

*Heaven Opens: The Trinitarian Mysticism of Adrienne von Speyr.* By Matthew Lewis Sutton. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. ix + 269 pages. \$59.00 (paper).

doi: 10.1017/hor.2014.66

Matthew Lewis Sutton, associate professor in systematic theology at St. John's University in Queens, New York, admirably introduces the trinitarian mysticism of the lay Catholic doctor and mystic Adrienne von Speyr (1902–67). The central thesis of the book is that the fulfilled mission of the Son opens heaven “to the Trinity and reveals the original image of the eternal, immanent relations of triune love” (3). Given that the bulk of von Speyr's work is untranslated, Sutton's study of the German and French renders a great service to the church and the academy in English-speaking contexts. Libraries stocked with modern theological treatises, or the writings of Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–88), would be well advised to purchase this monograph, though it is rather steeply priced for a paperback.

According to Sutton, the shared trinitarian mysticism of von Speyr and her spiritual director, von Balthasar, uncovers “an experience of the opening of heaven given by God (through a vision, audition, ecstasy, theophany, etc.) revealing the triune exchange of Persons in God” (67). In order to retain its biblical footing, such mysticism finds its apex in the trinitarian exchange of prayer—Father, Son, and Spirit eternally remain in prayerful beholding and expectation, as presented radically in Jesus' prayers recorded in the New Testament (e.g., the Our Father). Jesus the Christ opened heaven in his obedience to the Father, through the Holy Spirit, as he fulfilled his mission in death and, further, by allowing himself to be resurrected by the Father. Heaven is open to the world, which can become progressively infused with heavenly light. How does this happen? It happens as the world learns, through the church, to participate again in triune love “through the gift of triune obedience” (127). Imitation of the Son's obedience to the Spirit's instructions, sent by the Father, attunes the human person to her own uniquely freeing mission in this life, for “God always makes me yearn for what he wants to give me” (231). Ignatius of Loyola and Thérèse of Lisieux are united in this emphasis on the graced nature of human desire, accessible in the mode of joyful obedience.

Graduate students in need of a digestible précis of von Speyr's life and thought will find very cursory reference to the trinitarian thought of Karl Rahner, Catherine LaCugna, and Jürgen Moltmann, as well as a smattering of allusions to Eastern Orthodox theologians (Vladimir Lossky, Alexander Schmemmann, Dumitru Stăniloae, et al.). Sutton's distillation is praiseworthy.

Readers will undoubtedly be challenged to assess the validity of some of von Speyr's insights.

At times it is difficult to sort out the source of analogies meant to elucidate trinitarian relations. Is an analogy von Speyr's or Sutton's? In a short section on the Eucharist, after having quoted von Speyr, Sutton explains her meaning thus: "The Eucharist is the Son slung out of heaven by the Father like a tethered grappling hook, sinking its sharp points into the drifting earth, with the Holy Spirit pulling the tether to return earth back to heaven" (216). The worshiper is indeed brought close to God in the eucharistic embrace, but by what mechanism? Precisely what portion of the earth experiences the sharp points of this grappling hook? Sutton chooses this image to explain von Speyr, but it gives the reader pause to consider why such an image would even occur to a commentator on her work. Von Speyr needs an apologist capable of accounting for her analogical imagination if her trinitarian theology is to be taken more seriously today. One wonders, for example, what the difference might be between von Speyr's mystical visions claiming to capture trinitarian exchanges—she recounts deliberations about the Son's "decision" to become incarnate—and, say, J. R. R. Tolkien's fictional creation myth at the start of *The Silmarillion*. Tolkien had a rich prayer life, too, replete with visions of angels, but readers seem to know how to read his edifying myth as a musical analogy for God's relation to the world, rather than as an accurate account of an open heaven. Maybe there is no difference between Tolkien and von Speyr? Dare we hope that there is? Sutton may be poised to deliver an account.

CYRUS P. OLSEN III  
*University of Scranton*

*Understanding Interreligious Relations*. Edited by David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas. London: Oxford University Press, 2013. 464 pages. \$35.00 (paper).

doi: 10.1017/hor.2014.67

The last sentence of this collection summarizes its motivation and purpose: "Religions ignore each other at their ultimate peril; understanding the future of religion amounts to understanding the present reality, and the immediate prospects, of interreligious relations" (401). Convinced, therefore, that the study of religion must proceed interreligiously, the three male editors have assembled eighteen essays in two broadly titled parts: part 1, "Religions and the Religious Others," and part 2, "Themes and Issues in Interreligious Relations." "Interreligious" does not seem to include intergender or