light, and it is possible to establish fascinating networks of friendship for the period 1120—1180. McGuire has done a good deal of close work on the literary and human connections that prepare for this, and everyone concerned for his subject will read him with a real interest.

It is only a disappointment that the chapter devoted to Aelred of Rievaulx, when it comes, is not similarly prepared for by at least a sketch of the spiritual theology of love that crystallized around Cîteaux, in which Aelred's thought finds its most intelligible place. McGuire has unfortunately allowed himself to be too worried by the sexual implications of some of the evidence—more inconclusive than some modern writers like to suggest. Sooner or later this needs to be examined in the light of a more explicit theoretical study than either he or Boswell try to give it. An attempt has been made in the right direction—though not precisely in relation to Aelred—in Anna Riva's *Amicizia—integrazione dell' esperienza umana* (Milan, 1975) but more work will need to be done by others with psychological competence. In writing of 'continuity and change' in the years following Aelred until 1250, something is said about the opening to relationships with women, and here are included the early friars, with special reference to the Dominican Jordan of Saxony. The rather unsung Thomas of Cantimpré with his chaplain's duties and several lives of women saints lies, of course, just beyond the time-scope of this book. In the epilogue, which ventures further, into Italian humanism, Giustiniani is mentioned among the Camaldolese, but not the earlier Traversari, whose many friendships with important quattrocento personalities were vital to his attempt to revive patristic studies and essential to the part he played in connection with the Council of Florence. But, as the author modestly says in his introduction to this ambitiously extended survey, 'my results may well seem limited and quite preliminary, but what follows can be looked upon as a point of departure for more profound studies which must consider more closely the various languages of friendship in their varying cultural contexts.' There is indeed, always more work to be done.

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THE CREATIVE SUFFERING OF GOD by Paul S. Fiddes. *Clarendon Press,* **Oxford 1988. Pp. xix + 281, £29.50.**

Those who share the author's presuppositions about what he calls 'this central theme of Christian faith' (vii) will find this book of the greatest interest and usefulness. Those like myself, for whom any marring of the Trinity's eternal joy is unthinkable, may well need to read it it if only to appreciate the growing extent of the opposition to their main point of view. They will be rewarded with much good argument in criticism of other writers who believe that God suffers. The book is described in the Preface as 'a survey of thought' on the topic 'in the theology of the nineteenth and twentieth century ... not, however, presented for the most part thinker by thinker, but in the course of considering various facets of the theme ...' Expectedly, there are detailed discussions of Barth, Moltmann, Jüngel, Whitehead and his successors , Hegel and 'death of God' theologians. None of them gets off scot-free. Many others are more briefly treated. All the time Fiddes is building up his own synthesis. There are eight pages of indices,

and an *erratum* slip deals with the only misprint which could cause any trouble. But no living Roman Catholic writer in France is mentioned so that the best accounts of the traditional position are overlooked. All that I can do in a review is to list what seem to me the more important conclusions and add a brief reply.

'Today we must affirm that if Christ is one with God and one with humanity, he must be so as a whole person. God cannot be safeguarded from suffering by preserving an area of experience in Christ from contamination by change, suffering, ignorance and death' (28). 'If indeed God suffers in the cross of Jesus in reconciling the world to himself, then there must always be a cross in the experience of God as he deals with a world which exists over against him' (29). 'At the most basic level it is a consolation to those who suffer to know that God suffers too, and understands their situation from within' (31),'... the Creator must not only limit himself by taking the risk that human persons may suffer through their freedom; he should also limit himself by sharing their suffering' (34). 'Behind the coming of God to fellowship (in the Trinity) there must be a drive or thirst for fellowship with persons who enrich the being of God through their freely contributing to the project of creation. Otherwise we are simply speaking of the unveiling of the glory of God, not its fulfilling. If we are indeed to trace the path of God to glory along the *via dolorosa* of creation, then we must try to understand suffering as unfulfilled desire, and essential glory as unsatisfied desire' (85). '... out of his desire for his creatures he chooses to suffer, and because he chooses to suffer he is not ruled by suffering; it has no power to overwhelm him because he has made the alien thing his own ... He fulfils his own being *thorough* suffering ...' (108–9). '... the cross is "new" in the extreme to which God goes in experiencing alienation within his own relationships. It shows that he is the living God, vital in his own victory over death ... Because he experiences death, God is not dead' (206). 'If we are to make sense of the desolation within God to which the cross of Jesus witnesses, then we must incorporate the fact of human sinfulness at the centre' (221). 'The hollow of non-being (sin) in God is not because of his desire for fellowship with his world, but a consequence and symbol of it' (254).

The eternal joy of the Trinity is not something static, in the traditional view, but an interchange of absolute love which we cannot help imagining as a circular movement endlessly repeated, although we can come to realize that it cannot be *described* at all. So too we cannot help imagining God's eternity as 'including' time, although we can realize that space has nothing to do with it. God sees all that happens in his world, all together in its order of one thing after another, 'simultaneously', as we have to say, because our language is timebound. And because his knowledge of it is never lacking, he is not changed by it. Creating does not change him. It belongs to his absolute generosity that there should be creatures capable of being united with absolute love. And this love is changelessly on offer, though constantly rejected by his creatures (if they are to love, they *must* be free). This rejection may seem baffling, but that it happens is a fact of experience. An insistence that God must share our *feelings,* it seems to me, can be based on nothing more than a feeling.

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