

memorial services for dead, respect for monastic tradition. (xxi)

It is a little bit disappointing therefore that the first three entries are, by anyone's standards, to do with minor figures. However a dictionary is not to be read from cover to cover, and even if one thinks there are just too many small articles and some over-large ones – when a good number of medium-sized would have been better – nevertheless there are a number of strengths to this book, once one has moved beyond first impressions.

Positively speaking, The article on the Coptic scholarship of the C13 Al-Assai family is very worthwhile, with a good bibliography. There is a thorough piece on the Indian Syrian Christian Church. There is a good article on the Maronites who traded in their monothelitism for Crusader protection and Latinization, and on the Melkites in the middle East, who originally pro-Emperor, once too often left in the lurch looked to Rome during Ottoman times. We hear the tragic story of the Pontic Greeks. But the coverage is not limited to the Greek and Russian churches. There is much by way of riches in the accounts of engagement with and refutation of Islam in Arabic Christianity. There are even some gems about Orthodox Missionary activity in Alaska. There is an excellent article on Church Architecture and Liturgy, and a fine index.

On the issue of theological anthropology, David Melling notes: 'In the Septuagint, but not in liturgical texts, Adam's wife is named as Zoe, life (Genesis 3: 21)', yet I am not convinced that he has shown us just how the Eastern idea that death inherited as a cosmic effect of the fall which after all 'leads most directly to the near-inevitability of sin' is all that different from the 'Western' original sin doctrine. The poisoned legacy of Florence 1438 is well described by Melling. We are reminded that the Filioque issue cannot just be swept away in current ecumenical fervour. Sure, Emperor Michael after regaining Constantinople agreed to the West's definition at the Council of Lyons 1274; but he was excommunicated for his pains in 1281. Readers of this journal might be interested to know that in just about all else (especially the sacraments) the Eastern Orthodox confess themselves to be closer to the Roman Catholic Church than to Protestantism (which is very much identified with the vehicles of rationalistic scepticism especially in C19 Russia with tragic consequences, and a certain amount of missionary activity and bible-hawking to which Russia is to this day very sensitive.).

Negatively speaking, the presentation of the whole seems rather unimaginative—no use of different fonts, boxes, etc. is made, and there are no maps. We find no entry for Justinian, and there is no mention of Stanilaos. The entry on Khomiakov is too large, and why there has to be 6 pages given to 'Rome' is unclear, while the article on Alexandria is disappointing. The article on Georgia is unhelpfully divided into two. Chalcedon is hardly dealt with, and, one suspects, swept under the

carpet: of course too much can be made of it, but here we have the opposite error! It is almost as if 'Chalcedon' is not where the action is and Eastern churches need to bury their differences. The article on Palamas is superficial, and sometimes there is hardly any bibliography where there should be. Sometimes we get very good bibliographies, or it is made clear that scholarship is simply lacking: e.g., a full study of Gregor Barhebraeus is a desideratum. Yet why are there no bibliographies for Balsamon or Bessarion? There are only 3.5 lines on Uniate Christianity: there is something in the 'Rome' entry, but it is all very much at the level of the theory of Vatican statements. Spidlik on 'Spiritual Theology' really only deals with 'spirituality'—lest that sound to some like a Western categorisation, I mean rather that attention is paid to matters of the believers response rather than to God and his economy such that the article overlaps too much with that on Hesychasm. The other entry on Eastern Theology by one no less than Jaroslav Pelikan is a major disappointment.

It may seem that some of even the recent church history is just very complicated, but that may have more to do with our (or at least this reviewers unfamiliarity with, e.g., the fact that Andrei Rublev was canonised in 1988, yet some Russians remain unsure about his icons of the Trinity—amongst them the Matthewites. This is a storehouse of information hard to find anywhere else so easily. It illuminates what may seem to be a dark world for Western Christians.

I have spotted one or two mistakes which suggest a proof-reading before a reprint might be worthwhile. In the article on Eastern Catholic, the page header becomes Eastern Christian!! It should be J.F. Dechow at p 181. According to p 209 Constantinople fell to the Ottomans on Tuesday, 29 May 1543, There are a few spelling errors (p 295 'Calvinisitis'; p297 'resistence'). This is a welcome paperback version of a hitherto very expensive reference work. However, one should also look at competitors such as EG Farugia (ed), *Dizionario Enciclopedia dell' Oriente Cristiane*, Roma, 2000.

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The Dramatic Encounter of Divine and Human Freedom in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar

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Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity Vol. 105 (Bern, etc.: Peter Lang, 2000), £28.00
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SUMMARY

This book seems more about Karl Rahner and his influence and his theology as a rule by which all should be measured than about Von Balthasar, but perhaps ultimately that is not important. Serious issues get explored

here in some detail for which we should be grateful, even if it always seems like a thesis rather than a book written for a wider audience.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch scheint mehr von Karl Rahner, seinem Einfluss und seiner Theologie als von von Balthasar zu handeln, was aber vielleicht letztlich nicht wichtig ist. Ernsthaftige Fragen werden detailliert untersucht. Dafür sollte man dankbar sein, auch wenn die Monographie im Ganzen eher eine Dissertation denn ein Buch fuer eine breitere Leserschaft ist.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage semble davantage traiter de la théologie et de l'influence de Karl Rahner comme la référence par rapport à laquelle toute autre œuvre doit être évaluée, plutôt que de Von Balthasar, mais, finalement, cela n'a peut-être pas d'importance. Des questions importantes y sont abordées de manière approfondie et c'est ce qui en fait la valeur, même si l'ouvrage ressemble plus à une thèse qu'à un livre destiné à un public plus large.

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For Rahner encounter with Christ just makes explicit that which is already part of universal experience (the famous Rahnerian concept of *Vorgriff*). However, for Balthasar, grace does not just strengthen such a disposition, but pulls it in another direction. Here they seem already different and there is some discussion as to whether Balthasar is closer to the spirit of Thomas Aquinas as well as being more 'biblical'.

Another main point discussed is whether Balthasar thought that God was somehow changed on cross. It may seem so, but the Swiss ex-Jesuit insisted that there was no such thing as 'becoming in God'. (O'Hanlon's book, *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Cambridge, 1990) on the subject is foundational here.) Unlike, say, Moltmann, for Balthasar, God was passionate long before the cross, in fact, in eternity. Dalzell re-iterates that the cross was about the transformation of a human No into a Yes. (see especially, p. 146f). The emphasis is on redemption as the transformation of human freedom, so that a difference is made by God in history to humanity. There is a solidarity that stretches as far as Substitution, as the Son hands himself over to the abyss. (Balthasar always wrote with the threat of nihilism never far from his mind.) Christ's mission and person are identical, as Christ was sent to accompany prodigals lost in desolation and in so doing, Time got swallowed up in meaningful History.

The second Rahnerian point concerns human freedom. Every person's act influences others, only some acts are more influential than others, and that is how substitution works. Balthasar stresses receptivity before action (in a way that sounds Heideggerian), with the Father's commitment as *Einsatz*. 'For Balthasar, it is

freedom which makes one a person, but his point is that the freedom to which one is called in mission-existence is one's own natural freedom...the point being made is that by sharing in Christ's freedom one is not only liberated from slavery but is positively endowed with freedom in such a way that one is available to choose God's choice' (p. 223f.) Thus there is a liberation of liberty, so that full personalisation involves working with Christ.

Lastly, Balthasar can be criticised in that he prefers the interpersonal to the detriment of the political. One could say that this is a preference for the New Testament *diastasis* of religion and politics in contrast with the OT which conjoins them. Despite his optimism about 'nature' as something 'already graced', he is (unlike Rahner) very pessimistic about the chances of progress towards the kingdom of God. The view of Christian hope strikes a balance this worldly (Greek) and future worldly (Jewish), but if it has to choose, chooses the latter. A sort of realized Johannine eschatology comes to the fore with God's call to his disciples to order the world to a 'now' which is ever new. Human existence is viewed as an *épreuve* (Segundo), and with Loyola, it is about fitting to God's own project.

Dalzell by way of critique enlists O'Hanlon here, in order to argue that Balthasar undervalues immanence 'he so exaggerates the distinction between natural hope and hope as theological virtue in order to underpin a conception which is based on anxiety about the horizontal dimension of the theological hope which originates in the Old Testament' (p. 246.) The accent on the individual in Balthasar results from the Church's being focussed on Christ who was an individual while his ecclesiology amounts to being about those who are in relationship with Christ, so that *Einsamkeit* rather than involvement at the centre of world events and current affairs becomes an *Existential* of the church. Balthasar here is fighting the shadow of Hegel. But Dalzell gives us to think that on this last point, the way of Rahner (and Metz) is to be preferred to that of Balthasar.

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