Adam Pryor’s *Body of Christ Incarnate for You: Conceptualizing God’s Desire for the Flesh* is an exciting new volume addressing perennial, yet pressing, themes in theology. In *Body of Christ*, Pryor weaves together French phenomenology and systematic theology, as well as current discussions in transhumanism and embodiment, in order to understand the incarnation of God as salvific. Pryor sees as problematic how theology tends to consider God’s becoming human as secondary to the atonement. Instead, *Body of Christ* seeks “to understand the significance in itself of God becoming a body” (xvi). Rather than seeing soteriology as an escape from life in the flesh, Pryor argues that soteriology takes place in and through the flesh in an ongoing manner. Because of the broad subject matter that Pryor grapples with, as well as the varied thinkers that he draws on, this book is relevant to a diverse audience.

*Body of Christ* is laid out in three sections: 1) Inescapable Incarnational Themes; 2) Bodies Beyond Dermal Metaphysics; and 3) Bodies Scandalized by Being-Within God in the Flesh. In the first section, Pryor provides a brief foundation for the latter parts of the book. He argues that “we must be cognizant of what we claim by faith through Christian history, why these claims have existential significance, and how classic formulations can be translated anew by each generation of Christian thinkers in order to continue to be meaningful” (3). Chapters in this section look at Chalcedonian Christology, eschatology, kenosis, and plerosis.

In the second section, Pryor explores contemporary approaches to understanding bodies and flesh, and reads biblical events of Jesus’s life through this lens. Pryor draws on the thinking of Merleau-Ponty, who “explicitly seeks to overcome the hard distinction between the conscious-self and objects of consciousness out in the world” (70). This “hard distinction” is a keynote of “dermal metaphysics,” and is a position that Pryor argues is out-dated. Since the flesh is the continual site of reversibility between self and world, subject and object, the self is not a stable entity, but continuously incarnates itself in the flesh. Pryor then highlights a number of ways in which Christ incarnates God—not in a flesh limited to Jesus, but a flesh that extends to the space that Jesus continually incarnated in and through the people and world that he interacted with. Pryor writes that “Jesus’s rejection of self-serving power is an affirmation of the power of the flesh to make space for that which is other” (106). By consistently doing this though the entirety of his life, Jesus both inaugurates a transformation in the flesh and models the perfect way to incarnate God.

The final section explores the ways in which Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the flesh as a normative criterion for incarnation can be understood today. Since this notion of flesh confuses the borders of the body, Pryor shows the ways in which cyborgs can incarnate God. Rather than adding unnatural technology to a natural body, the cyborg “incorporates all sorts of technoscientific artifacts as elements of the flesh” (130). However, this discussion only matters because God’s incarnation cannot be limited to once instance, but is an ongoing event until God is all in all. Drawing on Jean-Luc Marion, Pryor shows that God must be understood as a persistent advance of divine, erotic love.

Coupling this understanding of flesh with the ongoing incarnation of God, Pryor writes that “in the encounter of radical, compassionate love, God incarnates as permeating the entirety of the event and all
persons involved therein…. Any time this occurs the divine promiscuously appears incarnate in the flesh” (162). Pryor highlights that this ongoing incarnation of God in the flesh is salvific and eschatological, and is a possibility and invitation for humans today. “The transformation of the flesh, this transformed way of being through our incarnating and adventing, revealed by the Christ’s incarnation of God is itself soteriological” (164).

In *Body of Christ*, Pryor presents readers with a very engaging and timely book. Pulling on various authors and disciplines, he provides a constructive way of understanding how God is incarnated in our world today. Further, by looking at transhumanism and cyborgs, he suggests ways we might understand incarnation in the future. Although his overviews of some topics are brief, and his look at Christ’s life limited to the Luke-Acts narrative, these deficiencies are more than made up for in the helpful new account of incarnation. Of prime relevance to those working in Christology, Pryor presents his material in a graspable way to anyone familiar with this content.

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