

anti-Judaism prejudiced Christians against the Hebrew Bible and particularly the Sabbath. A few sixteenth-century Anabaptists (Oswald Glait, Andreas Fischer, and some of the early Hutterites) saw that if the norm for following Jesus is the whole Scripture, stripped of distorting tradition, then the recovery of the seventh-day Sabbath would not only restore the biblical teaching, but remove a major obstacle to peacemaking and reconciliation between Jewish and Christian believers (Daniel Liechty, *Sabbatarianism in the Sixteenth Century* [Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1993], 6-7).

By projecting Anabaptist values into the twenty-first century, *The Naked Anabaptist* makes a valuable contribution. But the project of extending the sixteenth-century Radical Reformation remains a work in progress.

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Pugliese, Marc A. *The One, the Many and the Trinity: Joseph A. Bracken and the Challenge of Process Metaphysics*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011. 297 pp. Hardcover, \$69.95.

This extensively researched and well-written book represents an ambitious undertaking. In four rather dense chapters, Marc Pugliese explores an impressive range of topics under the rubric of philosophy's original and most fundamental question—*What is the one from which the many come?* He provides a description of process philosophy; an account of Joseph Bracken's Trinitarian thought, which utilizes process thought; a critique of process attempts to solve the problem of the one and the many; and an appeal to classical theism as the only adequate solution.

Chapter 1 begins with an informative review of the somewhat neglected background of process philosophy, noting how such factors as science, the rise of historical consciousness, and the turn to the subject have shaped the modern mentality. Next it explains the essential components of Whitehead's metaphysics—the central claim that reality consists of social process and the role that such concepts as creativity, concrescence, actual entities, eternal objects play in his development of this claim. It concludes by describing various ways in which other thinkers have drawn on the elements of process thought—particularly its dipolar view of God—including Charles Hartshorne, influential liberal theologians such as John B. Cobb Jr., and Schubert M. Ogden, and conservative theologians who embrace “open theism.”

Chapter 2 is devoted to the trinitarian theology of Joseph A. Bracken, who employs the elements of process thought more extensively than any other thinker within the Catholic tradition. Bracken modifies Whitehead's metaphysical scheme by maintaining that social units are just as important as individual ones, such as actual entities, in the ultimate scheme of things. This provides a helpful connection with the Christian view of the Trinity. Bracken

accepts the traditional claim that God is the sole infinite being, who exists necessarily, but he attributes to the divine Act of Being both interrelationship and temporality. This yields a unique version of social trinitarianism, according to which God comprises three distinct centers of consciousness, mind, and will, who “all think and will the same thing in virtue of the perfect harmony of love which they are as a community (128).

In Chapters 3 and 4, Pugliese presents his basic critique of process thought and sets forth his preferred alternative. No matter what form it takes, he argues, process thought fails to solve the problem of the one and many. Its essential flaw is “the problem of mutual ultimate causality,” a difficulty that stems from the basic process premise that “God is not to be treated as an exception to metaphysical principles, . . . [but as] their chief exemplification.” According to process thought, ultimate reality is characterized by polarities, contrasting categorical pairs that arise from the analysis of creaturely, or proportionate, being. Thus, ultimate reality is thought to be both absolute and relative, both eternal and temporal, both cause and effect, both changing and unchanging.

In Pugliese’s view, this simply won’t do. It is impossible to explain all of reality in terms of the metaphysics drawn from proportionate being, he asserts, because none of the terms in these categorical contrasts can account for itself and the other together (163). Such an account requires “reference to a transcendent being that is an exception to the metaphysics of proportionate being,” a quality that classical theism attributes to God. Indeed, the very problem of the one and the many arises “from attempting to make categorical unity and plurality, which are finite and not self-subsistent, ultimate reality” (207), or to put it another way, from a neglect of the “Creator-creature distinction as classically conceived” (179).

To solve the problem of the one and many, or, more accurately, to avoid the problem, we should acknowledge that the categorical contrasts drawn from finite, or proportionate, being, do not apply to God. The Creator-creature distinction is essential to an adequate metaphysics, and it resists assimilating God to creaturely derived concepts.

So, just how does invoking God resolve the problem of the one and the many? Pugliese doesn’t really say. Instead, his proposal consists of (a) denying that the metaphysical categories that account for reality as we otherwise experience it apply to God, and (b) asserting that these categories are mysteriously united in God in ways that we cannot comprehend. Here “we affirm what we cannot conceive,” viz., how the three divine persons are identical with the divine essence yet distinct from one another. Similarly, “only in the infinitely transcendent, incomprehensible God can we say, without full understanding, that what we know and speak of as the one and the many from finite categorical created reality are truly identical ways that can never be so in creation” (243).

As I see it, his constructive proposal offers little that is really constructive. On close inspection, it does little more than dismiss process theism in favor of a Thomistic form of traditional theism. What's missing is a careful comparison of the two. According to classical theism, as Pugliese describes it, the divine reality somehow encompasses both sides of categorical contrasts, but it does so in ways that are beyond our comprehension. We may assert, or confess, that God is both absolute and relative, for example, but we have no way of knowing just how that is the case.

To the contrary, process theism presents a clear and cogent account of divine dipolarity, and it is disappointing that Pugliese fails to consider it. For process theists, we preserve God's generic excellence, not by attributing one side of a categorical contrast to God and denying the other, nor by maintaining that the two mysteriously coalesce when applied to God. Instead, we uphold God's excellence by noting that each side of the categorical contrasts admits of a supreme or excellent form and that both apply to God. Thus, God is relative as well as absolute, both changing and unchanging, both cause and effect, in unique and supremely excellent ways.

Moreover, any supposed tension or conflict between the two is resolved by attributing each pole to a distinct aspect of the divine being. Dipolar theism does not consist in the mere assertion that God is both temporal and eternal, for example, or both absolute and relative. Instead, it applies each side of the polar contrasts to a distinct aspect of God's reality. "Eternal" and "absolute," for example, pertain to God's essential, changeless nature—what it is that makes God God. In contrast, what is temporal and relative about God is God's concrete, ever changing, concrete dynamic experience. The latter refers to the total divine reality; the former, to God's essential identity. Thus, God, and only God, is eternally, or timelessly, temporal. God, and only God, is absolutely relative—relative to, affected by, all that is and ever will be.

With dipolarity thus conceived, there is no need to obscure the application of contrasting categories to God with a shroud of inscrutability, as Pugliese does. How the two apply to God is by no means beyond our understanding; it is eminently clear. And it makes sense of the divine nature in ways that classical theism is notoriously unable to do.

Moreover, in spite of his extensive exposition of Bracken's trinitarianism, Pugliese seems to miss its important implications for the question at hand. If ultimate reality consists of supreme personal being, as theists affirm, and if God as such comprises the distinct persons of Father, Son, and Spirit, as trinitarian theists, including Bracken and Pugliese, affirm, then it follows that relationality, not undifferentiated unity, must be utterly basic to reality. Trinitarian thought thus provides a coherent solution to the problem of the one and the many. Trinitarian theism provides a vision of ultimate reality as inherently complex.

Despite my differences with Pugliese's views, I appreciate the fact that he takes on an issue of great importance and grapples with it in a substantive way. Seminary and graduate students will profit from reading his work.

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Seibert, Eric A. *Disturbing Divine Behavior: Troubling Old Testament Images of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009. xii + 347 pp. Paperback, \$22.00.

Eric A. Seibert seeks to clarify the Bible's picture of God by addressing certain problematic portrayals of the OT narratives. The introduction, "Thinking Rightly About God and the Problem of the OT," is almost as provocatively titled as the book. *Disturbing Divine Behavior* is divided into three parts, an epilogue, and two significant appendices, "Reexamining the Nonviolent God" and "Inspiration and the Authority of Scripture." The latter appendix will be of special interest to scholars in biblical studies and systematic theology. There are also three online features available for downloading at Seibert's website, including (1) advice on using the book as a class text, (2) sample study questions on the book as a whole, for each chapter and both appendices, and (3) an entire syllabus for Seibert's course on "Topics in Biblical Theology: Divine Violence."

Early on, Seibert complicates his task by referencing Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer's comment on his own catechistic experience. Nelson-Pallmeyer remembers being silenced by an authoritarian instructor when he raised questions about God's drowning everybody, allowing earthquakes, and consigning babies to hell because they died before being baptized (8). Seibert dedicates chapter 4 to addressing the problems presented in these types of events and to reviewing various ways people justify God's odd OT behavior, including approaches such as "divine immunity," "just cause," and the "greater good."

Consistent with the "divine immunity" approach, whatever happens in God's name is appropriate since God *qua* God cannot err (71-74). According to the "just cause" explanation, whatever God does, he does with good reason. Illustrative of this is the universal flood of Genesis 6-8, necessitated by widespread human wickedness (74-77). In the "greater good" approach, a "subcategory" of "just cause," Seibert underlines the limitations of arguments by scholars such as Gleason Archer (*Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*), Terence Fretheim (*God and Violence in the OT*), and Tremper Longman III (*The Case for Spiritual Continuity*) (77-80) to show that the end of "greater good" cannot be justified, especially given the suffering of some of society's most innocent in the process of mass destruction.