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Thomas McCall and Michael C. Rea (eds), *Philosophical and Theological Essays on the Trinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. ix+354. £45.00 (hbk).

There was a time not so long ago when philosophers would not have touched the doctrine of the Trinity with a barge pole. Fortunately that time has gone. This volume collects essays on the Trinity by some of the most brilliant analytic philosophers at work today, presenting the main contemporary philosophical interpretations of this crucial Christian doctrine in interdisciplinary dialogue with theologians. The key issue under discussion, the so-called 'threeness-oneness problem' or 'logical problem of the Trinity', is the coherence of affirming that there is only one God, but there are three divine persons. The result is a lucid and challenging book which will satisfy even the most exacting standards of analytic philosophy while inviting further debate on a subject of central theological importance and far-reaching philosophical implications.

The core of the volume is constituted by nine previously published contributions by leading philosophers of religion who, over the past fifteen years or so, have succeeded in moving the doctrine of the Trinity from the backstage of a purportedly no longer respectable philosophical topic into the limelight of contemporary philosophical discussion. These contributions are by now classic pieces which have sparked the sustained debate of which this volume itself is one of the fruits. They are complemented by nine new essays to form an impressive range of proposals and counter-proposals, objections and replies, organised in four parts: (I) social trinitarianism and its discontents; (II) Latin trinitarianism; (III) relative trinitarianism: prospects and problems; and (IV) the threeness/oneness problem in contemporary theology.

Like all trinitarian interpretations wishing to remain in line with orthodox Christian belief, the proposals included in the volume try to navigate the difficult waters between the Scylla and Charybdis which constantly threaten the trinitarian vessel: tritheism, which in an effort to ensure the distinctness of the three divine persons compromises the oneness of God, and modalism, which while firmly asserting the oneness of God ultimately reduces the divine persons to three modes of God. In this difficult balancing act, social trinitarianism (defended in this volume by Richard Swinburne, William Hasker and William Lane Craig) is accused by its critics of fatally tilting towards tritheism. The model in question calls upon a social analogy according to which the three divine persons are like a community of monarchs so strictly inter-related that they cannot exist apart from one

another. They can be conceived as 'three centers of consciousness' whose unity rests on an unbreakable relationship. Brian Leftow, Daniel Howard-Snyder and Carl Mosser nevertheless remain unconvinced that this proposal can successfully account for the strict divine oneness of monotheism. This section closes with Keith Yandell's account of a 'monotheism-securing relationship' resulting in a conception of the Triune God as a complex being albeit not composed of proper parts.

Discontented with social trinitarianism and its starting point from three distinct persons, Brian Leftow proposes instead a model labelled 'Latin' trinitarianism which begins with divine oneness and moves towards the threeness of persons. These are conceived in analogy with an imaginary Rockette, Jane, who with the help of a time machine manages to fill the role of her sick dancing partners by being 'leftmost Jane, centermost Jane, and rightmost Jane'. We have three distinct 'somethings' but still only one Jane. While this proposal successfully accounts for the oneness of God, critics are quick to raise the suspicion of modalism. Richard Cross, moreover, casts doubts on the appropriateness of distinguishing between a 'Latin' model, starting from the oneness of God, and a 'Greek' model, starting from the plurality of persons.

Part III explores relative identity – that is the view that identity statements might be true relative to one sortal term (e.g. 'cat', 'house') but false relative to another – and the various ways in which it can be used to defend the Trinity from the charge of logical contradiction (Peter van Inwagen), as well as providing a plausible account of what it means that 'x is the same God as y'. The latter project, advanced by Jeffrey Brower and Michael Rea, focuses on the analogy with different compounds of matter and form (in Aristotelian terms, hylomorphic compounds) which are the same material object. William Lane Craig, Christopher Hughes and Alexander Pruss present objections and alternative suggestions challenging the doctrine of relative identity and, more specifically, Brower and Rea's 'constitution' account of the Trinity. The final two chapters by Alan Padgett and Thomas McCall (part IV of the volume) draw attention to the gain that mutual dialogue between philosophers and theologians will bring to trinitarian discussions.

In short, this is an excellent volume and the two editors are to be congratulated for elegantly bringing together a wealth of outstanding material which will constitute an indispensable basis for further discussion.

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