

- 19 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 8.
- 20 Cf. the conclusion of the posthumously published manuscript notes by Sidgwick, included by F. F. Constance Jones in her 'Preface' to the sixth edition of Sidgwick's *The Methods of Ethics* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), xxii. 'There was indeed a fundamental opposition between the individual's interest and either morality (i.e., intuitionism and utilitarianism), which I could not solve by any method I had yet found trustworthy, *without the assumption of the moral government of the world*' (my italics).
- 21 Sometimes he seems to imply that we ought to believe in the existence of God and the immortality of the soul because these doctrines are morally desirable; sometimes rather that we should bear them in mind as ideal possibilities.
- 22 See Matthew 5: 5-10; 25: 31-46.
- 23 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 11.
- 24 It is the principal matter at issue in MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. 1988).
- 25 'Intuitionism' in ethics is certainly very liable to this sort of abuse; one is made to feel stupid if one does not share the 'intuitions' about what is good or bad of the members of one's society or group who have the greatest prestige. But I think aspects of intuitionism can be rescued. If a person were to doubt, for example, whether in general good action tended to increase happiness, bad action to impugn it, it could reasonably be said that to that extent the person was ignorant of the meanings of 'good' and 'bad'.

Reviews

PARTICIPATING IN GOD: A PASTORAL DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY
 by Paul S. Fiddes *Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 2000. Pp. 312, £14.95 pbk.*

Paul Fiddes interweaves within this book a doctrinal and pastoral understanding of the Trinity. In so doing he wishes to demonstrate that the Trinity, as the pivotal Christian doctrine around which all else attains meaning, is at the heart of Christian life and good pastoral practice. The aim of a pastoral doctrine of God should therefore be to ask (a) conceptually, what difference it makes to view pastoral issues from the perspective of engagement in God; and (b) experimentally, how our experience might be shaped by this engagement' (p. 33). The Trinity, as the mystery of God himself, ought to be relevant then to the prayer and sacramental life of Christians, to the realities and vicissitudes of daily experience, and the basis of all preaching and pastoral counselling.

On the practical level this book amply testifies to Fiddes's pastoral experience and wisdom. On numerous occasions he offers sound pastoral guidance on a variety of real life situations, on emotional and spiritual growth and health, sickness and bereavement, preaching and liturgical practice, and the role of the Christian, whether as an official minister or simply as loving friend, as 'the sacrament' of God's consoling and loving presence. In so

doing, Fiddes calls upon his admirable knowledge of literature and poetry. He, for example, creatively employs Dostoyevsky, Hopkins, and Shakespeare. He is equally versed in psychology, which he utilizes in a nuanced manner that conforms to the Gospel. Moreover, Fiddes has a gift for insightfully interpreting contemporary social and political realities. All this pastoral and practical acumen, though at times it appears a tad bit too politically correct, makes for beneficial and enjoyable reading.

It is on the theological level that this reviewer had some rather serious reservations and concerns. Because of Fiddes's pastoral concerns, he takes up the notion of God's relationality as his central theological theme, for it is God's intent to incorporate human beings into his very own life. Our life must always be lived and interpreted from within our relationship to God. Following the Cappadocians, Augustine and Aquinas, Fiddes argues that the God is composed of subsistent relations. It is here though that the first concern arises. If I understand Fiddes properly, in defining the concept of 'subsistent relation', he does not want to say that there are strictly speaking three subjects who subsist solely in relation with one another, but rather, and according to Fiddes more dynamically, God subsists in a threefold movement of giving and receiving. 'The triune God must not, as I have been suggesting, be visualised as three individual subjects who have relationships' (pp. 36-7). Rather, the terms 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit', though employed evocatively, are metaphors that designate the various dynamic movements within God. 'Actively they are such moments as originating, responding, opening; passively they are moments of being glorified, being sent, being breathed' (p. 38). Or again, 'The closest analogy between the triune God and human existence created in the image of this God is not in persons but in the personal relationships themselves' (p. 49). Thus, Fiddes wishes to embrace as his primary icon for God that of a dance. 'I suggest that the image of the dance makes most sense when we understand the divine persons as movements of relationship, rather than as individual subjects who have relationships' (72). Thus, while 'the theological tradition has referred to a perichoresis of divine subjects', Fiddes prefers 'a perichoresis of movement' (p. 73).

Evidently, Fiddes does not wish, and rightly so, to fall into any form of tritheism or a social understanding of the Trinity where the persons, while related, are nonetheless separate 'entities'. However, with his negating of the distinct subjectivity of the divine persons, it is difficult to perceive how the divine subsisting relations can be termed 'personal'. While Fiddes wants human persons to possess loving and forgiving relationships among themselves and with God within the 'divine dance', it would seem that there is no trinitarian foundation for such personal relations since there are no divine personal subjects, no personal 'who's', with whom to have such relations. He speaks of divine 'movements' and divine 'moments' within God, but such appear devoid of all personalism, except maybe that among human persons. Because Fiddes does not uphold the subjectivity of the divine persons, he most often speaks in terms of human beings living in relationship with 'God' and not in relationship with the distinct persons of the Trinity. This is rather ironic for a book that wants to enhance the pastoral importance of the Trinity.

The second concern is that God, as subsistent relational movements,

becomes, and I think Fiddes would agree, a philosophical principle placed within the very structure of existence itself. Fiddes's trinitarian economy is not one whereby the eternal persons of the Trinity have intervened in time and history in such a manner so as to make possible human persons to obtain communion with them. Rather the divine 'dance' is necessarily and ontologically weaved within the very fabric of time and history. Thus, Fiddes conflates the order of grace and the order of nature. Espousing a form of pantheism (see p. 292), there can be only one type of relationship between God and human beings, and that relationship inheres within the very ontological structure of all reality, including God. It is this pantheism that allows Fiddes to see the world and human beings as 'God's body' (see pp. 278-302) and so demands a God that, literally, embodies time and suffering (see pp. 152-90). Such a view raises a host of questions (which I have extensively treated elsewhere) not the least of which is how such a pantheistic God can create *ex nihilo*, since his very own existence is dependent upon the 'created' order. Moreover, Jesus is no longer the distinct person of the Son who became man and who, through his death and resurrection, inaugurated a whole new salvific order (a new dance) comprised of the new life of the Holy Spirit (the new interior choreographer who empowers the new dancers in faith to dance the new eschatological dance). Rather, Jesus merely makes evident the salvific 'dance' that has always been in progress. The significance of Jesus is then reduced to that of a gnostic and pelagian redeemer, the flawless dance master, who exemplifies and so teaches us to dance the old dance properly.

Fiddes, within this book, has set himself the important and noble task of making the Trinity pastorally relevant. He has succeeded in many ways. My fear is that his own theology of God has undermined some of the Trinity's practical relevance.

THOMAS WEINANDY OFM Cap

LA SAGESSE DU MONDE. UNE HISTOIRE DE L'EXPERIENCE HUMAINE DE L'UNIVERS by Rémi Brague *Fayard*, 'L'esprit de la cité', Paris, 1999. Pp. 333, FF 165 pbk.

Professor Brague started off by teaching Greek philosophy, to which he devoted his doctoral and professorial dissertations. He then moved into Arabic medieval philosophy, and now teaches this at the Sorbonne. A specialist in Christian medieval thought, over the last twenty years he has also been studying Jewish philosophy — see his intellectual autobiography, an essay written at the request of *Le débat*, 'Elargir le passé, approfondir le présent' (*Le débat* 72, Nov-Dec 1992). On Greek, Islamic, Jewish, Christian and modern cosmologies he writes with first-hand knowledge. He might well be the most learned Frenchman today. In other words, one should not be too quickly irritated by the title of his book. Still, for an English-speaking academic audience, a less offputting title, albeit more offputting for the non-specialist, could have been, *A History of the Posterity of Plato's Timaeus*.

The thread of the story is the link between anthropology and metaphysics, the 'factual' (nature, the World) and the 'normative', the is and the ought. Brague has never ceased to wrestle with this question, from his