

also views from the edge, as it were, in the studies on excommunicates, Jews, and Byzantines. Wilks castigated long ago those who were crude enough to demand a straight answer to the problem of sovereignty. The shifting location of centre and periphery is part of the complexity. There were significant redrawings of boundaries from the sixteenth century onwards, and this collection also has essays on conciliarism, papalism and power in the period 1511–1518, on the conciliarism of the Scottish writer John Mair and other relevant material. There is also told the sometimes tragic tale of monks, friars and the royal supremacy in sixteenth century Yorkshire. Quarrels over sovereignty have not always remained academic or rarified. The repercussions of the theme extend to the present day, and in some ways are built into Christianity itself.

Aquinas is referred to repeatedly in this collection, yet in terms of focus he is the great absentee. But his fellow-Dominican, John of Paris, is examined thoroughly by Janet Coleman. Although he died in 1306, he had an influence on conciliarists of the fifteenth century, and republicans of the seventeenth. As for the papacy, so central to the theme of the Church and sovereignty, it is not neglected in these essays. Particularly stimulating, and a needed corrective to persisting bias, is David d'Avray's contribution on papal authority and religious sentiment in the late Middle Ages. The idea and practice of indulgences put the papacy in the middle of powerful currents of religious sentiment, and various preachers emphatically encouraged reverence for the papal office.

With an eye on today's Europe in flux over the redefinition of states and peoples, and with an eye to a papacy not reluctant to be involved with international affairs, we can ponder the essay by Diana Perry on the Neapolitan lawyer Paridis de Puteo. Perry concludes by noting that, for Paridis, the sovereign State was a political fact of life. But this did not negate his belief that the papacy had a relevant part to play in the elucidation, implementation and maintenance of the norms of universal right conduct and government. To this extent papal sovereignty was still a viable concept in the ordering of secular affairs.

The photograph in this volume shows Professor Wilks framed by a medieval abbey in ruins. Being a humorous man, he will appreciate the contrast with the flourishing state of medieval studies, in part due to his achievements.

ROBERT OMBRES OP

THE PROMISE OF TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY by Colin E. Gunton.
T & T Clark, 1991. pp. 188 + xii. £14.95 .

Colin Gunton is Professor of Christian Doctrine at King's College, London. In this book he offers us 'a set of essays for which is claimed a unity of theme, direction and development' (vii). The unity of theme in question is that of a relational account of trinitarian ontology, with some attempts to bring out the implications of this in different spheres.

Chapter 1 looks at Trinitarian theology today, showing how both

ecclesial and political questions are influenced by the central concepts of person, relation etc. This is an effective introduction to the themes which Professor Gunton raises in the rest of the book. In Chapter 2 he shows how a relational understanding of the Trinity, based on S.T. Coleridge (of whom we hear much, and well, in the book) gets us off the hook of the sort of argument about God or not-God waged between Don Cupitt and Keith Ward. We are enabled to see the world and human life in a different light because of the doctrine of the Trinity. In Chapter 3, Professor Gunton reveals more of the underlying pattern of his thought: Augustine bad, West bad, Cappadocians good (though Professor Gunton claims in his introduction that he is now less inclined to romanticise the East than he was). Augustine's principal failure seems (oddly) to have been stupidity in not understanding the Cappadocian revolution of distinguishing between hypostasis and ousia! Thus he is guilty of individualism, intellectualism and a neo-platonic a priori, and has bequeathed all this to us. Curiously Professor Gunton seems to think that his own central claim, that the crucial Augustinian analogy is between the inner structure of the mind and the inner being of God, is 'outrageous', rather than commonplace (see J. Ratzinger's 1973 article on personhood). Like all commonplaces, it may be time to challenge it.

In Chapter 4, Professor Gunton looks at ecclesiology in the light of his relational Trinity, attacking a 'monistic' church, and borrowing, in a very interesting way from the 17th Century Puritan John Owen in his search for a relational, congregational model. Gunton has no time for hierarchy, which is part of a monist, authoritarian, bad, model, with 'its dominance by an ontology of the invisible' (p 83). In Chapter 5, the notion of person is studied, and we are told that Descartes and Augustine are bad, Richard of St Victor, Coleridge, Macmurray, and Zizioulas are good. In Chapter 6 we are treated to an interesting working out of the consequences of the relational Trinity for the doctrine of the Imago Dei. In Chapter 7, on freedom and the theology of Jenson, (to my mind the most interesting chapter in the book), we get a further insight into Gunton's concerns: how to be anti-Augustine and yet pro-Reformation. I suspect that a good deal of Gunton's reflections spring from just this challenge.

Chapter 8 deals with the ways in which relation and relativity are linked as possibilities for seeing our world, while Chapter 9 spells out some of the consequences of the foregoing chapters for theology, and touches very elegantly on the importance of the concept of 'otherness' for relation.

Professor Gunton writes lucidly, with a distinctive style, and introduces interesting thinkers into his argument. Much of what he says seems to me to be clearly right. Yet I am left with a feeling that three things mar the thought. The first is that what he gives us are clear and distinct ideas—as though the conversion from Descartes and (his own straw) 'Augustine' to relational thought were only an intellectual one. This means that what he says runs the risk of being a fine, but

inconsequential, display. Second, and linked to this, he seems, despite his espousal of relational intellectuals, not to be aware of the depth of ecclesial complicity of his own thought. He has it in common with many theologians whose denominations started at the Reformation that when he says 'the church' (i.e. is monist, is authoritarian), it is not clear what he means. It is no longer acceptable for a Reformed theologian to criticise abstract thinking, while making glorious trinitarian remarks that are quite unrelated to the actual power structures and historical conflicts which have made their own church order, and relationship with a given academic establishment, what it is. Or has Professor Gunton got more in common with the East than he realises? There are hints of some unexaminedly atavistic attitudes towards Catholicism. Yet criticism which is not rooted in a recognition of complicity rules itself out of court as part of a dialogue, and I am left with the impression of a somewhat self-congratulatory beating of a tribal drum, beautifully dressed in the sophistication of the western theological traditions. Finally, while he asks to be allowed to be ontological without much reference to the Cross, is that really possible? Does not the possibility of the doctrine of the Trinity being humanly available come from the Cross in the light of the resurrection? Maybe Professor Gunton would be kinder to the Augustinian tradition if it were not only the understanding of relationality, but conversion of heart towards it that interested him.

JAMES ALISON OP

ROMAN CATHOLIC BELIEFS IN ENGLAND: CUSTOMARY CATHOLICISM AND TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY by M. P. Hornsby-Smith *Cambridge University Press, 1991. £27.50.*

In the latest of his contributions to the sociology of contemporary English Roman Catholicism, Michael Hornsby-Smith focuses on the range of beliefs which ordinary Catholics actually entertain. That they do not necessarily believe all that they are officially supposed to believe has long been clear from such indicators as the relative birth rates of carefully matched samples of Protestants (who are free to use all birth control techniques) and Catholics (who are not). But ordinary Catholics do not only pick and choose among more or less convenient moral teachings of the Church, some of them also subscribe to a collection of ideas drawn from quite alien sources which bear little relation to Church teachings, and some of them believe things that are patently contrary to it. Hornsby-Smith, in his widely acclaimed earlier study, *Roman Catholics in England*, made evident the dissolution of the Roman Catholic sub-culture in Britain and the process by which English Catholicism has been 'domesticated', partly by virtue of the effects of Vatican II, partly by the increasing rate of intermarriage with non-Catholics, and by the accelerated assimilation of immigrants, who still amount to a considerable proportion of the English constituency. In contrast to the quantitative analysis of the earlier work, here Hornsby-Smith draws

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