

Plotinus influenced the early Augustine. Perhaps one key to determining this influence is to decide how much Augustine owed to Plotinus his theory of divine illumination in the *De Magistro*, another early work of Augustine's: as its subject is rather philosophy of language (how do we learn the meaning of words?), it is less obviously Plotinian than one might think the early theology of Augustine was.

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REFORMING ROME: KARL BARTH AND VATICAN II by Donald W. Norwood, *Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/Cambridge U.K., 2015, pp. xxi + 263, £23.99, pbk*

In these days when ecumenical projects on any ambitious scale seem to be 'on hold', relations between ecclesial communities have seldom been more cordial. Yet those Protestant and Catholic ecumenical pioneers who bore the 'heat and burden of the day' during the last century, might now conclude that well-nigh insurmountable obstacles remain. Yves Congar OP, one of most ardent and active, eventually came to that conclusion. Much as these pioneers would have applauded today's greater cordiality, they would surely remind us that there remain formidable impediments to Christian unity and to inter-communion. These cannot be surmounted until the issues have been resolutely faced and a true consensus achieved.

The author, a leading United Reformed minister, who has been at the very heart of the ecumenical movement, is passionately committed to the quest for Christian unity. His book presents anew the challenge which the great Reformed theologian, Karl Barth, addressed to all ecclesial communities. If we are serious about our 'sad and sinful divisions', then he poses uncomfortable questions which demand answers from all churches. Barth realized that to engage fruitfully in responding to them, it was essential that Reformed theologians engage in dialogue with the Roman Church. By taking Rome as the major interlocutor, Barth earned the respect of popes and Catholic theologians, a surprisingly large number of Dominicans among them, so much so that, as Dr. Norwood maintains throughout this book, his influence was evident in the deliberations and even in some of the documents of Vatican II.

Donald Norwood confesses to being 'in love with the Council' and Barth, who was not well enough to attend as an 'observer', was ardently interested. He was kept *au fait* with the deliberations by his friend and colleague, Hans Küng. Catholics should remember the debt they owe the latter for an eirenical masterpiece on justification and for persistently raising the question of papal authority. We are indebted to those who compel us to give good reasons 'for the faith that is in us'.

Asking for such responses was what Karl Barth did from his early days as pastor in Safenwil (1911-1921) where he was already engaged in brotherly critical dialogue with Catholic confrères. Barth was always a daring thinker, as likely to question his own Reformed tradition as that of Rome. What he never doubted, as Norwood puts it, was that 'Rome was and is *the* debating partner with whom we non-Roman Catholics in the West have to deal.'

It is astonishing how heavily indebted the author is to the writings of Yves Congar - his *True and False Reform in the Church* and particularly his *Journal of the Council*. It seems at times that every other page carries a reference to this remarkable Dominican. Congar was no Barthian, but he was a friend and ally, sharing Barth's zeal for Christian unity and paving the way, at considerable personal cost, for the reforms of the Council where at last he came into his own as one of most influential of the *periti*. Years before the Council was convened, he had a cordial, working relationship with leaders of the World Council of Churches, indeed more cordial in many ways than Karl Barth who deliberately sat rather loosely on the sidelines of the WCC. The inviting to Vatican II of many observers and distinguished theologians meant that discussions would be, at the very least, sensitive to their presence. Barth comments appreciatively but critically in his *Ad Limina Apostolorum: An Appraisal of Vatican II*. He justifiably called *Dignitatis Humanae* a 'monstrosity' but gladly approved *Dei Verbum*. Joseph Ratzinger, long an admirer of Barth's writings, believed that it was possible to detect his influence particularly in *Dei Verbum* with its emphasis on biblical theology.

Donald Norwood makes his case by ranging over the whole of Barth's prolific output. In itself, this is an extremely valuable survey of the extent and development of his thought. Those who have the mistaken impression that this great theologian was preoccupied with the construction of a vast and unfinished *Church Dogmatics*, need the salutary reminder that he is the thinker who in 1921 dropped the bomb (his commentary on *Romans*) into 'the playground of the theologians'. He inspired opponents of Nazism and had a major hand in the drafting of the Barmen Declaration of the Confessing Church. He was always engaged in the issues of the day. He was a passionate striver after Christian unity and the reform of the churches. He believed that all ecclesial life should be responsive to the Word of God. He remained critical of the exercise of authority in the Roman Church and was wary of those Marian doctrines which he believed were insecurely anchored scripturally. Was it the influence of the absent Barth and the presence and comments of Protestant observers which swayed the decision against issuing of a separate document on Mary? The author thinks it possible.

After the Council, Barth was well enough to accept an invitation to go to Rome to talk with Pope Paul and a number of Jesuit and Dominican theologians. He went armed with questions about the Council's documents and found that he was received with brotherly respect and

affection. A striking contrast to that shocking scene at Vatican I when Bishop Strossmayer caused uproar by protesting against harsh condemnation of Protestants, declaring that there were many among them who loved Christ. Some of Strossmayer's fellow bishops called him 'Lucifer'! Less than a century later, the greatest Protestant theologian of the 20th century was warmly welcomed in Rome. Donald Norwood's fine, erudite book helps to explain some of the major factors that were in play at Vatican II – among them the ecumenical movement's quest for Christian unity and the strenuous advocacy of ecclesial reform in the light of the Word of God, unremittingly made for more than sixty years by Karl Barth.

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THINKING CHRISTIAN ETHOS: THE MEANING OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION
by David Albert Jones and Stephen Barrie, *Catholic Truth Society*, London,
pp.158, 2015, £9.95, pbk

This little book is a gem. It ought to be read by anyone involved with Catholic schools, and especially by all teachers and governors, Catholic or non-Catholic. It embeds its account of Catholic education into explanations of what it is to be both a Catholic Christian and a human being. Thus much of it is relevant to anyone wanting to understand the basics of our faith. It is easy to read, lucid, inclusive, balanced, open-minded, thought-provoking and highly engaging. It is skilfully divided into accessible chunks, with helpful quotations highlighted, cross-references to relevant material in RE curricula, and suggestions for making use of each chapter (for example, for assemblies, staff meetings or governors' INSET days). A humorous touch and imaginative illustrations are the icing on the cake. (My favourite example is the picture in the section about courage, of a Great White Shark, with the caption, 'selachophobia (fear of sharks) is a rational reaction'.)

The three main parts are each divided into three chapters, each in turn containing five sections. The first, 'The Nature of Education', describes human beings in Aristotelian style as a kind of animal endowed with language and reason, and above all the capacity for friendship. Chapter 2, 'The Integral Formation of Persons', explains the virtues needed for such a creature to flourish. This account, in the best tradition of modern Thomist ethics, provides a distinctive underpinning for the whole book. Education is primarily for helping young people to cultivate the virtues, both moral and specifically intellectual. The third chapter, 'Education & Ethos', offers a liberal account of the purpose of education, set in the context of the parents as the primary educators. Jones and Barrie