

Sarah Coakley. *The Broken Body: Israel, Christ and Fragmentation*. Challenges in Contemporary Theology. Wiley-Blackwell, 2024. xlii + 294 pp. \$39.95 (pbk).

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The career of Professor Sarah Coakley will no doubt be familiar to readers of this journal. Coakley has long been at the forefront of philosophy of religion and philosophical theology. She can clearly be claimed as one of the key instigators of the theological methodology for which this esteemed journal is named (an essay of hers was included in the original 2009 *Analytic Theology* volume; she blurbed the *T&T Clark Handbook to Analytic Theology*; she has served as a professorial fellow at the Logos Institute at the University of St. Andrews; etc.). All of her past writings repay careful attention, which will surely continue. This particular installment is a collection of essays gathered together from the past two decades centering around the theme of Christology. Nearly all of the chapters in this volume have found the light of publication elsewhere. Though it might appear to the reader, then, that it is not worth buying what can be had for free through one's local university library, it is actually a great service to the scholar for these essays to be collected in one place. It has at times been difficult for the devotee of Coakley to access her entire corpus, for she has often been something of an occasional writer whose pieces can be found in various edited volumes, Festschriften, and conference proceedings. Indeed, there were a few essays in this volume that this devotee did not know existed, and I am grateful that their existence has become known to me.

Beyond the pragmatic benefit of a collection of this nature, another benefit is that the student of Coakley's illustrious career will observe the master at work. At times when an artist, say a painter, is preparing to put brush to canvas, long before the paints are procured and the canvas stretched, the painter might sketch some preliminary aspects of the painting as yet existent only in the mind of the artist. Perhaps with charcoal and paper, perhaps with pencil and a sketch pad, the artist may work out some of the contours, ratios, and trajectories that will ultimately find their way onto the canvas and thus the completed artifact. Such is so for the relationship between the essays in this book and a final, finished Christology that Coakley is in the process of producing. Coakley herself notes that she is in the midst of writing a four-volume systematic theology, of which her 2013 *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* was the first. When the Christology volume comes, we should expect to see in full color some of the ideas only sketched here in *The Broken Body*. Hence, one day, when some budding theologian writes a dissertation on Coakley, it will be an immense service to trace the development of her Christology from her early work on Ernst Troeltsch, through these various essays, to whatever culmination of her Christological thinking is yet to come (and, we pray, if the Lord wills it).

In what follows I will first offer a brief summary of the three sections of the book. Although the essays contained within each section were written at various times and for

various purposes, Coakley does well to show how they hang together within something of a cohesive arc in this volume. Secondly, I make some specific observations about her discussion of the metaphysics of the Incarnation and her discussion of the Eucharist. I suggest that these aspects of Coakley's thought will benefit from some engagement with recent work in analytic theology, which remains unexplored in the current volume. I offer my observations with appreciation and the humble hope that feedback on the current sketches will benefit the master when she puts brush to canvas in due course.

This volume comprises three sections of four chapters each. The first section focuses on Christ explicitly, although with a largely methodological focus. In these studies Coakley targets such contemporary hot-button issues as the use of apophaticism and the meaning of Christological kenosis. As with much of her work, patristic conversation partners like Gregory of Nyssa are companions in the studio as she composes these sketches. Section two brings Jewish thought into the conversation. In my estimation, Coakley is to be highly commended for taking the most difficult issues head-on. When it comes to Christian-Jewish dialogue, the Trinity and the divine status of Jesus are right at the heart of what divides. And yet, in an impressive and bold maneuver, Coakley plumbs the recesses of Jewish thought for potential conceptual resources that might—one day—dovetail with Christian Christological commitments. Moreover, in this section we get the first discussions of sacrifice—a perennial Coakleyan topic—that receives a fuller treatment in the next section. The final section focuses on sacramental theology, specifically the Eucharist and the liturgical celebration of it. In my view, the three most controversial issues in the history of theological reflection on the doctrine of the Eucharist have to do with (a) presence, (b) sacrifice, and (c) who can consecrate. Coakley bravely takes up each.

On to some constructive criticism, first with respect to the metaphysics of the Incarnation and second with respect to the discussion of the Eucharist. As noted previously, these essays have been gathered from the past two decades of Professor Coakley's work. In her discussion of the metaphysics of the Incarnation in chapters 1–4 (section 1), her treatment of the contemporary analytic conversation is out of date.

Coakley is engaging in these chapters with some of the first generation of scholars to apply contemporary philosophical tools to the perennial metaphysical issues surrounding the two natures doctrine delivered by the Ecumenical Councils. However, the conversations have advanced considerably since her chapters were first written. In 2018, I published a survey essay on the state of analytic Christology that seems to me now, less than a decade later, to be in need of updating—this is the rate at which the literature has expanded. Any Christology written today—especially one in the analytic or analytic-adjacent subfields—needs to engage with Timothy Pawl's two Oxford University Press volumes, Oliver Crisp's Christological tetralogy, and Richard Cross's historical trilogy of Christological metaphysics (to be fair, Coakley does refer to one of Richard Cross's recent volumes). This is not at all to take away from the groundbreaking work of Thomas Morris (1986), Richard Swinburne (1994), Stephen Davis (1983, 2006), C. Stephen Evans (2006), and others with whom Coakley engages—we are standing on the shoulders of these philosophical giants—but the conversations have moved forward.

In my estimation, there is much in the recent literature that would be of great aid to Coakley as she makes her constructive cases. For instance, her discussion of the angles on kenoticism of Cyril of Alexandria, Nestorius, and Gregory of Nyssa would benefit from the concretist/abstractist distinction regarding Christ's natures made by the likes of Crisp (2007), Andrew Loke (2014), Pawl (2016, 2019), and yours truly (2016, 2018). Or regarding the logical consistency of the 'Definition' of Chalcedon, Pawl has shown that the metaphysical

and linguistic challenge of Chalcedon is even more demanding than the likes of Morris, Evans, and Davis thought many years ago. But this just goes to show how significant is Paul's own solution to—what he calls—the 'Fundamental Problem' of Chalcedonianism. The recent analytic discussion of Christology might just give Coakley a few more paintbrushes to utilize in her constructive craft.

As we turn to discuss the Eucharist in the third and final section of the book, I have no criticisms of the first three of the four chapters that constitute this section. Regarding (c), from above, her focus concerns the controversy most pressing in the contemporary era, namely, whether the gender of the consecrator is a relevant consideration. Because her discussion of gender roles in the context of the eucharistic consecration depends largely on enacting these roles in a Western high liturgical tradition, this discussion will likely only be of keen interest to those within those traditions (Roman Catholic, Anglican, and perhaps some Lutheran). However, this discussion is worth paying careful attention to regardless of one's current ecclesial location, given the role that all ministers play in ecclesial leadership. With respect to (b), I found her application of her reflections on desire to the issue of sacrifice to be extremely provocative. Reframing discussions of desire has been a leitmotif throughout Coakley's work, and she continues to push the leading edge of this aspect of her research program here in very intriguing directions.

So, my criticism (again, offered as humble assistance) focuses on issue (a): eucharistic presence, and thus the final chapter of the volume. I have two main suggestions here. First, once again, I think the recent analytic theological conversation would benefit her constructive project. Coakley goes to great lengths to explicate the views of Catherine Pickstock and Jean-Luc Marion on the theory of Christ's presence in the Eucharist known as transubstantiation. I grant that there is a sense in which the discussion of Pickstock and Marion in this final chapter flows well from the discussion in the previous chapter of "gift" in John Milbank and Kathryn Tanner. But I admit to finding Pickstock and Marion's ruminations on transubstantiation rather opaque, convoluted, and representative of the vices of the philosophical traditions in which they reside. Far better, in my mind, would be for Coakley to engage the defenses of transubstantiation from within the analytic tradition by the likes of Michael Dummett (1987), H. E. Baber (2013a, 2013b), or Alexander Pruss (2013). These discussions offer more pinpoint clarity as to just what metaphysical and linguistic challenges are at issue in the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Or, better yet, with or without the analytic side of her influences guiding her constructive account, I would suggest that Coakley let her Anglicanism be her guide in her discussions of the Eucharist. I do not see why any Anglican need spend much time attempting to rehabilitate a theory of the Eucharist that, as our Articles state, "is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions" (Article 28). Moreover, this view seems not cut from the same theological cloth as Coakley's other work in this volume or elsewhere. On transubstantiation, the body of Christ is present only in its substance, absent any of its empirical features. Rather, the empirical features that are present on the altar are only those of the bread or wine, but now absent the 'what it is' of those objects. Yet these two—the body of Christ and the properties of bread—are not connected, not unified. Transubstantiation requires that one deny the appearances, deny the ordinary, deny that the bread and the wine continue to exist. This seems very incongruous with Coakley's robust Chalcedonianism and, in my view, undercuts the value of embodiment that has also long been a recurring theme in Coakley's work.

It would be far better—in my humble estimation—for Coakley to marshal the full force of her Christological thinking to address the tricky issue of Christ’s eucharistic presence. What this would produce would be—again in my humble view—a truly incarnational model of the Eucharist, known as impanation. For impanation, the body of Christ is extended to include the bread and wine as constituents of the Word-made-flesh’s incarnate life. The very physicality of the elements are the current presence of Christ, which is not some ethereal, immaterial, indeed docetistic incarnation. Risking hubris, I might note that there is already an analytic, Anglican version of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist currently available in the literature: It is my own (2018). I have argued that impanation is a more preferable way for bringing Christology to bear on eucharistic metaphysics than any other extant theories. In fact, I even utilized Coakley’s discussion of the ‘Definition’ of Chalcedon in my own constructive model. So we might say that my view is ready-made for her to appropriate in her own vision of how the Eucharist mediates Christ’s presence to the church. I should also note that on page 267, footnote 15, Coakley references Marilyn McCord Adams’s extremely helpful work where she (another analytic Anglican, to whom I am indebted conceptually and personally) endorses impanation as well. Plenty of painters incorporate the work of others into their pieces; the works of Adams and Arcadi are ripe for incorporating.

All in all, this volume is well worth the price of admission and the effort in reading. Da Vinci’s sketches made their way into museums along with the Mona Lisa and many other of his final products. Coakley’s studies here are likewise worthy of public consumption, even as we await her final future Christology.

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