
This is a collection worthy of the ecclesiology of John Zizioulas, who is certainly the Orthodox theologian who has had the widest influence in non-Orthodox Christianity in the past thirty years. Now Metropolitan of Pergamon, he has been a key figure in major ecumenical dialogues between the Orthodox Church and the other main Christian traditions. He is perhaps the best known of that school of Orthodoxy which has seen theological revival as dependent on a return to the Greek Fathers and on eschewing the baleful influence of scholasticism and modern trends of thought. Its origin is commonly seen in a 1949 writing by Hamilcar Alivizatos (‘Hai sygchronoi theologikai taseis en tē hellēnikē orthodoxia’, *Theologia* 20: pp. 80–98), though it did not become established in Greek orthodox until the early 1960s. Zizioulas is typical of this school in having ample suspicion of the West; however, this has not prevented his thought from being able to represent theological trends which have an echo in the theology of mid and late twentieth century Catholicism and Protestantism, such as personalism, non-propositional revelation, communion and social trinitarianism. This has of course earned reproof from writers of his own communion, such as Turcescu, Louth and Behr. However, it is surely his ability to engage with contemporary thought which has been one of his most salient and attractive virtues. Of course, he is not alone among Orthodox theologians in this regard – one thinks of Yannaras and Staniloae and, from an earlier generation, Bulgakov and Afanasiev. Famously expounded in *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 1985), Zizioulas offers a critique both of the west and of his own church, of secular individualism and of ecclesiastical authoritarianism. It is a critique which is resolutely theologian and trinitarian, attended by an openness which has had major results in the ecumenical sphere, with respect to Protestants, Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Indeed, *The Cyprus Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican – Orthodox Theological Dialogue* would have looked very different without his influence.

Controversially, he has argued that being in the Cappadocians is relational, that is to say that without the concept of communion, talk of God, talk of his being would not be possible. Personhood has a metaphysical claim built into it; relations constitute personhood. A moment of transcendence is entailed, for personhood is something received from the triune God. Church is an image and likeness of God, in which human beings become persons in
relation through their eucharistic life. In this personal ontology, fundamental significance is ascribed not only to communion, but also to otherness and difference. For Zizioulas, personal ontology, though it may have analogies in western personalists such as Buber, is required by the eucharistic experience of God. The eucharist is moreover about an anamnesis from the eschaton; we live in the power of that which is realised in the eucharist, something more than the reign to be hoped for but which is something real from eternity now.

The collection offers a range of responses to the thought of John Zizioulas, with a predominantly Reformed taste, though there are appreciations from Roman Catholics (Paul McPartlan, Philip Rosato and Robert Turner) and Lutherans (Pannenberg and Markus Mühling) and more critically from the solitary Anglican Paul Collins. This is the volume’s nugget, for he offers a critical appraisal of Zizioulas’ understanding of authority, using it to offer a third way between ‘democratic’ and hierarchic hermeneutics of authority. It only just avoids collapsing the question of the exercise of authority entirely into one of expedience, which is a temptation from which Zizioulas is happily free.

There is a defence by an Orthodox writer against criticisms made by his fellow Orthodox and by an alleged school of Anglican liberal patristic scholars, a polemical defence which reads more like a rebuttal than sustained engagement. Those from the Reformed camp (Gunton, Farrow, Knight) take up some of the questions regarding the controverted areas of this vision, e.g. to what extent does Zizioulas treatment of creation elide the distinction between fall and creation (Farrow) or does the construal of the monarchy of the Father entail an unacceptable subordination of the Son and the Spirit (Gunton)? Some of their own suggestions – the persons of the Trinity have their own qualities (Gunton, p. 106) – are less persuasive than Zizioulas’ own.

Zizioulas’ personalism and trinitarian ecclesiology is the focus of his major works, but it is not his sole concern; he has been a leading theologian in the area of the non-animate environment and his treatment of apostolic succession has served to bring together the contrasting treatments of the Protestant and Catholic divide (the one emphasis on teaching, the other on visible and institutional life). In so rich a collection, it is something of a sadness that room could not be found for some discussion of such features of his thought.

Zizioulas makes much of the eucharistic and liturgical root of our participation in the communion of the Trinity; it makes the church. In his work however, there is little liturgical theology, still less close attention to the liturgical action, something which is to be found in other recent theologians of his communion. There is a generality of his treatment which does not reflect that the theological diversity which attends the various expressions – rites,