of these in that they cover some of the same thinkers and they all trace patterns of thought from one era to the next. But these similarities become surface phenomena when one penetrates the substance and intent of Grenz and Olson's work. As the subtitle "God and the World" implies, the single organizing principle and criterion of judgment running through every page of this volume is that of God's relationship to the world—the tension in theological thought between divine transcendence and immanence.

It is the thesis of the book that a balance must be maintained. An overemphasis on transcendence leads to a conceptualization of God as being so far removed from this world as to be irrelevant to the experience of human beings. On the other hand, an exaggerated over-emphasis upon immanence may lead to a theology that is subservient to human culture and in which God is reduced to the limits of human thought. In the authors' opinion a balance was maintained in classical theological systems; they affirm in the penultimate chapter, "Reaffirming the Balance," that evangelical theology has gone a long way toward restoring this balance by its return to a biblically based theology. The subthesis of the book could perhaps be that the procrustean and rapid

changes in theological thought since the Enlightenment have been due to the elevation of human reason above biblical authority, and now that modernity has turned upon itself in self-criticism there is a fresh opportunity for evangelicals to rediscover the biblical meanings of both the sovereignty of God and the incarnation, and thus restore the balance.

The book opens with an analysis of the theological significance of transcendence and immanence and the legacy bequeathed to the twentieth century by the age of reason. It moves to a study of immanence in nineteenth-century theology (Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Ritschl) and from thence to the revolt against immanence in neo-orthodoxy (Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, and Niebuhr). Two chapters are devoted to the deepening of immanence in liberal and secular currents of thought, followed by a major chapter on the theology of hope (Moltmann and Pannenberg) in which the axis of transcendence is shifted from spatial/vertical to a temporal category. A chapter is devoted to the concern in liberation theologies for the immanent dimensions of the gospel. This is followed by a study of the elements of transcendence in the new Catholic theology of Karl Rahner and Hans Küng. Given the evangelical emphasis on hermeneutics and the authority of Scripture, it is not surprising that narrative theology is accorded a chapter. This is followed by a study of two major evangelical theologians (Carl Henry and Bernard Ramm, chosen in part because of their complementarity) in a chapter with the title "Reaffirming the Balance"). A brief conclusion, "Past Contributions and Future Prospects . . ." brings the book to a close. (This chapter is perhaps the best place from which to start reading the book.) Grenz and Olson conclude that twentieth-century theology ends by repeating the lessons with which it began. Because humans cannot transform earth into heaven, our only hope lies with the God who comes to us from beyond ourselves. Inasmuch as postmodernism has shown its power to deconstruct but has not yet shown itself able to go beyond the immanent, the challenge to evangelical theology in this era of transition, our authors conclude, is that of articulating anew the "Christian conviction of the reality of the transcendent-immanent God" (314).

This is a major study and one that is entirely suitable for seminary courses in theology and history of theology. The authors portray the subjects of their study with keen analysis that is not inconsistent with fairness and objectivity. It is a disciplined analytical rather than constructive study, but foundational lines for constructive evangelical theology are clearly drawn. Considerable information is given regarding the life experience and theological pilgrimage of the thinkers studied, which helps to make the book interesting and readable. There are some 70 pages of endnotes, a fairly extensive bibliography, and two indices. Not surprisingly, it was accorded first place in the 1993 *Christianity Today* "Critics' Choice" Award for theology.