

the universe for life. Here, it should be said, Rolnick's account of element formation in the early universe is particularly fine.

The final chapter in the cosmology section concerns the Logos, as the divine source of creaturely reasonableness. As he made his point here, that both the origin of creaturely order and of the human capacity to discern it come from God as Word, I was left wondering what underlying account of divine exemplarity the author would subscribe to. Some such account is necessary, but it is not spelt out. There are plenty of insights here, however, and if the book raises almost as many questions as it addresses, that is perhaps no bad thing.

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Jason A. Fout, *Fully Alive: The Glory of God and the Human Creature in Karl Barth, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Theological Exegesis of Scripture* (Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 213. £69.99

Jason Fout argues that contemporary theology needs to clarify the relationship between God's glory and human agency. All too often, Fout claims, theologians describe God's glory in ways that magnify God at the expense of the human creature, specifically genuine human agency. Fout's correction to this well-worn path is to argue for an understanding of the glory of God that "does not overwhelm human agency, but rather constitutes and establishes it in a manner consistent with the character of that glory" (p. 145).

Fout's ambitious strategy is to provide a close and careful reading of arguably two of the most profound theologians of God's glory in the twentieth century – Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar. Fout carefully describes and deftly analyzes Barth's and von Balthasar's influential treatments of God's glory and of human agency, with particular attention to human obedience. Fout is both appreciative and incisively critical of both Barth and von Balthasar.

Fout commends Barth for the depth of his treatment of the glory of God throughout the *Church Dogmatics*. He gives particular attention to Barth's account of the glory of God in his exploration of the divine perfections in CD II/1, in which Barth stresses God's glory as God's freedom to love. Furthermore, he examines Barth's description of the glory of God in CD IV/3 as the shining forth of God's self-declaration in the prophetic office

of the Mediator, Jesus Christ. Fout finds much to endorse in Barth, while also raising significant concerns. Fout consistently criticizes Barth for failing to give room for genuine human engagement with the revelation of God's glory. By insisting that God's revelation must be accepted by human beings on its own terms, Barth rules out any possibility for human "question[ing], doubt, exploration or discernment" (p. 66). Fout judges Barth's account of human reception of God's revelation to be destructively heteronomous to human agency. Fout favors Paul Ricoeur's language of "non-heteronomous dependence". Moreover, although he recognizes Barth's account of God freeing human beings to obey, Fout is not satisfied with the limitation he deems present in Barth's ethic of divine command and human obedience. Fout labels this view "straight-line" obedience. "Straight-line" obedience is problematic because it presents the individual with only one possible form of obedience. God's command is clear and unequivocal and the only proper human response is to perform exactly what God commands. Fout challenges this limited notion of the relationship between God and humanity because it truncates and fails to engage with the whole of human agency. In contrast to Barth, Fout insists that a proper biblical and theological account of human agency must include the possibilities of genuine conversation between the human person and God and not merely direct address. This conversation includes faithful questioning and leads to genuine human discernment. Instead of "straight-line" obedience, Fout proposes "improvisational" obedience.

Fout helpfully demonstrates ways in which von Balthasar builds upon and goes beyond Barth's treatment of the glory of God. Von Balthasar improves upon Barth by providing a fuller account of human agency and a more expansive and detailed account of how God's glory glorifies the creation. Yet, even with these notable improvements on Barth, Fout finds von Balthasar's account of obedience to be unsatisfying for reasons similar to Barth. Von Balthasar, like Barth, endorses "straight-line" obedience, in which the individual must submit to God, relinquish her own agency and do exactly what God commands. Notably, Fout challenges a prominent feature of von Balthasar's entire theology, his view of Mary, his reading of the annunciation, and his proposal for the Marian shape of the Church. For von Balthasar, Mary is the model of the Christian life, in particular her "active receptivity in obedience" (p. 137). Mary's obedience involves self-dispossession, the relinquishing her agency in order to allow God to act. Rather than reading the episode of the annunciation as highlighting Mary's self-renunciation, Fout suggests that the exchange between Mary and the angel is an example of genuine conversation, which includes "faithful questioning." Mary does not exemplify "selfless assent and consent" (p. 141). Instead, she models

for the Church and all Christians humble questioning, discernment, and creatively responsive obedience.

Fout's project does not rest with his explication and critique of Barth and von Balthasar. The volume culminates with a thought-provoking theological reading of Exodus 33 and 34, 2 Corinthians, and the Gospel of John. This reading promotes Fout's constructive proposal for how God's glory does not overwhelm or bracket out human agency but rather transforms human agency in such a way that human engagement with God involves conversation, faithful questioning, discernment, and performance.

Fout's work calls for engagement, even by those who might not be entirely convinced by his critique of Barth and von Balthasar, and those who might question his constructive account of human agency. He has produced a rich reading of Scripture and an appreciative and critical account of the seminal and profound reflections of two of the twentieth century's greatest theologians. Fout's project is a welcome challenge to theologies of God's glory in contemporary conservative evangelical reformed theology. It also contributes significantly to recent developments in theological accounts of the relationship between God and humanity - e.g. Kathryn Tanner's non-competitive construal of divine and human agency and Katherine Sonderegger's proposal for "theological compatibalism".

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Myk Habets, *Theology in Transposition: A Constructive Appraisal of T. F. Torrance* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013) pp. xiv + 197 (226 incl. bibliog. + index).

This is a substantial analysis and evaluation of Torrance's theology as a whole, of his critics, central issues raised by his work, weaknesses in his theology as Habets sees them and areas in which it needs to be developed. Throughout, Habets evidences meticulous research and a wealth of useful, illuminating footnotes.

Part I deals with 'The Architectonic Nature of Torrance's Scientific Christian Dogmatics'. Beginning with a fine biographical chapter on Torrance the man and his work, reformed-biblical, trinitarian-christological, missional-evangelistic and academic-pastoral, the major chapters are 'Scientific Theology and Theological Science' (chapter 2), 'Natural Theology and a Theology of Nature' (chapter 3), 'Realist Theology and Theological Realism' (chapter 4).