

importance of warning us how difficult even thinking of reunion between the Churches will be unless we are prepared to listen seriously, and allow ourselves be corrected and instructed by what others have to say. Since these are the only books at present in English on Barth by Catholic writers, I can only warn Catholics who wish to understand Barth either to read himself, or to read one of the books I mentioned at the outset, and only regret that it is Hamer that has been translated and not one of those.

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THE KEY CONCEPTS OF ST PAUL, by François Amiot; Herder Nelson, 35s.

This translation from a French work which appeared in the *Lectio Divina* series in 1959 represents the distillation of many years of teaching the doctrine of St Paul by a professor at the Seminary of St Sulpice. Here we have laid before us a synthesis, by a competent enthusiast, of all the main elements in Paul's teaching. The exposition is thoroughly sound, and takes account of most of the more important and reliable opinions available in the French language. (Père Durrwell, for example, is quoted more frequently than any other writer). The resulting book is the most readable short presentation of St Paul's doctrine as a whole that I have come across, suitable to Catholic priests, seminarians and the educated laity. Not that it is without certain limitations which follow necessarily from the book's very nature, as a synthesis of doctrine. The trouble with any work which confines itself to this form is that it necessarily loses the sense of immediacy which the epistles themselves give us, the sense of a concrete situation in which the apostle is grappling with a definite problem, striving to penetrate deeper into the meaning of the gospel tradition. In a doctrinal synthesis the concepts can only be presented neat, as abstract ideas stripped of their original 'setting in life'. In the present case the following sentence in an introductory chapter quickly makes us prepare for the worst: 'In these letters, we can see right from the beginning the complete maturity of his thought, which he later developed only slightly in one or two particulars, as events dictated.' The correct view on this point seems to me to be that expressed by Mgr Cerfaux, who, summing up at the end of his *Christ in the Theology of St Paul* (p. 529), says that although we cannot speak of a true evolution in Paul's system, yet 'one gets the impression that it is impossible to make one synthesis of Paul's thought that will be faithful to every stage of his career'. In the event, however, things turn out in P. Amiot's book very much better than we might expect. Often a rather timid attempt is in fact made to sketch the development of a concept, especially in the case of the theme of Christ's body, where Amiot follows the general line laid down by P. Benoit in his article 'Corps, Tête et Plérôme dans les Epîtres de la Captivité' (*Revue Biblique*, 1956, pp. 5-44). A theme to suffer from 'synthetic' treatment, on the other hand, is that of eschatology. It is true, of course, that some scholars (as for example the Protestant exegetes C. H. Dodd

and J. A. T. Robinson) have gone too far in the past in their attribution to Paul of a complete change in his thinking on this subject during the period covered by his Epistles. But this would hardly justify P. Amiot in treating all the Epistles on a single level in regard to eschatology. He tells us, quite rightly, that Paul allows himself the ancient prophetic practice of sliding mentally from the present aeon to the coming age, and back again, without worrying about the time scale. All the same, it is surely significant that the apostle's major concern in the earliest epistles is with the last days, which he then regarded as imminent; while in the later epistles his main preoccupation is rather with eschatology as now being realized in 'the saints'. It seems to me that his views at both these periods are hardly susceptible of being synthesized consistently.

A few points of less importance. The Epistle to the Hebrews is here treated as a part of Paul's own writing, because, P. Amiot explains, it follows Pauline teaching. It may perhaps be doubted if this practice is any longer justified. But it is certainly strange to read nowadays the assertion (not of course meant to be taken literally, but incongruous nonetheless) that 'St Paul boldly explains in the Epistle to the Hebrews . . .' (p. 96). This epistle is not as Pauline as all that! The translation is satisfactory. Biblical quotations vary between Douai, Knox and the translator's own. It is a pity that the translator did not (perhaps for reasons of censorship?) keep invariably to his own renderings. An example of the result is the quotation on p. 183 from 1 Cor. 6.15, given in the Knox paraphrase: 'Have you never been told that your bodies belong to the Body of Christ?' What Paul actually says here is: 'Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?', the literal sense of which is precisely the point P. Amiot is making here, but which has almost disappeared in Knox. An unusual proof-reading error has remained on the Contents page, where chapter 10 is given in the wrong part of the book. A more important criticism is that it will be difficult to use this book for reference, since there is no index of biblical references and the subject index is poor. Perhaps all these points can be rectified in future editions, together with several wrong references given in the course of the text. In any case, it is a pleasure to welcome a good Catholic introduction to the thought of St Paul as a whole, and especially one available in the English language.

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THE LITURGICAL BOOKS, by Lancelot Sheppard; Faith and Fact; Burns and Oates; 8s. 6d.

It is not easy to treat a complicated subject like this at a popular level: the choice of what to include and what to omit is delicate, but Mr Sheppard has put the fruit of much erudition within easy reach of the casual inquirer. As there are already two books on the mass in this series the chapter on the missal is short, but it is regrettable that he has not given the *Ordines Romani* the same careful