

The Theology of Karl Barth: an Introduction. By HERBERT HARTWELL.

Duckworth Press, London, 1964. Pp. 201. 15s.

THIS volume provides a good basic exposition of Barth's theology, drawing generously upon the whole of *Church Dogmatics* and shorter essays as well. This is not an outline of all sections of the *Dogmatics* but an effort to achieve perspective on Barth's great work understood in the light of several primary themes which constitute the principal chapters of the book: 'The Word of God as the Source and Criterion of Theology', 'Jesus Christ the Key to the Understanding of God, the Universe and Man', 'Gospel and Law', and the 'Grace of God'. A comprehensive set of references to passages in Barth's writings is provided for every chapter and will serve the student who wishes to do more careful research.

The author shows how such doctrines as creation, the *nihil*, and ecclesiology, find their place in the whole context of Barth's theology, a theology guided throughout by the illumination provided by the Easter-event retrospectively, before the Incarnation in creation and in the history of Israel, and prospectively, in the time of the Church and the expectation of the final coming of the Lord of time (p. 98f). Hartwell sees very well the function which the doctrine of reconciliation has in shaping the whole unfolding of Barth's mature theology and properly reminds us how this doctrine includes the obedience of Jesus as the faithful covenant-partner. 'Jesus Christ is never treated in a purely nominalistic way, as a mere formal historical or symbolic sign of the event of reconciliation . . .' (p. 136). The author shows how the christological concentration is related to Barth's style with its use of direct presentation and narration in the unfolding of the contours of the Gospel history as this is seen from different angles (p. 17; see Barth's own statement in *C.D.* iv.3/2, p. 849). While the discussion of theology and science is useful, the sentence at the bottom of p. 58 is awkward as it stands and should be corrected in any subsequent reprinting.

Hartwell takes account of several of the more prominent criticisms of Barth's theology including the charge of Christomonism which is rightly rejected (p. 16). Bonhoeffer's characterisation of Barth's 'positivism of revelation' fails to do justice to the manner in which revelation is received by man. The Holy Spirit is not 'a heavenly *alter ego*' displacing man's decision in the act of believing (p. 46). The criticisms of Wingren (p. 68, p. 113) and Brunner (p. 56, p. 109) are likewise examined, and the author's handling of them is on the whole felicitous. Hartwell's characterisation of Schleiermacher and Ritschl as beginning with the historical Jesus and then arguing God was in Christ (p. 78) is not apt, for this presumes a divorce of the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith that both theologians reject.

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(See, for example, Schleiermacher's discussion of Jesus as Founder of the Christian communion in *The Christian Faith*, E.T. 1928, p. 56f.)

The assessment of Barth's theology in the concluding chapter is regrettably cursory. We do not concur with the author's judgment that Barth's teaching on the Son of God as the Subject of the person of Christ 'casts a doubt upon the true humanity of Jesus Christ' (p. 185). This minimises the reality of the human body and soul which Barth wishes to uphold when he refers to Jesus as praying to God, suffering, undergoing temptation, and obeying in faith. Barth's Christology elucidates these features in the unfolding of the Gospel history far more adequately than is the case in older Protestant dogmatics. Fuller reference to the discussion of the relation between Christ's divine and human natures as set forth in *C.D.* iv.2 would have been useful. The criticism that Barth treats the humanity of Jesus as existing from eternity needs to be considered in the light of Barth's exegesis of such passages as John 1.3, Rom. 16.25-26, Col. 1.16 and Heb. 1.3 together with more attention to section 47 in *C.D.* III.2, 'Jesus, Lord of Time'. Barth does not mean to deny that real distinctions pertain to the time of old Israel under the covenant, the time of the Incarnation itself, and the time of the Church thereafter. While noting Barth's rejection of apologetics (p. 184), we wish that the author might have given a further word concerning the significance which Barth does attach to human culture and its relative autonomy acknowledged in the light of faith.

Such a book as this cannot serve as a substitute for a direct encounter with Barth's own writing, but it can be used as a good ancillary tool helping to show the student his way around.

DANIEL L. DEEGAN

Karl Barth: Eine Einführung in sein Denken. By Dr B. A. WILLEMS, O.P. EVZ-Verlag, Zürich, 1964. Pp. 120. No price.

THIS little book by a Dutch Dominican priest, a former pupil of Karl Barth and now lecturer in dogmatics at the Albertinum in Nijmegen, has been translated by Marcel Pfändler from the original Dutch into German. In an illuminating sentence the author says at the beginning of his essay (p. 9), 'To write about Barth without doing him injustice requires a passionate affection for him.' In view of Barth's severe criticism of much controversial teaching of Roman Catholicism this is a startling statement, coming, as it does, from the pen of a R.C. theologian. Some of Barth's Protestant critics could learn from it. Its truth is borne out by the sympathetic understanding with which the author deals with his subject. His study is another welcome sign of the increasing interest taken by R.C. theo-

logians in Barth's teaching ever since Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote in 1951 his penetrating analysis of Barth's theology.

The title of the book is somewhat misleading. Even in such a small volume one would expect a systematic introduction, however brief, to the leading thoughts of Barth's theology. Instead we are presented with a brief outline of some stages of Barth's early thought and with reflections on a few selected aspects of his mature theology. This is indicated by the chapter-headings which read consecutively as follows: 'Under the Spell of Liberalism' (pp. 13ff), 'Parting with Schleiermacher' (pp. 23ff), 'From Kierkegaard to Anselm' (pp. 33ff), 'Barth and Politics' (pp. 45ff), 'Centrality of Christ' (pp. 59ff), 'Ecumenical Significance' (pp. 73ff), 'The Doctrine of the Church' (pp. 95ff). The author concludes his study with an Epilogue (pp. 115ff) in which he points out where in his view the essential significance of Barth's theology is to be found, in particular in so far as R.C. theologians are concerned. The order of these chapters shows that the author's reflections on Barth's theology closely follow the actual course of Barth's life. This procedure has the curious result that the practical side-issue of Barth's attitude to politics, in particular his resistance to National Socialism and his very different reaction to Communism, is examined before Jesus Christ's central place in Barth's theology is considered, though Jesus Christ is the pivot round which Barth's entire thinking revolves. Moreover, it has induced the author to devote too much space to Barth's early thought and to his views on the application of Christian principles in politics. On the other hand, it has prevented him from investigating the innermost motives of Barth's theology and from working out systematically and concisely its basic trends and features which, however differently emphasised during the various stages of Barth's theological development, have been operative in his theology from the very outset. Consequently, we get only a very fragmentary introduction to Barth's thought which, for instance, strangely fails to make sufficiently clear that the Word of God is the exclusive source and criterion of Barth's theology and to indicate the ultimate reasons for this supremely important feature of Barth's teaching. Within these limitations the book is, however, valuable, not only as a frequently illuminating objective study of Barth's personality and of certain aspects of his thinking, but also as a stimulating contribution to the vital discussion between Protestant and R.C. theologians at the present time. The latter is particularly true of those passages in which the author argues that Barth has misunderstood the present teaching of the R.C. Church on the subject in question. These passages as well as the author's discourse on what constitutes an ecumenically useful theology (pp. 76ff)

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and his several suggestions of theological propositions deserving further study by Protestant and R.C. theologians alike form the most valuable part of the book, and for this reason alone, if not for any other, it would be well worth while to translate it into English.

Dr Willems renders a useful account of Barth's gradual rejection of Kierkegaard's existentialism which had been an essential element in Barth's early teaching (pp. 30ff). Again, he rightly emphasises the importance of Barth's *Fides quaerens intellectum* for the development of Barth's methodological approach to theology (pp. 35ff). In this connexion the author's defence of Barth's interpretation of Anselm against E. Gilson's attack on the latter is of particular interest. He insists, however, that, contrary to Barth's total rejection of the *analogia entis*, the latter must find a place 'in' (*sic!*) the *analogia fidei* (p. 38). Otherwise, says Dr Willems, quoting a phrase used by E. Brunner in his polemics against Barth on this subject-matter, God's self-revelation becomes a 'dangerous Chinese affair'. Again, it seems strangely unbalanced to refer (p. 50f) to Barth's *Gifford Lectures* only in so far as they deal with the relationship between Church and State, though they contain a fundamental attack on natural theology in addition to much positive teaching on basic theological themes. In the chapter on 'The Centrality of Christ' the author rightly throws into relief the wholly christological character of Barth's theology and concedes that no theologian has exhibited the possibility of basing the whole of theology on the central mystery of Christ so well as Barth has done. He fails, however, to explain why in Barth's view Jesus Christ must be the point of departure of every theological proposition. Further, though in a sense it is true to say, as the author does (p. 65), that for Barth 'the person and work of Christ constitute the sole criterion of theology', this can be said only because for Barth Jesus Christ is the one and only Word of God. In the book under review there is, however, no mention of this dominant aspect of Barth's teaching. Again, having devoted so much space to Barth's early thought, the author has left himself little room for such basic themes as, for instance, Barth's views on the relation of God's election of grace to creation, reconciliation and redemption. One may wonder what a reader not already familiar with Barth's teaching will make without any further explanation of such brief and rather ambiguous statements as these (p. 68): 'Sin is included in the event of the Incarnation. It is only in the work of the externally overflowing grace of God, only in Jesus Christ, that sin can exist: if there would not have been the free man Jesus Christ, neither Creation nor sin could have come to pass.' The chapter on the 'Ecumenical Significance' of Barth's theology points out the importance of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* for future ecumenical dis-

ions deserving

cussions. It deals in the main with the dialogue between Barth and the R.C. Church, with Barth's critique of certain aspects of the dogmatic teaching of Roman Catholicism and with the reaction of prominent R.C. theologians to Barth's theology. This chapter makes fascinating reading and deserves careful study, in particular its characterisation of the *Tridentinum* as a historical document and its statement that the present R.C. thinking is by no means a monolithic entity. The author's view (p. 99) that Barth's doctrine of the Church has developed 'from an incipient dualism to a christocentric monism of some sort' overlooks that Barth's early teaching on the Church, especially that of *Romans*, has primarily in view the actual state of the Church at that time and not the true Church, and further that in Barth's later doctrine of the Church not only Jesus Christ but the Holy Spirit too plays a decisive part. Again, Barth no longer approves of the dictum *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, which Dr Willems seems to regard as Barth's present teaching, but has replaced it by the statement *extra Christum nulla salus* (*C.D.* IV.1, p. 688). On the other hand, dealing with Barth's concept of the humanity of Jesus Christ and its ecclesiological significance (pp. 109ff), the author rightly raises the question, over against Barth's teaching on the Son of God as the sole Subject of the Person of Jesus Christ, whether the human nature assumed by the Son of God in His incarnation has not thereby become the co-acting Subject of the Person of Jesus Christ. Finally, Dr Willems claims in spite of Barth's attacks on the R.C. doctrine of the Church, which he discusses at some length, that there are many points of contact between Barth's 'strictly christocentric' and, consequently, incarnational view and present R.C. thought on the Church, and he indicates the direction in which future research on this subject-matter should move.

H. HARTWELL

The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich, A Review and Analysis. By ALEXANDER J. MCKELWAY. John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1964. Pp. 280. \$5.50.

IN the confrontation with Paul Tillich, people divide fairly sharply into two classes. There are those who see him as a faithful doctor of the Word of God as it constantly surprises us by its inexhaustibly new and lively relevance to every new situation. On the other hand there are those who see him as a brilliant exponent of essentially human insights and cultural preoccupations which, however well-intentioned, have only a spurious and misleading similarity to revealed doctrine. Surprisingly, it is representatives of this latter, severely critical group who have most often been moved to write seriously about Tillich.

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In this respect Dr McKelway is really no exception. In spite of the very proper deference which he shows towards a great and senior theologian, one is left in no doubt where he really stands. He begins by emphasising that 'before speaking about God he [Tillich] must speak about man'. Chapter by chapter it becomes clear that in spite of strenuous and patently sincere efforts to place the best possible interpretation on Tillich, Dr McKelway fears that this pre-occupation with the human situation to which God speaks displaces God's Word from that central and pre-eminent position in which alone it can be truly heard as God's speaking. But he differs from most of Tillich's other critics in one important respect. Few critics have been sufficiently careful in their exposition of Tillich. As a result much has been written at cross-purposes. But this book errs, if anything, in the other direction. The main bulk of each chapter is taken up with straightforward summary of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*. As exposition it is well and painstakingly done. It is in this respect that the book has most to offer. It is an excellent and often illuminating summary. To have the whole system thus compressed into one volume enables one to see its intricate pattern more clearly and thus to find one's way about. Tillich himself is quoted on the book-jacket as having said: 'This book is a very fair and clear presentation of my work and an excellent introduction to my theology.'

This generous remark from Tillich himself does much to disarm the criticisms of Dr McKelway that I would wish to make. But while I readily accord with this general assessment of Dr McKelway's book, there are one or two points which seriously disturb me. My chief difficulty is that I cannot finally reconcile his evident admiration for much—even most—of what Tillich has to say with the radical character of the criticisms which from time to time he suggests. These criticisms are not of incidental points which could be adjusted within the architectonic of the system. They are fundamental. Tillich's ontology and his method of correlation, without which his whole theology falls in irreparable ruin, are faithfully reported, duly admired and then rejected. I say that these criticisms are suggested, for Dr McKelway tends to put them in the form of rhetorical questions. In most cases they are not worked out, but are left hanging like a sword of Damocles over Tillich's head. Dr McKelway does not seem to be fully aware of the either/or with which he is confronted. If his criticisms are well-founded, then those very insights which he admires and respects in Tillich are totally undermined in any sense in which Tillich ever intended them. If, on the other hand, they are valid insights, then the method of correlation is admitted. If it is admitted, then there is no point at