

theology is the inner life of God as knowable by revelation and faith. By this object theology rises above metaphysics. . . .’ This quote comes from Reginald Marie Garrigou-Lagrange, OP (1877–1964), a slightly older contemporary of Karl Barth (1886–1968), and one of Aquinas’ great expositors. So perhaps Torrance is closer to some aspects of the Latin tradition than he himself realizes or would like to admit.

Clearly, this book is indispensable for students of Torrance. It is also of importance for students of Barth, and anyone with a general interest in 20th century Reformed theology. The volume is supplied with an excellent chronological bibliography of Torrance, which alone bears witness to his work-rate and breadth of learning, and twenty-one photographs covering Torrance’s whole life to date.

NEIL FERGUSON OP

BISHOPS, WIVES AND CHILDREN: SPIRITUAL CAPITAL ACROSS THE GENERATIONS by Douglas J. Davies and Mathew Guest, *Ashgate, Aldershot, 2007, Pp. xi + 207, £50.00 hbk.*

The description of Gordon Brown, the British Prime Minister as a ‘son of the manse’ draws attention to an important facet of the reproduction of the professions in England: the disproportionate contribution to their ranks made by the children of the clergy. With backgrounds high in status, but low in terms of income, these graduates of a domestic academy have had a profound influence on English culture, class and occupations. While well recognised in educational and social history, little sociological attention has been given to the moral and theological implications of this phenomenon. In filling an important gap, this well written and sensitive study on the transmission of spiritual capital, value formation and family life has much to offer. In their introductory chapter, the authors rightly indicate that excessive concentration on the secularisation thesis in the sociology of religion has left ‘woefully under-theorized’ the conception of religion as a cultural resource that shapes lives (p. 4). This study does much to rectify this imbalance. In placing spiritual capital on the sociological and the theological map, the authors open out many possibilities for further study, not least of the social construction of religiosity.

A lot of important issues are generated, far more than could be covered in one volume, however meticulous. The statistics and testimonies in the study derive from a complex set of surveys, whose methodology is well covered in the appendix (pp. 181–184). The use of spiritual capital in relation to the episcopacy occurs in chapters 2–4. Reticence, an extraordinary diversity of theological positions, pastoral matters and the notion of the bishop as a gift are concerns that dominate these chapters. They are not where the strengths of the study lie. When the study focuses on spiritual capital in relation to wives and children (chapter 5–8), it takes on a critical and significant importance.

Spiritual capital is a term derived from the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu. The term is an extension made by Verter of Bourdieu’s notions of religious, cultural and symbolic capital. Few sociological terms are as friendly to the concerns of theology as spiritual capital, with its emphasis on dispositions and capacities for reproduction. As a term, it is at the heart of understandings of religious belief in relation to the use of cultural resources. In this study, however, spiritual capital is directed less to spiritual competences, such as developed in liturgy and more towards concerns with the transmission of the virtues of Englishness, of service, altruism, tact, decency and what constitutes an implicit religion. This is very much a Protestant use of the term, with its concerns with duty and obligation. Spiritual

capital, however, has a very definite Catholic gestation, one not pursued in this study.

The chapters on the episcopacy treat spiritual capital in terms of the gift relationship and symbolic exchange. Although the points are marked and the ritual dimensions of the episcopacy are denoted, what emerges is terribly diffuse. Predominantly, the bishops in the study went to Oxford and Cambridge and public schools and much is made of the networking, 'the nod and wink', surrounding the filling of Episcopal appointments. In these chapters, a stress on reticence emerges. Thus, the reluctance to speak on moral issues can be linked to a perverse defence of 'vagueness' as a virtue (pp. 37–8), one deemed necessary to handle the galaxy of churchmanship inherent in Anglicanism. This notion of vagueness as a virtue is oddly linked to the perpetuation of tradition (pp. 178–180).

The study suffers from not giving the concept of spiritual capital a tighter and more defined focus from the beginning so that its terms of reference and anticipated use could have emerged more clearly. Too often appeal is made to the ideals of the gifts Bishops embody with too little attention given to how they donate these from their store of spiritual capital to those they rule, whether clergy or laity. Chapter 4, on Suffragan and Diocesan Bishops, with its emphasis at the end on institution, humility and on personal piety is replete with Anglican contradictions. Its place in the study is not persuasive.

The analytical benefits of spiritual capital become much more apparent in the later chapters on its diffusion to the identity and careers of the children of the palace. Chapter 5 on the place of the Bishops' wives in what is termed a 'shared ministry' is very useful. Slope and Mrs. Proudie make no appearance in this account of support and moral sobriety. A difficulty of the study lies in separating out what is particular to the children of Bishops from the more general traits that emerge from the offspring of clergy as a whole. On balance and without such a parallel study, Davies and Guest manage to mark out distinctions between both and keep well concerns with the episcopacy to the fore.

They are highly alert to some of the oddities that arise in the transmission of spiritual capital in relation to the offspring of the Bishops. The households seem on moral display and in the palace there is a blurring of the public and private domains that greatly affects the children who respect the father but look to the mother for love. The relationship between the wives and the nurture of spiritual capital is well covered. The best chapters in the study are 6, on 'Growing up Clerical' and 7, on clergy, children and clergy. In the family setting, 'spiritual capital (is) absorbed as theological literacy' (p. 112). In both chapters the formation of character and virtue are well covered in settings where the children have to live up to the status of the family. The demands of the family life meant that many of the children grew up in opposition to their Episcopal fathers, either in terms of churchmanship or in response to the Church of England. Those who hope for married clergy in Catholicism will find little of comfort for their case in this study, at least in relation to the children who faced acute problems of growing away from the moral crucible in which their identity was formed. Duty and obligation denotes the moral character of these children, their lives and this is well related to the later careers they enter. The link is presented persuasively. The confusions of the spheres of family, work and religion are astutely explored.

Those seeking to apply notions of spiritual capital to Catholicism and Anglicanism will find much that will stimulate. Overall, therefore, whatever about its unevenness of concern, this is a solid, original and important work that deserves close reading. The study is an excellent example of how sociology might be applied to theological understandings.

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