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K. BARTH: *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* 183

They have a good library. . . . They keep their own property, and furnish their own rooms. It is what Dr. Wiseman actually wishes, and really I should not wonder, if at last I felt strongly inclined to it, for I must own I feel the notion of giving up property try my faith very much (31st December—pp. 305-6).

This inaugural volume casts fascinating light upon one characteristic of the Victorian age—its extraordinary interest in religious debate—and promises a mine of detailed information and exchange of opinion. The letters are connected by short diary entries and are elucidated by accurate editorial notes, which frequently cite the relevant passages of correspondents' letters. A 32-page index of persons and places mentioned in the letters forms a practical *Who's Who*, which crisply states the identity and history of each. Another 14-page index lists Newman's letters under his correspondents' names with precise detail of their present sources.

3. *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*. By KARL BARTH. Translated by IAN W. ROBERTSON. London: SCM Press, 1960. Pp. 173. 25s.

In 1931 Dr. Barth, commonly regarded as the greatest living Christian theologian, published an acute appreciation of the theology of the first great Scholastic, St. Anselm (which, he claimed was misunderstood by the schools of both St. Thomas and of Kant), and particularly of Anselm's *a priori* proof of the existence of God whose traditional interpretation since Gaunilo 'always struck me as being a kind of intellectual insolence concealing or distorting something vital' (*Preface*, p. 8). His personal assessment was claimed to be satisfactory only because it posed Anselm's proof within 'the context of his own particular theological scheme' of *fides quaerens intellectum* in a literally eschatological sense and rested upon an exact exegesis of the main text of *Proslogion* 2-4 with full consideration of the debate with Gaunilo—two presuppositions which, he strangely charged, 'seem to have been left out of account as much by Anselm's critics as by his friends' (p. 9).

Dr. Barth found in Anselm not 'a side-issue' but the key to the process of thought alone proper to theology and immediately engaged himself in his series of *Church Dogmatics*. In 1958 he discovered to his 'sorrow and surprise' that his early Anselmian work was still unrevised and out of print. Revising quotations to accord with Schmitt's edition of the *Opera Omnia* but without presenting any 'new material' in response to 'very interesting criticism' especially from 'Roman Catholic observations' (p. 11), a second German edition was prepared with the help of Mr. Hoefesandt. The enterprising Student Christian Movement Press in the present English translation offers a careful and readable version of a difficult text from this second edition. Latin footnotes

are occasionally misprinted and a line is omitted apparently from page 14, but it presents the challenging integrity of the original work squarely to the English-speaking reader. One niggling complaint arises from the scanty index, which curiously omits both Anselm and Gaunilo.

*Part I* investigates the theological scheme of Anselm's argument, which Barth considers to be an attempt to advance the light of faith itself and not a preliminary philosophical argument to establish the existence of God. In the events of Biblical revelation God has properly 'proved' His own existence; the acceptance by faith of this truth does not, however, remove its mystery, whose nature demands analysis. There is thus place for a merely 'theological proof' of God's existence, that is, for an analysis of the truth of this proposition *within* the act of faith. (Barth's recent Christology no longer rejects a knowledge of God by analogy—as Christ incarnate is like the Father, so there must be some likeness between man and God; but he rejects philosophical theology as the wilful assertion of natural and, therefore, fallen man building an idol in his own conceptual image.)

*Intelligere* is a potentiality for advancing in the direction of heavenly vision to a point that can be reached. . . . It has within itself something of the nature of vision and it is worth striving for as *similitudo* of vision, just because it leads men, not beyond, but right up to the limits of faith. . . . *Intellectus* is the limited, but fully attainable, first step towards that vision which is the eschatological counterpart of faith. Therefore *fides* is essentially—*quaerens intellectum* (p. 21).

Apart from the complex implications of redefining revelation and reason and their relationship, and specifically the relationship of supernatural to natural theology within this bold take-over bid, Barth's theological scheme does not satisfy the whole of Anselm's text and especially the concluding prayer of *Proslogion* 4, which unites his new understanding of God even with a possible unbelief:

*Gratias tibi, bone Domine, gratias tibi, quia quod prius credidi te donante, jam sic intelligo te illuminante, ut si te esse nolim credere, non possum non intelligere* (Koyré ed. p. 16).

*Part II* analyses Anselm's proof of God's existence in detail. *Prima facie* the *Proslogion* proposes an *a priori* argument from the notional essence of God (defined even by the intelligent unbeliever as *aliquid quo nihil majus cogitari potest*) to His necessary existence, because non-existence would contradict this definition. It is therefore logically impossible to deny the existence of God; only a fool (literally) does so: *dixit insipiens in corde suo, non est deus* (ps. 13). Barth, however, interprets the curious power of this argument as a meditation on God's revealed name rather than as a rational proof:

... when he [Anselm] gives God a Name, it is not like one person forming a concept of another person; rather it is as a creature standing before his Creator. In this relationship which is actualized by virtue of God's revelation, as he thinks of God he knows that he is under this prohibition; he can conceive of nothing greater, to be precise, 'better', beyond God without lapsing into the absurdity, excluded for faith, of placing himself above God in attempting to conceive of this greater. . . . Thus we see at once . . . that at the very outset of his Proof . . . Anselm is fully and legitimately engaged in the exposition of his theological programme. It goes without saying that for him the Existence of God is given as an article of faith (pp. 77-8).

And he re-expounds the underlying Platonist principle, that the truth of any concept commands the reality of its object, in the same theological scheme:

... since, therefore, theology assents to that Name of God as an article of faith and presupposes it for all that follows—it is able to illuminate the noetic necessity of faith (that means the impossibility of denying the existence and the perfect nature of God designated by that Name) by the roundabout route of ontic necessity which is inseparable from ontic rationality. Thus theology can know what is believed, that is, prove it. In this sense . . . the conception of God in the *Proslogion*, just because of its limitation, possesses epistemological validity (pp. 83-4).

In fact replying to Gaunilo's implicit objection that the only real conclusion from this argument is hypothetical; that *if* God exists, He exists necessarily, that is, in virtue of His very definition, Anselm's *Liber Apologeticus contra Gaunilonem* appealed to the natural principle of non-contradiction and not to any article of faith:

Quisquis igitur negat, aliquid esse quo majus nequeat cogitari, utique intelligit et cogitat negationem quam facit, quam negationem intelligere aut cogitare non potest sine partibus ejus; pars autem ejus est quo majus cogitari non potest. . . . Sed nequit esse simul cogitari et non cogitari. Quare qui cogitat quo majus non possit cogitari, non cogitat quod possit, sed quod non possit non esse. Quapropter necesse est esse quod cogitat, quia quidquid non esse potest non est quod cogitat (c. IX, Koyré pp. 94-6).

Judgement, however, is not reducible to its merely conceptual parts and the epistemological transition from a possible concept of God to the judgement of His actual existence requires more than an appeal to abstract logic to give it realism; positing a reality, and not merely a definition is normally grounded upon the experience of fact (as provided e.g., in the *a posteriori* proofs of God's existence). Dr. Barth neatly avoids this existential difficulty but his powerful re-reading of St. Anselm seems to force the textual evidence, no matter how freshly he illuminates its meaning.