

increase and "triumph" of monotheism over henotheism and polytheism in Israel. According to the book, monotheism is unstable since it presents God as the author of evil. Thus, Satan was developed "to relieve God from the duty of evil." Only after centuries of 'relieving God' of this duty by "priestly and prophetic stylists" is God now "presentable in polite company." This development reached a climax during the period of Second Temple Judaism when the Jews borrowed the idea of wicked powers from their neighbours. Thus, by the time one reaches the NT, God is exonerated since evil is now blamed solely on the figure of Satan, who sums up all the other wicked powers in extracanonical literature. The authors conclude then that the Satan in the bible was an *ad hoc* explanation for evil. They do not know whether he is real, only that the one in the bible is *not* him; nevertheless, they encourage the reader to hold on to these passages as parables which demonstrate that although evil moves in the world, it is always opposed by good.

Several comments should be made in response to this book. First, the book gives the impression that the only way the Jews could free God from evil was to blame the devil, and thus, there was a monolithic move among the Jews to find a scapegoat. Even if, however, all Jews felt a need to free God from blame – rather than embracing the mystery of God – the invention of Satan was not the only way to do this. Instead, there are passages which place the blame on wicked people and free choice. Second, in light of synecdoche, one must question the validity of the conjecture that phrases such as the hand of God and sword of the Lord were early attempts to distance God from evil. Next, in the discussions of foreign philosophical influence on the Jewish idea of evil, the authors over-emphasise the similarities. In doing so, they depict the Jewish belief as containing no original thought. Moreover, the conclusion that Satan is no longer an agent of God in the NT is not so clear. For example, in 2 Cor. 12.7, Paul tells how God used Satan for divine purposes. To be fair, the authors do admit this in one line; yet, they did not feel the need to elaborate on that which muddles their thesis. Another unaddressed issue is the problem which results in placing all blame on Satan, namely, the extent of divine sovereignty: if Satan is not an agent of God, then why doesn't God destroy him?

It is unfortunate that some have been abused by manipulative presentations of Satan; but, if the goal was to relieve the audience of fears stemming from this abuse, why dismiss the Satan of the bible. There, he is not so much to be feared as resisted and is one who flees before those who submit to God while counting his days before he is crushed beneath them. Rather than focusing on the speculative birth of Satan, it seems a better strategy would have been to focus on his definitive defeat. Despite the above critiques, this book would serve as a beneficial introduction to 'Satan', summary of works about him, and catalyst for conversation.

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*Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity
In Dialogue with Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology*

Paul D. Molnar

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SUMMARY

As the title suggests, Molnar's concern in this work is the freedom of God, especially in relation to the immanent Trinity. Molnar's basic premise is to uphold God's freedom by revealing the need for a properly conceived doctrine of the immanent Trinity, and by combating the frequently used starting point for formulating such a doctrine, that of human experience. The works of Barth and T. F. Torrance are extensively used in opposition to a broad range of theologians' works on the subject, and in particular, the work of Karl Rahner. Rahner's axiom that 'the immanent Trinity is strictly identical with the economic Trinity and vice versa,' (xi) is questioned in regard to whether or not it can truly respect God's freedom. Molnar contends that God is free, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, apart from creation, pre-creation and eternally.

RÉSUMÉ

Comme son titre l'indique, ce livre porte sur la question de la liberté divine, en particulier dans son rapport avec la Trinité immanente. Molnar part de la volonté de maintenir la liberté divine en montrant que cela nécessite une doctrine de la Trinité immanente adéquate. Il rejette pour cela le point de départ couramment adopté pour formuler une telle doctrine, celui de l'expérience humaine. Il fait largement appel à l'œuvre de Barth et à celle de T.F. Torrance pour s'opposer à d'autres théologiens qui ont écrit sur le sujet, en particulier Karl Rahner. Il conteste que l'axiome rahnérien selon lequel « la Trinité immanente est strictement identique à la Trinité économique et vice versa » soit à même de faire réellement toute sa place à la liberté divine. Molnar soutient que Dieu est libre, en tant que Père, Fils et Saint-Esprit, indépendamment de la création, de la pré-crétion et éternellement.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wie der Titel nahe legt, beschäftigt sich Molnar in diesem Werk mit der Freiheit Gottes, insbesondere in Beziehung zur immanenten Trinität. Molnars grundlegende Prämisse besteht darin, an Gottes Freiheit durch die Offenbarung des Bedürfnisses nach einer angemessen konzipierten Lehre über die immanente Trinität festzuhalten. Außerdem bekämpft er die menschliche Erfahrung als oft benutzten Startpunkt einer solchen Lehre. Die Arbeiten Barths und von T. F. Torrance werden ausführlich in Opposition zu einer großen Bandbreite an Werken anderer Theologen zum Thema genutzt. Insbesondere wird das Werk Karl Rahners und dessen Axiom, "die immanente Trinität sei streng identisch mit der ökonomischen Trinität und umge-

kehrt" im Hinblick darauf in Frage gestellt, ob es Gottes Freiheit wahrhaftig respektieren kann oder nicht. Molnar behauptet, dass Gott als Vater, Sohn und Heiliger Geist frei ist, unabhängig von der Schöpfung, vor der Schöpfung und in Ewigkeit.

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This is a scholarly work of great depth and thorough research, in a complex and detailed subject. Molnar raises concerns over pressing issues regarding the immanent Trinity. He always desires to uphold God's freedom, while recognising the limitations of our finiteness, where from necessity we describe the eternal God with human projections of earthly relations. At the very beginning he asks the question, '... how may we know God in accordance with his nature rather than creating God in our own image?' (x). He argues that God is not just God for us, simply because God was God before us. God is not only the believer's Creator, Redeemer and Mediator, in relation to his creation, but God was and is always Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The danger that needs to be avoided in Molnar's opinion is that of reducing God to merely what he has accomplished for us. Molnar concludes, 'we therefore end where we began, that is, with a recognition of God's freedom to be and to have been the eternal Father, Son and Spirit who existed prior to and apart from creation;...' (316).

So how does Molnar reach this conclusion? He begins in chapter one by examining the role of experience in determining a doctrine of the immanent Trinity, plus issues raised by contemporary feminist theology. Molnar examines the theologies of G. Kaufman, C. LaCugna, S. McFague, and E. Johnson, and shows how any theology which fails to think from a centre in God by revelation, will leave us never truly knowing God as he is, and we will '... only image God in ways that seem appropriate to ourselves' (25). He wants to stress from the start, that Jesus Christ should be the starting point and norm for theology, not human experience, or things outside of God's revelation of himself.

In the remaining nine chapters, as Molnar's argument develops, he encompasses a wide range of related subjects for tackling the task of revealing the necessity for a well conceived doctrine of the immanent Trinity, which can otherwise lead to a number of unwanted ends, such as dualism, pantheism or panentheism, or in Christology, Docetic or Ebionite tendencies. His solution for avoiding these conclusions is for theology to take God himself as the definition for his eternal being, rather than just the economy. And he repeatedly highlights the need for starting trinitarian theology with Jesus Christ, the self revelation of God, the eternal Logos.

The chapters explore God's self-communication in Christ, with emphasis on the resurrection in the views of Rahner and T. F. Torrance, plus the function of the Trinity in J. Moltmann's ecological doctrine of creation, and the doctrine of the immanent Trinity in the thoughts of A. Torrance, E. Jungel, and lastly C. Gunton. As Mol-

nar's argument develops, various points become clear that he sees as essential for understanding the immanent Trinity. 1) God is God apart from creation, and was free to remain himself if both creation and salvation never materialized. God did not become trinitarian in his creative and redemptive works. 2) The history of God acting for us should not alone define who God is in his own *ousia* pre-creation. This is to avoid a doctrine of the immanent Trinity which is dependent upon the works of God *ad extra*, for example, the Word was the Word before the incarnation and resurrection, the Word did not become the Word through or by these events, or as Molnar says, '... God's eternity is not defined by its relation to time. . .' (81). 3) Both divine and human freedom is maintained when a doctrine of the immanent Trinity establishes that human beings and their history do not condition God. 4) God's freedom *in se*, revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is never dependent upon human experience of faith. God is independent of the world. And, 5) In Molnar's own words, 'In this book I am arguing that Barth did not separate or collapse the immanent into the economic Trinity but distinguished and united them in accordance with the fact that creation, reconciliation and redemption were factual necessities grounded only in God's free grace. Barth did not allow God's being and act to be defined by his relations *ad extra*.' (270).

This book will be of great worth to any reader wishing to develop a richer understanding of the Trinity, not least because of its depth of research and the interaction with Barth and many other theologians. It should make the reader question their starting point in formulating their own doctrine of the immanent Trinity, and should instil the necessity to let God be God, rather than to make our own.

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Habermas and Theology

Nicholas Adams

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Pp. 267 + ix

SUMMARY

This study is a welcome theological appreciation and critique of the work of the influential German philosopher Jürgen Habermas examining his 'communicative action' and 'discourse ethics' theories. It also addresses the narratives of intellectual and social history of the West which underwrite these ideas. The peculiar focus throughout is upon treatment of theology and religion in connection with Habermas' theorising about the modern public sphere.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Studie ist eine willkommene theologische Würdigung und Kritik des Werkes des einflussreichen deutschen Philosophen Jürgen Habermas. Sie untersucht seine