

Book Review

Kachappilly, Kurian, *God of Love Revisited: Exploring Hartshorne's 'Neoclassical Theism' on the Model of Love*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1998, pp. xvii, 324.

'God of love who inspires worship' is the most precious treasure of all the world religions. The need to 'revisit' the God of love has risen from the many puzzles of traditional theism, such as the problems concerning immutability, personhood or individuality of God, co-existence of infinite and finite perfection, evil and suffering, etc. The personal reason why Dr. Kurian Kachappilly has undertaken this analytical study in Theodicy has been that neither his long years of philosophical training in Platonic-Aristotelian and Sankara-Madhva schools of thought, nor the study of English literature, nor the theological formation in the Augustinian-Thomistic traditions could provide him with an adequate conceptuality - a metaphysical framework - for God-talk, which is both "rationally coherent and religiously satisfying." Those seekers of God, who are vexed by similar intellectual inquisitiveness of the author, would profit much from the book.

The original title of this doctoral dissertation, "Dynamics of Relationship and Divine Dipolarity" was changed into *God of Love Revisited*, to emphasize the truth that dynamics of relationship are the categorical conditions of love. The subtitle of the book, "Exploring Hartshorne's 'Neoclassical Theism' on the

Model of Love" puts the content of the book in proper perspective. Individuality, freedom, sociality and activity vis á vis passivity are identified as the categorical conditions of love.

The metaphysical enquiry, the book has undertaken with the guidance of Charles Hartshorne (1897-), into the nature of love leads to conclusions quite different from those of the tradition, namely, a "dipolar conception of God." Philosophical enquiry into the nature of 'individuality' leads one to the conclusion that God has real, personal relations and it is, in some respects, constituted by relationships. The speculative analysis of relationships ('sociality'), corroborated by biblical evidence, leads us to the conception of God as social being.

The social reality of God or the God-world relationship raises a few issues, such as the notion of God's dependence upon the world, God's enrichment in value (God in his concrete nature is constantly increasing in value through his all-inclusive sensitivity to the world), and his immutability to which the traditional theodicy has no satisfactory answer. The author, however, comes with the following solution: In whatever sense a social being can be absolute, independent and immutable, God may be called absolute, independent and immutable; and in whatever sense a social being can be relative, dependent and mutable, God is, in that sense, to be called relative, dependent and mutable. In other words, there are two aspects or poles (hence 'dipolar') to God's nature: an abstract aspect and a concrete aspect (p. 223).

Through the scholarly analysis of Hartshorne's works, Dr. Kurian Kachappilly has done a great service to those who are hopefully awaiting to attain a transformation in which the idea of God that intellectually seems worthy of worship would also actually evoke worship and bring religious satisfaction. Whatever be the beauty of the new conceptuality, however, in the words of the author: "It is possible that we are more interested in one set of doctrines than in another" (p. 287) and that ultimately the adherence to a system or thought is mostly a personal matter.

Dr. Thomas Kadankavil