18 See *Monologion*, 48.
19 Something Newman himself was alive to, see 'Proof of Theism', p.7, in Boekraad and Tristram, p.109.
20 *Monologion*, 10: "where they cannot be, no other word is useful for manifesting the object". They are "the proper and principal words" for objects. See also, G.R. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God*, Oxford 1978, *passim*, esp. p.75: *naturalia verba* are "crucial to Anselm's own thinking about the language in which we can talk of God".
21 *ST* Ia, 2, 1 *sed contra.*
22 *ScG*, I, 5.
23 This point has been made previously by Leslie Armour, who went on to draw out a suggestive case for the proximity of Anselm's argument and Newman's argument from conscience in the 'Proof of Theism'. See L. Armour, 'Newman, Anselm and the Proof of the Existence of God' in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 19 (1986) 87-93, p.87.
24 See *Grammar of Assent*, p.284: "As to Logic, its chain of conclusions hangs loose at both ends; both the point from which the proof should start and the points at which it should arrive, are beyond its reach; it comes short both of first principles and of concrete issues."

Book Notes: Barthiana

Karl Barth died on 10 December 1968, exactly thirty years ago, at the age of eighty two, having abandoned the attempt some years previously to complete it but still leaving 9000 pages of his *Kirchliche Dogmatik* in print. Pope Pius XII is commonly quoted as saying that Barth was the greatest theologian of the twentieth century — but there is never chapter and verse for the quotation and, when you think about it, with whom might Pius XII have compared him? According to Thomas F. Torrance, it was Pope Paul VI who 'used to say that [Barth] was the greatest theologian since Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, which ranks him above John Duns Scotus' (*Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* , Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990, page 1). Again no reference is provided. This was a 'surprising tribute from a Roman Pontiff', the author goes on to say, 'for Barth's critical analysis of Roman dogma was as sharp as it was profound'. Barth, it may be noted, felt himself too old to accept the invitation to attend the public sessions of the Council but took a passionate interest in the reports

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1998.tb01638.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

and documents emerging from them. At the end of September 1966, he paid a six-day visit to Rome, accompanied by his wife and his doctor, and had a large number of conversations with various theologians, including Yves Congar, Karl Rahner and Josef Ratzinger. The visit culminated in an hour with Paul VI, when he was bear-hugged, told how difficult it was to carry the burden of being Pope, ventured to suggest that Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, was a much better icon of the Church than the Blessed Virgin Mary, and was assured that the Pope 'would pray that in my advanced age I should be given a deeper insight in this matter' (Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts* , London: SCM Press 1976; reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1994, page 484). Barth's appreciative but quite critical reflections on the Council appeared as *Ad Limina Apostolorum* (1967, the last of his books he saw through the press; English translation 1969). While he was applauded at a conference of Catholic theologians the previous day, and seated on the same level as the Cardinals, Barth's report of his conversation with Paul VI suggests that, if the Pope did say that Barth was the greatest theologian since Thomas Aquinas, it was not a statement based on any real meeting of minds.

According to Torrance, Barth's theology has had 'an enormous impact' on the Catholic Church. Repeating the Pope's praise of Barth, Torrance explains it by claiming that, 'to a far greater extent than most people realise', the doctrine of the church expounded in the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* is indebted to Barth's theology. 'When in the early nineteen- thirties the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ was laid before Roman theologians as a serious doctrine demanding dogmatic elucidation they shrugged it off as something that belonged properly to the realm of devotional meditation — remembering, no doubt, that the First Vatican Council had rejected the propriety of a constitution *De Ecclesia*' (page 26). But that is, surely, a mistaken account of the failure of Vatican I to deal with anything in the prepared draft texts except the question of the primacy of the Roman pontiff: the rest was shelved simply because of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war (in fact the Council was never officially closed). It depends on how narrowly Torrance understands 'Roman theologians' — perhaps theologians in the Curia (though the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* appeared in 1943, using material drafted for Vatican I, and theologians in Rome such as Sebastian Tromp SJ must have been involved in preparing the encyclical very soon after Pius XII was elected in 1939). But if one means Catholic theologians at large, in the 1930s, it is bizarre to say that they dismissed as mere pious imagery the doctrine of the Church as (mystically and sacramentally) the Body of Christ: Karl Adam, Emile Mersch, Henri de Lubac, Yves Congar and many others were preparing the doctrine of the Church that culminated in *Lumen Gentium* — quite independently of Barth's theology. Indeed, in the 1940s and '50s, it would have had to be what

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1998.tb01638.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

was perceived (by Hans Urs von Balthasar, Henri Bouillard, Jerome Hamer and others) as the *absence* of any doctrine of the Church in Barth's theology that helped to define the Catholic doctrine as framed at the Council. A doctrine of the Church in which the foster-father of Jesus rather than his mother had iconic and paradigmatic status would never be in line with Catholic tradition. It certainly leaves no trace in the ecclesiological vision in *Lumen Gentium*.

For all the considerable number of substantial studies of Barth's work by Catholic scholars, dating back to Hans Urs von Balthasar's book (1951), it is not easy to trace his influence on Catholic theology. In a way, it might be held, with his attack on the notion of *analogia entis* — 'the invention of the Antichrist' — and thus on neoThomist notions of natural theology, the relationship between reason and faith, and so on, as well as with his emphasis on Christology, revelation, and the specifically Christian doctrine of God as Trinity, Barth might well be found congenial by theologians in flight from metaphysics and inclined towards a certain fideism. In a way, also, it might be argued that the impact of Barth on Catholic theology, in recent decades, is most evident in the work of his friend von Balthasar. Neglected, predictably, by theologians in the Reformed tradition, for a quarter of a century since his death, it is plain from the wave of recent studies that Barth's theology is back at the centre of attention. Theologians who were engaged in their postgraduate work in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Barth's theology seemed to many an incubus that had to be destroyed, find it hard to understand; but his work is being rediscovered — and subjected to revisionary readings — by the upcoming generation.

In ***Hans Frei and Karl Barth: Different Ways of Reading Scripture*** (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 1997, paperback £12.99), David E. Demson, professor of systematic theology at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, and general secretary of the Karl Barth Society of North America, seeks to bring out how Barth's doctrine of inspiration, to be found in his exposition of particular New Testament narratives, determines his way of reading Scripture. Interestingly, from a Catholic viewpoint, what Barth includes and Frei leaves out, according to Demson, in their respective expositions of the New Testament's depiction of Jesus' identity, is 'Jesus' gathering, upholding, and sending of the apostles' (page xi). In other words, where the 'Barthian' Episcopalian, who taught for many years at Yale, very influentially, differs from the old Calvinist in Basle, is that the latter has a stronger doctrine of the Church. This is ultimately because Frei lacks a substantial theology of inspiration. It is not that Frei pays no attention at all to Jesus' relationship with the apostles; it is, rather, so Demson argues, that he 'puts such an emphasis on Jesus' holding together his identity as crucified and risen ... that he makes virtually no reference to those to whom and for whom Jesus enacted this holding together of his identity'

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1998.tb01638.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

(page 108). Frei's work is not well known among Catholics, or many others on this side of the Atlantic (for example, there is no copy of his fundamental book *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Basis of Dogmatic Theology* , 1975, in the divinity faculty library at the University of Edinburgh, though one could reconstruct it from files of the journal in which it originally appeared serially). For anyone familiar with Frei's work, however, Demson's book illuminates key issues in Barth concerning Scripture and Church.

A standard Catholic thesis is, or was, that Barth's theology has no place for genuine human agency — God alone does it all. It is certainly true that Barth inveighed against various Catholic beliefs about merit, the Virgin as co-redemptrix, and the use of reason, etc., as incipiently or rather quite radically 'Pelagian'; and the vehemence of his protests often sounded like a denial of any real human contribution. Some years ago, in *The Autonomy Theme in the 'Church Dogmatics': Karl Barth and His Critics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), John Macken SJ challenged that familiar view. Now, in ***Barth's Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth's Thought*** (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998, £22.95), John Webster, recently appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at the University of Oxford, collects eight essays, expository in character and on somewhat disparate topics, but all backing the argument in his previous book *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: CUP 1995), that, properly understood or at least taking some of his posthumous texts into consideration, Barth's work as a whole is best understood as moral theology. Furthermore, whether the themes be *original sin, hope or freedom*, Barth turns out to be concerned to bring out how human beings as moral agents are shaped by divine grace. Citing Hans Frei, in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, Webster insists that Barth's fears of liberal-Protestant or Catholic fusion of human aspiration and divine condescension spring, not from his claims about God as the 'totally other' but, rather, from his conviction that we creatures are always already within a relation established by God (cf. page 38). In a way, though Thomas Aquinas is never mentioned, it turns out that Barth's view is not very different from his: the relationship between our freedom and God's is that our moral agency as real (though secondary) causes is sustained by God's agency as the all-creating primary cause.

Nigel Biggar, Chaplain and Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, has reissued ***The Hastening that Waits: Karl Barth's Ethics*** (Oxford; Clarendon Paperbacks, 1995, £10.99), with a brief new conclusion. While often very critical and wanting to go beyond Barth in significant ways, Biggar highlights the themes of freedom, vocation, and character, to challenge the entrenched interpretation of Barth's theology as denying or at least downplaying our role as moral agents. In particular, Biggar is out to show, it is not the case that, for Barth, we are, as moral agents, only a series of sporadic acts and these are ultimately divine interventions. Nor is it true that, for Barth, Scripture

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1998.tb01638.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

eliminates general experience as a locus of moral authority, nor even that the famous 'Christological concentration', which von Balthasar identified, entirely obscures the reality of creation and its moral order. In the end, so Biggar maintains, Barth thinks that 'human beings are *determined* [by God's grace] to choose *freely* what is right', and 'this yields a notion of human freedom that is more apparent than real' (page 5). That goes some way, of course, to conceding the plausibility of the standard views of Barth's moral anthropology; but, as Biggar devotes most of his book to showing, how one enters upon and remains in the graced life of moral agency is a different question from that about what comprises the good life in Christ as such — and, as this short but rich study brings out, Barth's account deserves close attention.

Much more adventurously, in ***The Mystery of God: Karl Barth and the Postmodern Foundations of Theology*** (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, £13.50), William Stacy Johnson, who teaches at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Texas, wants us to recognize that, for all the famous Christocentric emphasis, Barth's mature theology also contains an equally strong stress on the hiddenness of God — 'this more ominous, tympanitic dimension' (page 1). Far from being the unstoppably verbose exponent of the neo-orthodox *Offenbarungspositivismus* that turned the generation of the 1960s against him, Barth turns out, on Johnson's interpretation, to offer an open-ended, restlessly dynamic narrative that invites the reader into theology understood, as Barth once said, as 'rational wrestling with mystery' (*Church Dogmatics* I/1, page 368). Allowing that he may focus more on what Barth *should* have said rather than on what he actually did say, Johnson insists that his reading 'seeks to uncover a *possibility* to which Barth's theology, perhaps despite some of its own countervailing intentions, points us' — 'a possibility that may open up new avenues of fidelity to the God who is ultimate mystery' (page 9). Aware of the work of John Webster and Nigel Biggar, Johnson also presses the ethical dimension of Barth's theology; but he probably finds the work on Barth by Graham Ward, Walter Lowe, Johan F. Goud and Steven G. Smith that he lists (page 211) even more congenial. While showing almost no interest in Catholic theology (Karl Rahner and David Tracy are mentioned, rather dismissively), let alone in the Catholics who have written about Barth, Johnson nevertheless opens up an approach that could bring Barth's theology back into conversation with Catholic theologians — whether or not hailed by this or that Pope as 'the greatest'!

FERGUS KERR OP

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1998.tb01638.x Published online by Cambridge University Press