

*[1963. Review of Karl Barth on God, by Sebastian A. Matczak. Christianity Today 1 Mar.]*

## **STILL TOO MUCH**

Karl Barth on God, by Sebastian A Matczak (St. Paul Publications, 1962, 358 pp., \$5.75), is reviewed by Gordon H. Clark, Professor of Philosophy, Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana.

This Roman Catholic critique of ample title is characterized, not unnaturally, by repeated contrasts between Barth and Aquinas. Though the conclusion that they differ is sometimes superfluous or trivial, the author makes a telling point here and there.

For example, Barth holds that natural theology fails because it arrives at best at a Supreme Being and not at the Trinity. But God is the Trinity, and any other idea of God is idolatrous. Matczak replies: then the Old Testament must be discarded because it has no ideas of the Trinity and especially no idea of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, if in heaven our knowledge of God will be more superior to our present knowledge is to the idea of a Supreme Being, then our present knowledge of the Trinity is as useless as Barth thinks the idea of a Supreme Being is (pp. 73-77).

The author also attempts to defend the scholastic view of natural theology by the theory of analogy. The point is made that the theory of analogy is established after and not before the existence of God is proved. This is an interested observation. Still, if existence is univocal in the proofs, as it must be for a valid implication, then the theory of analogy is destroyed in advance; whereas if existence is later shown to be analogical, the proofs are then discovered to have been invalid. (pp. 207, 208)

Throughout the author assumes the validity of Thomistic proofs and the theory of abstraction and epistemology on which they are based. In addition to repeating scholastic themes of long standing he makes liberal use of the recent arguments of E.L. Mascall. But none of this (especially p. 251) is enough to convince a non-Aristotelian. In fact such a one, if a Reformed thinker, would be inclined to believe that Barth himself, for all his rejection of natural theology, still has too much, rather than too little, abstraction, empiricism, and analogy.

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