

**Anthony Clarke and Andrew Moore**, eds. *Within the Love of God: Essays on the Doctrine of God in Honour of Paul S. Fiddes*. Oxford University Press 2015. 280 pp. \$110.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780198709565).

Paul Fiddes is a Baptist theologian who holds the distinguished title of Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Oxford. In 2014 he was presented with not one but two festschrifts. *For the Sake of the Church: Essays in Honour of Paul S. Fiddes* is a collection of essays from colleagues at Regent's Park College where he was Principal and Chairman of the Theology Faculty. That volume focuses primarily on matters of Baptist theology and ecclesiology. The second festschrift, the subject of this review, offers an impressive lineup of international scholars writing primarily, though loosely, on the doctrine of God, which was the subject of Fiddes' most important works *The Creative Suffering of God* (1988) and *Participating in God* (2000). In these books we see Fiddes' efforts to bring together Barthian trinitarian theology with process theology's responsive God who is persuasive, not coercive. *Within the Love of God* offers essays reflecting both agreement as well as critique of Fiddes' constructive theology concerning the being and perfections of God.

The structure of the book is threefold with part one offering four essays on 'Sources of the Doctrine of God'. These essays focus on the nature and use of the Bible as a norm for Christian theology. In 'God, the Word, and Wisdom', Hebrew Bible scholar John Barton explores how some texts speak of God suffering with God's people—a concept quite taboo for those who champion divine impassibility. Barton writes that 'The purpose of this essay is to argue that the biblical conceptuality of God allows, indeed encourages, such ideas [as divine suffering]' (21). Barton also utilizes the Jewish mystic tradition which often presented God in surprisingly anthropomorphic ways. He concludes by suggesting that 'Only a suffering God has the kind of power that is needed to hold such a [finite and fragile] world in being, and to love it' (28).

In 'The "Rule of Love"' Islamic scholar Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad articulates a possible relationship between the Golden Rule (do unto others as you would have them do unto you) and the two great commandments (Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind and love your neighbor as yourself). Muhammad recognizes that these two teachings are uniquely linked by Jesus connecting them to the 'Law and Prophets' (the whole Hebrew Bible). The Golden Rule *is* the Law and Prophets, while the Law and Prophets *hang* on the two great commandments. He concludes his essay by making practical application of 'the rule of law of love' to biblical interpretation, social interaction, and legal matters.

Section one is rounded out with John Colwell's essay, "'In the Beginning was the Word..."; On Language and Presence' and Andrew Moore's 'Experience and the Doctrine of God'. Colwell utilizes Augustine, Aquinas, and Barth on the nature of divine Word and human language as understood in scripture. Moore highlights the place of experience as a source and norm of Christian theology.

Part two offers six essays on 'Metaphysics and the Doctrine of God' and it is here where the book is most interesting in light of philosophical theology. Frances Young considers divine *apatheia* and why early Christian writers did not appeal to Jesus Christ's sufferings as a basis for theodicy. Young argues that early Christians did not understand divine *apatheia* in the same way Greeks thinkers did. The Church Fathers eschewed the selfish passions found in the gods of the Greek myths but not by making God aloof (as did the Epicureans). *Apetheia*, argues Young, was an apophatic term used to resist anthropomorphisms but all the Fathers affirmed unchanging divine justice and love (87). In contrast to how others have understood the Fathers, Young says *apatheia* was never understood to mean 'impassive' but as protecting God's goodness and love. Young's crescendo, citing Clement of Alexandria, seems to be that perfection means mastery of the passions and '*apatheia* produces and is produced by love' (91), which leads to the paradox that 'he suffered without suffering'.

John Weber, in his essay '*Non ex aequo*: God's Relation to Creatures', takes a strong thomistic approach to God's relationality, arguing that God's relationship with creation is a 'relation of reason'. Humans have a 'real relation' with God since we are mutable and finite but God's metaphysical necessity makes God's relation to humans metaphorical and thus not essential. Weber's essay seeks to defend the notion that creation 'adds nothing to God, and in its absence God would be undiminished' (106).

Jürgen Moltmann, perhaps the most important theologian of the past half century, answers six key questions asked by J.K. Mozley in 1926 concerning God's being and relation to creation. Moltmann is a passionate defender of possibility and in the essay faults the metaphysics of substance for immutability. Moltmann appeals to revelation and relationality: 'Self-revelation and self-dedication are actions of love. Love can only be ascribed to a subject, not a substance' (115). Key for Moltmann is that God is essentially personal and this determines God's being.

Stephen Holmes examines two of Fiddes' main works, *The Creative Suffering of God* and *Past Event and Present Salvation*, to make sense of Fiddes' doctrine of salvation. Holmes argues that Fiddes' reinterpretation of the atonement brings divine suffering to the fore or perhaps it is God's suffering nature that redefine soteriology. The cross not only gives objective victory but, according to Holmes reading of Fiddes, is 'constitutive for God's being' for God in creation 'repeatedly encounters death...forcing it into servitude' (123).

This section of the book concludes with two of the more interesting essays. Keith Ward's 'Freedom, Necessity, and Suffering in God' challenges Fiddes' claim that 'God is free to be what he chooses to be' (134). Ward argues that God must have a nature before any choice can be made. Furthermore, it is good that God have a nature and logical limits for a totally unconditioned nature would hardly guarantee goodness or intelligence. Ward also challenges Fiddes' notion that God 'shares' in our pain. 'God is affected by and fully understands human suffering' according to Ward, but God 'does not literally share it and is not in any way injured by it' for this would impair God and that is not something we should wish on anyone, even God (143). Paul Helm ends the section by

defending Classical theism's impassibility tradition. Helm argues that God accommodates to humanity and makes it seem like God has passions, even though this could never be. Much in the way one can be dedicated to the truth or justice, Helm offers that God is *impassioned*, that God is fully committed to such things as goodness, mercy, truth, and judgment. While God has no emotional episodes God is nonetheless 'passionate' about such things.

Part three, 'God and Humanity', rounds out the book with six essays addressing questions related to human nature. In 'Eschatology and Human Knowledge of God' Judith Wolfe unpacks what she calls 'eschatological dialectic' utilizing both Fiddes and Heidegger to understand human authenticity. Her essay seeks to interpret 'present human existence backwards from an eschatological ideal' (162). And in 'Sublimation and Sublime Meaning' Pamela Sue Anderson explores Fiddes' use of psycholinguist Julia Kristeva and how each understand the concept of 'person'—human and divine. Anderson explores Kristeva's philosophy and Fiddes' use of her works in developing his doctrine of God as relationship.

Oliver Davies carefully employs neuroscience and genetics in developing his ideas about human relationship and Fiddes' discernment of Wisdom. Davies appeals to insights in neurobiology to show that being an observer and participant overlap in our encounters with the world and the other. Our embedded relationality initiated by evolutionary development, including language, leads Davies to reason 'We *become* sign to the other, as they become sign to us' (191). Davies connects our evolutionary history to Fiddes' notion of Wisdom as being in relation to self and world.

In contrast to Davies, Bernd Wannenwetsch's essay, 'Creation and Ethics', questions the legitimacy of appeals to 'nature' in developing a Christian ethic. Wannenwetsch says that nature or creation is but one part of the 'complete salvific drama' and so any Christian ethic must make account 'of fall, redemption, restoration, and perfection' (199). Wannenwetsch examines three ways in which 'natural' is used (statistical norm, biology, and rational) but finds each wanting. Because of the fall we have lost access to creation in its normative sense, so each must approach the 'natural' through the Word, both Scripture and Christ. In this way, to live naturally is to 'partake in the life of the new Adam, Christ, within the New Eve, the church' (216).

The final two essays are political in tone. David Burrell explores the question of whether Jews, Christians, and Muslims worship the same God. While he affirms that they do, his essay focuses on how the politics of power pose a far larger problem than theology or theological differences. He is hopeful about 'new directions in Islamic thought' and the possibilities of an 'inter-faith effort toward social justice and participatory society' (228). Finally, Christopher Rowland looks at how William Blake reimagined Dante's *Paradise Lost* to explore the dialectic in the divine. Rowland applies this to Blake's political theology, which captures the divine dialectic in his telling of the story of Job and his seeing God as both demon and Christ. Rowland reads Blake as calling the reader 'to participate in another way of thinking about God and the world and its formularies. It demands the exercise of the imagination, the heart as well as the head, to conjure up a different way of grasping reality and the stimulus to change it' (243).

*Within the Love of God* is an engaging collection of theological essays, even though it is quite eclectic. While the editors worked to gather essays under common themes, the only thing that really ties these together are Christian theology and Paul Fiddes, but this is not unexpected given the work is a festschrift.

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