

Introduction

This collection draws together the revised versions of papers presented at The Metaphysics of the Trinity: New Directions conference at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in March 2016. The conference aimed at brooding the intersection of analytic metaphysics and Trinitarian theology, an interdisciplinary area that has not been addressed in print for a while, the last collection devoted to it being Thomas McCall and Michael C. Rea's *Philosophical and Theological Essays on the Trinity* (2009).

Deploying analytic metaphysics for theological purposes is not the only (and certainly not the standard) way to think about the Trinity. But it is an interesting project in its own right, one with potential benefits for both theology and philosophy. As we will shortly indicate, the topics in this collection range from non-standard mereologies through the metaphysics of aspects to the nature of non-physical constitution relations. We hope that, as a result, the collection is both a test of existing metaphysical concepts and a step towards constructing new tools for theology. Finally, it is our hope that future ventures of similar stripe will help shed new light on, and build bridges between, traditions beyond mainstream Christianity.

Richard Swinburne and Brian Leftow are the leading proponents of the two dominant analytic approaches to the Trinity, Social Trinitarianism (which denies that God is strictly numerically identical to the three persons of the Trinity) and Latin Trinitarianism (which denies that the three persons of the Trinity are strictly numerically distinct), respectively. In the present collection, Swinburne summarizes his case for the Social approach and he argues that, given the nature of unselfish love, it is necessary that if there is at least one divine person, then there are exactly three. Brian Leftow looks at an alternative to the two dominant approaches, namely the hypothesis that the relation between God and the members of the Trinity is the relation of constitution, and he argues that no intelligible and theologically acceptable notion of constitution can do the required work.

Most of the other authors depart from the mainstream models or focus on issues that are orthogonal to them. In 'The Philosophy of *Filioque*', Nikk Effingham sketches a theory of divine causal relations in order to reconcile Eastern and Western positions on the *Filioque* doctrine. John Heil's 'Being of One Substance' suggests that the early modern distinction between substance and modes could

be fruitfully applied to the Trinity. Shieva Kleinschmidt puts forward the idea that 'the Father', 'the Son', and 'the Holy Spirit' are empty names (but 'God' isn't), and she explains how the resulting theology differs from the mainstream alternatives. Robert Koons, in 'Divine Persons as Relational *Qua*-Objects', identifies the Father with God *qua* knower, the Son with God *qua* known, and the Holy Spirit with God *qua* knower-cum-known, and he backs this suggestion up with a detailed metaphysic of '*qua*-objects'. Mark Makin applies the fashionable concepts of metaphysical grounding and real definitions to the problem of procession, and Daniel Molto explores possible mereological models of Latin Trinitarianism. (The last two articles are the winner and the runner-up, respectively, of the essay prize that was advertised concurrently with the conference.)

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