

Eerdmans' Handbook to Christianity in America. Edited by Mark A. Noll *et al.* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983. Pp. xvi, 507. Illustrations, maps, figures, indexes. \$24.95.)

This is a denominational history book for a nondenomination. It writes the history of the Christian church in America being certain that its own religious family is clearly and favorably traced. It shows that its own religious family has been and is an especially reliable representative of the historic faith. It shows where its own religious family went wrong at some points, indicating present hazards and offering counsel. By setting up the extremes as rigid fundamentalism on one side and unrestrained modernism on the other, the preferred religious family can claim to occupy a sensible middle ground along with God, the Bible, *Christianity Today*, Wheaton, Fuller, Billy Graham, the National Association of Evangelicals, and a network of conservative parachurch organizations never quite willing to declare loyalty to any existing denomination. Here they stand along with what they see as the best of America's religious past and a substantial conservative constituency across most Protestant denominations. This stance is especially apparent when the account describes the tension in the churches over evolution and biblical criticism. In this book the mainline denominations and every attempt at theological accommodation for the past 150 years have gone frittering away into modernism and earned their statistical obituaries now being compiled. Meanwhile the preferred religious family of evangelicals, along with a few embarrassingly overheated companions, have held the old biblical line and pressed on to victories unlimited. So this book is not the best place to go for a comprehensive treatment of mainline denominational history. It will serve its best purpose as a church history reader for adherents to this large paradenomination needing to find its own roots and self identity.

However, this is not a mere denominational book to be dismissed by its cultured despisers. Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, George M. Marsden, David F. Wells, and John D. Woodbridge offer the narrative text; they are graduate level faculty members and able writers. Sixty-five contributors present articles on specific subjects and include experts like Sydney Ahlstrom, Jay Dolan, David Harrell, William Hutchison, and Martin Marty. One is required to say of such a compilation that it is uneven, but the joyful surprise is that so many have taken care to distill a little gem of an article out of a profound knowledge of the area assigned. The editors and publisher have gone far beyond assembling a collection of words. They have actually integrated narrative text,

subject articles, inset quotations, generous illustrations, color in both illustration and paper, and expert typographic layout to produce a book which is a pleasure to read. For those who can handle history with some advocacy, who want a review of American church history capable of keeping a reader awake and occasionally aggravated, who welcome more understanding of the manifestations of religious life so visible on America's skylines and roadside signs and radio and television, this book is warmly recommended.

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John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power. By Ronald W. Pruessen. (New York: Free Press, 1982. Pp. xiv, 575. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95.)

If this first volume of his projected two-volume biography of John Foster Dulles is an accurate indicator, Ronald W. Pruessen's work should be considered definitive, at least for this generation of historians. Analyzing Dulles's life and thought from his birth in early 1888 until shortly before his appointment as Dwight D. Eisenhower's secretary of state in late 1952, Pruessen has produced a carefully researched, authoritatively argued study that deserves to be read not only by United States diplomatic historians but also by anyone interested in the international political economy, in international organization, or in Republican politics in this century. This book is so impressive, in fact, that Hoosiers can forgive the author for the inclusion of a humorous but derogatory story about practicing law in Indiana in the 1880s, in which the lawyers "earnestly engaged before the judge in contesting the ownership of a hog!" (p. 6).

When he began his research, Pruessen expected "to fill in the details of a rough sketch of Dulles as a rabid and unbalanced anticommunist, a megalomaniacal Presbyterian preacher, a viciously partisan Republican, and a McCarthyite pushover" (p. 2). Instead, the "Dulles who finally took form for me is a complex amalgam, many of whose characteristics have not really been understood before" (p. 2). Pruessen convincingly portrays Dulles as a person whose concern about world affairs "evidenced always a keen interest in the forest as well as the trees" (p. 134), a leader with "a capacity for vision that was broader and deeper than that of many in similar positions . . ." (p. 509).

In numerous articles and speeches from the 1920s onward, in books like *War, Peace and Change* (1939), and in his leadership during World War II on the National Council of Churches' Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, Dulles sought to understand and explain the causes of the world wars and economic crises of