

sixth century BC. In the end, however, theories that believed in the equality of men and women while recognizing significant differences, were defeated by the victory of Aristotle's philosophy in the thirteenth century. According to his sex polarity, women and men are different all right, but women are inferior. While with such theorists of sex complementarity as Hildegard of Bingen there were women on the intellectual scene in the twelfth century, Aristotle's doctrine of sex polarity was institutionalized in the universities and women were excluded. Allen's case is massively documented, and the book is studded with interesting asides. For example, Shakespeare might have seen a printed collection of the works of Roswitha of Gandersheim; women graduated in medicine in the first universities in Italy but were excluded at Paris; Roger Bacon regarded Aristotle as a Christian, on the basis of a text mistakenly attributed to the philosopher; and much else. Retelling the story of the horrific murder of Hypatia, the neo-Platonic philosopher, in 415, Allen assumes that it was 'secretly arranged' by Cyril of Alexandria: his complicity has long been suspected, though never proved, but that he 'arranged' it is a bit strong. As for the thesis itself, there could be discussion.

As Professor Michael Nolan suggests, in two important essays, what Aristotle believed about women needs to be considered in the context of his biology as a whole (*New Blackfriars* May 1995) ; and what Aquinas took from Aristotle is not so straightforward either (*New Blackfriars* March 1994). For the record, the text Allen cites from Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* 1a. 93, 5) does not say that a man 'more perfectly' contains the image of God than a woman but just that God's image is found in a man in a way in which it is not found in a woman, in as much as 'man is the beginning and end of woman, just as God is the beginning and end of all creation'. Woman was born of man, Aquinas thought. As far as being created after God's image, as Allen rightly says, Aquinas leans towards complementarity: 'the image of God is common to both sexes, being in the mind which has no distinction of sex' (93, 6 ad 2) — not that all gender theorists nowadays would be so sure that women's minds are not significantly different from men's. Allen's book is, anyway, by far the most important study of the concept of woman in philosophy from the pre-Socratics to the mid-thirteenth century. She promises a sequel, to take the story into the fifteenth century humanist Renaissance.

FERGUS KERR OP

**PERSONS IN COMMUNION: TRINITARIAN DESCRIPTION AND HUMAN PARTICIPATION** by Alan J. Torrance, Pp. xii + 388. *T&T Clark*. Edinburgh, 1996. £24.95.

For a hardback book this is certainly a bargain. The author teaches at King's College, London, in one of the two or three 'schools' in the United Kingdom with a distinctive theological orientation. For one thing, he takes it that the Christian doctrine of God is radically *trinitarian* — not always taken for granted by Christian theologians! For another, though he does not harp

401

on about it, he takes it that Colin Gunton's famous essay (*Scottish Journal of Theology* 1990) is a 'devastating critique of the influence of Augustine on Western theology'. Following Karl Rahner, he accepts that the Western practice of expounding the doctrine of God in terms of the one divine essence as a whole *before* the three persons in communion leaves us with an abstract, philosophically accessible deity. He accepts the 'powerful critique' of Rahner's theological anthropology sketched many years ago (*New Blackfriars* 1981) — less persuasive, I have come to think, that it seemed to me then! On any reckoning, then, Alan Torrance's book, as it enters the debate, carries a good deal of freight, some of it disputable, much of it fully intelligible only to workers in the field.

The central thesis, beautifully simple, is that theology stems from participation — by grace alone — in the triune life of God. This participation is held to take place, primarily, in worship — worship understood as doxology. The argument is conducted as a debate with Karl Barth. Alan Torrance starts from Barth's insistence on the doctrine of God as Trinity, as important as ever in a culture in which forms of Pelagian deism pass as authentic Christianity. His claim is, however, that Barth, for all his emphasis on starting, in theology, with the God self-revealed in the historical economy of the missions of divine Word and Holy Spirit, has an amazingly poor sense of the place, within a theology of worship, of sacramental and ecclesial participation. Torrance mentions Barth's reluctance to endorse the practice of infant baptism and his weak doctrine of the eucharist, tracing these inadequacies (as he takes them to be) to a failure to allow for the continuing priesthood of Christ. The prophetic office of Christ, central in Barth's understanding of revelation, is allowed to overshadow the priestly office, so Torrance argues, which means that revelation is separated from reconciliation and atonement. In turn, this means that theology gets separated from worship. Though Barth makes great use of the notion of the *triplex munus* of Christ (prophet, priest and king), he neglects the continuing priesthood — perhaps, Torrance, suggests, out of fear of Roman or Anglo-Catholic notions which might call in question the 'once and for all' nature of Christ's finished work ('it would appear that Protestant bias may have led him astray!'). What is required, for the ecclesial and doxological context that Torrance highlights, is 'a theologically profounder doctrine of the sacraments than has generally characterised, not least, Reformed theology' — though he reminds us of Calvin's neglected insights.

The notion of the creature's being in the image of God, and of human personhood's perhaps being a *vestigium Dei*, leads to a lengthy analysis of analogy — particularly of what Thomas Aquinas held. First we get Gerald Phelan's exposition, a complicated, typically neo-Thomist theory (1941). This is attacked by Battista Mondin (1963) as more Cajetan than Thomas; following Suarez, and advocating 'analogy of intrinsic attribution', Mondin wants to show that Thomas's notion of analogy is rooted in a principle of universal (including divine) similarity between agents and their effects. Thus, agreeing with Hampus Lyttkens's earlier book (1953), the

story is that, for Thomas, creation and human beings bear a likeness to God which means that we have a natural way to a knowledge of God which, though of course deficient, is nevertheless true. Against this version of Thomism, as Torrance notes, Barth himself appealed to the Thomist principle that God is not in any category — *Deus non est in genere*. A certain Thomist emphasis on the 'analogy of being' leaves the impression (at least) that God and creatures belong together under one and the same metaphysical category of 'being' — the two related by analogy to a third reality. Barth, however, feared exactly what Thomas feared, namely, an understanding of theological affirmation which stems precisely from an *analogia duorum ad tertium*, collocating the divine and the human under the heading of substance — compounding the error by operating in terms of *per posterius et prius*, from below upwards. With his insistence that theological predication has to be *unius ad alterum* rather than *duorum ad tertium*, and that we must stick to the principle *per prius et posterius*, Thomas was no great distance from Barth, so Torrance argues. We must always think 'from above downwards', safeguarding God's sovereignty, yet not denying the reality of finite beings; denying, however, that the relation between creator and creatures depends on anything else.

Among much else, in this immensely rich book, we engage with several other participants in recent Trinitarian theology (Zizioulas, LaCugna and others); the notion of 'person' is defended as more appropriate than the notion of 'way of being', *Seinsweise*, to which Barth resorted in despair at ever recovering the word 'person' from modern philosophies of the autonomous self; and there are countless attractive remarks about the importance of worship. In the best sense, this is a thoroughly ecumenical book. If doing Christian theology — daring to speak of God — stems from participation by grace in the triune life, as Alan Torrance insists, how far is this from Aquinas's conception of theology as proceeding from the knowledge of himself that God shares with the blessed (*Summa Theologiae* 1, 1, 2)? Aquinas is perhaps not explicitly Trinitarian enough? Or perhaps his conception of knowledge here is too intellectualist? Not doxological enough?

FERGUS KERR OP

## Book Notes

**THE MODERN THEOLOGIANS: AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**, Second Edition edited by David F. Ford, *Blackwell*, Oxford, 1997, xviii + 772 pages, £19.99 paperback.

Thoroughly revised and now in a single volume this, as consumer research of the most elementary kind bears out, must now be the most widely used textbook for students in divinity and religious studies. The major Continental European theologians are each discussed (and the major theologians *are* all Continental European!):