

heritage, the breakthrough insight is God's "compassionate intervention" (203); for the heritage of Islam, it is God's leading "against the impulse" to offer human sacrifice (217).

Muhammad did make combat for the cause of Allah into "an article of faith," says Chilton, citing, for example, *Al Tambah* 9:19, 20 (215). But in contrast with some later Muslim interpreters, he did not use the Aqedah to glorify the sacrifice of young people. As for Jesus, the Gospels portray him *doubting* the need for martyrdom. And when he finally embraces it, it is not out of thoughtless "acquiescence" to an ideal. Jesus brings assessment of himself and his circumstances to the situation he is facing and makes his own "strategic choice" (209). It is here that one of the most striking sentences in the book appears. Chilton claims that "there is no doubt whatever but that the Christian tradition endorses the model of martyrdom that it inherited from Maccabean Judaism, and further develops that model" (209). The further development is that now, at the prospect of martyrdom, "insight into oneself and into the world" must come into play; life's business is "self-giving on behalf of others," and it can make no sense, in light of the Jesus story, to "mimic a single, heroic gesture" (210).

But is that the entire development? Doesn't the Sermon on the Mount (unmentioned in Chilton's book) suggest another, and still more radical, difference between the Jesus and Maccabean models?

It is hard to imagine that Chilton is unaware of the Radical Reformation or of the interpretive giants (John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, James William McClendon Jr.) who, in the last 35 years, have given new prominence to its vision of nonviolent discipleship. Yet, whether out of obliviousness or obstinacy, he misses this—misses Jesus' unmistakable repudiation of the very violence that in all three of the Abrahamic religions martyrdom came, tragically, to embrace.

Arguably, Christianity alone among these religions has on the highest pedestal of authority someone who refuses the value of violent conquest even as he affirms the gift and wonder of life. That is a matter, of course, for further conversation, not least concerning the link Chilton finds in Islam between military action and religious faith. But from this generally provocative and valuable book, you wouldn't know that opportunity for conversation was even available.

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Coppedge, Allan. *The God Who Is Triune: Revisioning the Christian Doctrine of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007. 345 pp. Paper, \$27.00.

In the current context of revived interest in Trinitarian studies, the debate between classical and open theism, and a rising interest in reconnecting biblical studies with Christian theology, Allan Coppedge undertakes a systematic exposition of the doctrine of God through the *trinity* of God rather than following the traditional pattern of discussing the existence and attributes of

God before the Trinity. In this strategic methodological reversal, Coppedge first addresses the doctrine of the Trinity and then lets the unfolding Trinitarian perspective affect the definition and explication of the attributes, roles, and work of God, particularly in creation and providence. In doing so, Coppedge reorders the attributes of God from the traditional classification (absolute, relative, personal, and moral) by placing God's personal attributes first. By making God's personal and moral characteristics primary, the role of God's relative and absolute attributes is modified, i.e., omnipotence, omniscience (foreknowledge), infinity, and immutability are reframed within a personal and moral context.

Integral to this methodology is how the person and work of Jesus compels a reconceptualizing of the nature of God. Jesus, Coppedge asserts, is the way into the progressive revelatory biblical understanding of "triune theism." "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made Him known" (John 1:1, 14, 18) and "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9) are hermeneutical. There is a finality and completeness in which God reveals himself in Jesus (Heb 1:1-3). If Jesus is the way of knowing God, then he becomes the key to organizing the NT material about the nature and personhood of God. This centering of the discussion of the nature of God in Jesus opens the way to understanding the OT monotheism of the triune God who reveals himself more fully in the NT as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Thus Coppedge begins with Jesus, moves to an understanding of the Trinity, and then develops the implications of beginning with the Trinity for understanding how God works in the world. Thirteen chapters unfold this progression. Chapters 1 and 2 touch on biblical foundations, with two suggestions for organizing the data, i.e., studying any passage that relates two persons of the Trinity together rather than limiting one's study only to passages that refer to all three persons; and taking literary *inclusio* seriously where NT books begin and end with references to two of the three persons of the Trinity. Chapter 3 unfolds the development of the Doctrine of the Trinity in light of implications of Eastern and Western foci in the discussion. Chapters 4 and 5 contrast how the Trinity may be approached in terms of God's relationships to the created order within himself as the *economic* or *ontological* Trinity. Chapters 6 to 8 place God's personal and moral characteristics as primary and hermeneutical in terms of understanding his absolute and relative attributes. Chapter 9 discusses the roles of God in terms of how the Trinity relates to the cosmos. Chapters 10 and 11 explore the relationship between the triune God and the world he created. Finally, chapters 12 and 13 unfold the doctrine of providence in view of God's direction of the world, his allowance of freedom, and encouragement for growth and maturity. Here foreknowledge, freedom, and providence are explored in terms of persons and freedom, both within the triune God and in relation to human beings.

The God Who Is Triune is very readable considering the conceptual difficulty of the Trinitarian doctrine and the philosophical/theological terms that Coppedge uses. The introduction is sufficiently engaging and suggestive so as

to pique interest toward reading further and to create openness on the part of the reader to the proscribed methodology as being not only sensible, but also right. Some portions of the ensuing material can be exhaustive in their coverage of the material, with evidence supporting Trinitarian theism being drawn from the whole corpus of biblical materials. However, in spite of this, the book is more theological and, at times, philosophical than it is a biblical study.

When Coppedge argues that how God relates *within himself* (ontological Trinity) should be consistent with what he has made known *about himself* (economic Trinity), he radically shifts the question from Does God exist? to What is God like? In doing so, the triune nature of God becomes apparent, and in that *trinity*, so does God's personhood. Not only does God's personhood become primary, but it naturally deserves priority of attention as well. Here Coppedge's methodology powerfully moves the discussion of the Trinity to some of the most profound and moving insights into the person of God—touching on God's being, his holiness, righteousness, and love in deeply personal perspectives rather than mere abstract or intellectual categories. His approach helps to illumine the doctrine of God (and all of theology for that matter) by adding a relational element to God's existence. God is a person in relationship—within the Trinity and with other persons whom he has created. Jesus becomes the key to understanding what it means to be a person. He reveals what a person is in both the divine and human senses. Jesus is the God-man who not only tells what God is like, but what God intends humanity to be. The implications for anthropology, theology, ethics, ecclesiology, salvation, sanctification, a personal relationship with God, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life, are profound and engaging.

One of Coppedge's most stimulating and helpful discussions (chap. 9) explores the roles of the triune God and how through analogical language—particularly metaphor—the transcendent God makes himself known in the world. God uses human categories to help people understand him. Coppedge effectively demonstrates how the metaphors that imply the greatest degree of correspondence between God and symbols from this world are those taken from personal relationships. God's being, actions, and relationships are similar in many respects to humans'—both within himself and in relation to the world. Coppedge provides tables that outline the roles and subroles of God and that illustrate and underscore God's moral nature. The multiple images enable a more holistic and inviting picture of God. God's own personal and moral being reshapes these metaphors so as to become the standard for a new understanding of human being and roles. Here the organic link between the doctrine of the Trinity and moral life becomes both evident and forceful. The discussion becomes incredibly practical as it addresses particular ways in which this unique understanding of God informs faith and interpersonal relationships.

Ultimately Coppedge unfolds the implications of his methodology, bringing a balanced understanding of divine foreknowledge, freedom, and providence, along with the difference these understandings make for human freedom, choice, and being. While in some respects his final chapters are pastoral and practical by intent, they are, in effect, some of the more

theologically and philosophically reasoned parts of his work. By reminding the reader how the person of Jesus is key to understanding God, Coppedge opens the way for a Trinitarian theism that avoids the pitfalls of open theism, process theology, deism, pantheism, fatalism, and chance, as well as some of the rigid and rather impersonal perspectives of classical theism.

While most would not expect a book on the doctrine of the Trinity to do so, *The God Who Is Triune* will surprise readers who may have only tolerated the Trinity as a mere statement of faith and may cause them to actually embrace Trinitarianism. Coppedge's exposition of the entire doctrine of God based on a Trinitarian starting point is helpful. One finds an understanding of providence and freedom that entails inviting human persons to enter into genuine relations with God and each other in true freedom. I highly recommend this book as a great resource for both pastors and scholars. The implications of this study for contemporary moral life are incredible.

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Okoye, James Chukwuma. *Israel and the Nations: A Mission Theology of the Old Testament*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006. xx + 180 pp. Paper, \$28.00.

In *Israel and the Nations I*, James Chukwuma Okoye proposes a hermeneutic for studying mission in the OT. In the Foreword of the book, Okoye cites Carolyn Osiek, who concisely summarizes the problem: "What is the role of the Old Testament in Christianity? Is it only to prove the superiority of the Christian revelation, or to justify political claims without regard to contemporary suffering?" (xi).

The author assumes that readers come either with a mission background or a biblical background, but not both (xiv). He also claims that, by preserving the organic links between the Testaments without reducing one to the other, his book guards the integrity of the OT as the Word of God, although, writing from the Roman Catholic tradition, he recognizes as authoritative texts that are not included in the Jewish canon. He also employs the Documentary Hypothesis of the origin of the biblical text.

The author believes that Israel was not a missionary nation at the beginning, but became so later on. For him, the covenant between God and Israel was particularistic. Only when Israel opened up her covenant to include the Gentiles, did Israel become clearly missionary oriented. Until then only Israel was elected by God and election stands in tension with mission. Okoye insists that "such a focus is to be read not in isolation but in relation to internal transformations of the tradition that indicate that Israel's election had a missionary intention" (3). However, he is ready to accept Norman Gottwald's theory that Israel was formed in Canaan from oppressed peasants under the influence of the Moses group that came from Egypt simply because under such a scenario "election would be intimately connected with mission." He concludes that in the OT "the theme of mission shows itself to be the necessary accompaniment of that of election" (4).