

know more of God than they can express through doctrine alone.

This book is one of the best recent contributions to Trinitarian theology that this author has read. Reestablishing personhood in the Trinity as relation of origin rather than independent personal action and willing seems increasingly to be the need of the hour. Vidu provides readers with the historical, conceptual, and exegetical tools to cut through the heart of much confusion in the so-called Trinitarian renaissance today, especially related to thorny questions like eternal subordination and social Trinitarian theology. This book will serve serious-minded students interested in Trinitarian theology, especially among professors and ministers who want a deeper grasp of the doctrine than what they might find in entry level texts.

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Steven J. Duby, *Jesus and the God of Classical Theism: Biblical Christology in Light of the Doctrine of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022. 464 pp. Cloth. \$55.

The past several years have witnessed a renaissance in what is often called classical theism. Works in this vein have explicated the attributes of God or been devoted to one attribute in particular.¹ To date, however, the retrieval of the traditional doctrine of God has largely been focused on God understood generally, or God in his triune being,² rather than the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit in particular.

In *Jesus and the God of Classical Theism*, Steven J. Duby brings the traditional doctrine of God to bear on Jesus as he is revealed in the Bible. The impetus for this project is that in the past two centuries or more, scholars have “cast doubt on whether a ‘more traditional’ doctrine of God can fit with an exegetically driven Christology” (xiv). Against such doubts, Duby contends that the God of the Bible

¹Some notable examples include Steven J. Duby, *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account* (London New Delhi New York Sydney: T&T Clark, 2016, repr. 2018); James E. Dolezal, *All That Is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2017); Matthew Barrett, *None Greater: The Undomesticated Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019); and Michael J. Dodds, *The One Creator God in Thomas Aquinas and Contemporary Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2020).

²See, e.g., Fred Sanders, *The Triune God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2016); Scott R. Swain, *The Trinity: An Introduction* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020); Matthew Barrett, *Simply Trinity: The Unmanipulated Father, Son, and Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021); and Thomas Joseph White, *The Trinity: On the Nature and Mystery of the One God* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2022).

and the God of classical theism are not “two different Gods. In fact, I intend to argue that the revelation of God in Christ and Holy Scripture implies and is illuminated by the theological claims of the catholic fathers” (xiii). For the purposes of this book, Duby defines classical theism as “an account of the triune God holding that he is simple, immutable, impassible, and eternal” (xiii).

In chapter 1 Duby begins by acknowledging some modern criticisms of both classical theism and “the use of ‘Greek’ philosophical concepts in scriptural exegesis” (xv). He identifies “three recurring themes” or concerns that are evident in these criticisms: “(1) a concern to set forth the Son’s relationship to the Father and Spirit, (2) a concern to preserve the unity of the person of Christ, and (3) a concern to honor the authenticity of Christ’s human life and suffering” (22).

The rest of the book discusses the major facets of Christology with an eye toward demonstrating that biblical Christology and classical theism are mutually supportive rather than contradictory. Chapter 2 addresses the Son’s eternal relation to the Father; chapter 3 the Son’s election and mission; chapter 4 the Son’s relationship to his human nature; chapter 5 the Son’s dependence on the Holy Spirit in his earthly ministry; chapter 6 the Son’s obedience to the Father; and chapter 7 the Son’s suffering (xv). For each facet of Christology discussed, Duby first surveys relevant passages of Scripture to establish a sense of what the biblical witness on the subject is. After noting particular questions about the classical theistic account of God which these passages can raise, he then addresses these questions by drawing on patristic, medieval, and Reformed orthodox sources.

One topic that will likely be of special interest to Protestant readers is Duby’s treatment of the controversy between Lutherans and the Reformed over what is known as the *extra Calvinisticum*. This term refers to “the teaching that Christ according to his divinity is not enclosed within his humanity but rather subsists *extra carnem*, beyond his finite flesh” (166). From this teaching follows the practical implication (commonly held by the Reformed) that Christ, because he is finite in his humanity and seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, is not corporally present in the Eucharist, yet he is omnipresent in his divinity and therefore spiritually present in the Eucharist. Lutherans, on the other hand, contend that “divine attributes like omnipresence are shared by Christ’s humanity” (168). By extension, Lutherans maintain that Christ is corporeally (or “substantially,” in the term’s technical sense) present in the Eucharist.

As indicated above, these differing views of the Eucharist stem from competing approaches to Christology and more specifically the *communicatio idiomatum*—understood as “the communication or sharing of the properties of the two natures in the one person of Christ” (166). In Lutheran Christology there

are three “genera or kinds of christological communication that follow on the hypostatic union of the two natures.” The first is the “*genus idiomaticum*, wherein the essential properties of each nature are really communicated to or belong to the one person of Christ, the divine properties being communicated to Christ on account of his deity and the human properties being communicated to Christ on account of his humanity.” On this principle we can rightly say, for example, that God was capable of dying, for while the Son in his divinity could not die, the Son in his humanity could and did die. The second kind of christological communication is the “*genus apotelesmaticum*, wherein the economic offices and works (*apotelesmata*) of Christ belong to the person of Christ on account of both his deity and his humanity because Christ always acts by both natures together to accomplish his works” (167). Hence we can say that God suffered and shed his blood for the sins of humanity because the Son, in his humanity, did these things. The Reformed affirm both of these kinds of christological communication.

Disagreement arises concerning the third kind of communication posited in Lutheran Christology, the “*genus majesticum*, wherein the majesty or glory and excellence of the divine nature is communicated to the human nature on account of the hypostatic union, so that Christ’s humanity has an excellence and power that surpasses that of ordinary humanity” (167). In upholding these three kinds of christological communication, Lutherans maintain that the Reformed “[have] Nestorian tendencies in their Christology,” in that they “allow only a ‘verbal’ (rather than ‘real’) communication of essential properties in the person of Christ, as though the divine attributes were only spoken of the man Jesus and did not belong to him in reality.” This is why, for example, Lutherans say that “within the *genus majesticum* divine attributes like omnipresence are shared by Christ’s humanity,” with the caveat that “omnipresence is not transferred to Christ’s humanity in the abstract or on its own.” The Reformed, for their part, respond that “despite Lutheran arguments to the contrary. . . the sharing [of divine attributes by Jesus’s human nature] would pertain to the human nature as such or in the abstract, thus suggesting a Eutychian confusion of Christ’s two natures” (168).

Duby expresses a desire to be “fair” to the Lutheran scholastics and is careful to note that “the Lutheran writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not claim that the divinity of Christ was affected by his human properties or experiences” (177). Even so, he goes on to observe, “The Lutheran claim is that the *human nature itself* (as long as it is not taken to be *by itself*) is ubiquitous and omnipotent. . . . Their approach raises serious questions about whether Christ’s finite human nature can be both ubiquitous and circumscribed, omnipotent and

finite in power” (178, emphasis original). In short, although Duby is not out to “defend Reformed Christology simply because it bears the descriptor ‘Reformed’” (176–7), he does raise some concerns about Lutheran Christology. His discussion of the topic comprises only a small percentage of the book, but it is a highlight because of its concise treatment of an issue that continues to divide Lutherans and the Reformed.

More broadly, throughout the book Duby does an excellent job of attending to both the biblical text and relevant theological treatments, older and newer. In so doing he effectively demonstrates that classical theism is not a byproduct of disregarding the biblical witness, but rather a result of reading Scripture rightly. Much of Duby’s scholarly output to date has sought to defend this basic point in various ways, and *Jesus and the God of Classical Theism* is a welcome contribution to this worthwhile task.

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Hans Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. 316 pp. \$34.99.

Hans Boersma (PhD, University of Utrecht) serves as the St. Benedict Servants of Christ Chair in Ascetical Theology at Nashotah House Theological Seminary. He previously taught at Regent College and Trinity Western University. Throughout his career, he has written extensively on the topic of sacramental ontology, publishing *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (2009), *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (2011), and *Sacramental Preaching: Sermons on the Hidden Presence of Christ* (2016).

In *Scripture as Real Presence*, Boersma aims to demonstrate that the early church read the Bible sacramentally. His thesis is “that the church fathers were deeply invested in reading the Old Testament Scriptures as a sacrament, whose historical basis or surface level participates in the mystery of the New Testament reality of the Christ event” (xiii). But his goal is deeper. He not only wants to convince his readers that the church fathers read the Scriptures sacramentally, but that they should too.

When he speaks of sacrament, Boersma is arguing for the idea that the Bible (along with those ecclesial activities which are more traditionally known as sacraments) do not simply point to the reality of Jesus, but that they actually