

[1961. Review of *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, by Karl Barth. *The Presbyterian Journal*. May 3.]

ANSELM: FIDES QUAERENS INTELLECTUM, by Karl Barth. John Knox Press, Richmond, Va. 173 pp. \$3.00.

Anselm (1033-1109) brilliantly invented the so-called Ontological Proof of the existence of God, a proof reworked by Descartes and Spinoza, and severely criticized by Aquinas and Kant. Barth holds that Anselm has been seriously misunderstood by friends and foes alike.

Anselm's aim has been traditionally understood to be the proof of Christian doctrines on a purely rational basis without any appeal to Scripture so that a "Jew or pagan" would be convinced. This seems to be Anselm's actual procedure in his proof of God's existence, although in his proof of the Atonement he constantly makes use of Scriptural ideas.

Barth holds that Anselm is to be interpreted in every case by his procedure on the Atonement. A thesis, such as God's existence, is taken as an unknown **x**, and its proof consists in deducing it from **a**, **b**, **c**, articles of the Creed taken as known. Thus the proof of any Christian thesis consists in showing its necessary connection with the remainder of the Christian faith.

Barth's analysis of Anselm's argument, by which he defends his view, is extremely detailed and penetrating. It is a major contribution to Medieval studies.

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