



The Love of God: A Canonical Model

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“John Peckham brilliantly reassesses the concept of God’s love.”

“I have devoted years of my life to the investigation of God’s love because of my conviction that it is the most important issue of the doctrine of God, which itself stands at the beginning and end of systematic theology,” writes John Peckham, author of The Love of God: A Canonical Model. “My passion for this book in particular results from my experience in challenging my own preconceptions of who God is through extensive biblical investigation by way of asking systematic questions of the text as canon. Within this investigation, I have repeatedly been surprised and exhilarated to find my own misconceptions challenged and corrected by using the canonical data as a whole to put my own presuppositions to the test.

“Theologians differ widely regarding the nature of God’s love. Much of the conflict of interpretations is bound up with competing, mutually exclusive conceptions of divine ontology. The Love of God: A Canonical Model uses Scripture as the basis to evaluate and address crucial questions regarding the nature of divine love, in dialogue with some major recent perspectives. This in turn sheds light on the broad contemporary debate over the nature of God and his relationship to the world.”

“Many people talk about how to do ‘theological interpretation of Scripture,’ but John Peckham actually does it in this book. He does it in a well-informed and thoughtful way, and he helps us gain a clearer – and more biblical – vision of the great love of the triune God.”

– **Thomas H. McCall**, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“Few beliefs about God are more distinctive of Christianity or more appreciated by Christians than the truth that ‘God is love.’ But not all Christians understand this statement in the same way. John Peckham focuses on God’s love in the context of God’s relationship with the world, and he describes clearly and carefully the different conceptions of God’s love that exist within the church. . . . His book not only stimulated me intellectually; it often prompted me to worship. I commend it heartily to those who want to grow in their love of God through contemplating anew, and more deeply, what God has told us about his loving self in his inspired Word and demonstrated to us in his deeds supremely in Christ.”

– **Terrance L. Tiessen**, professor emeritus of systematic theology and ethics, Providence Theological Seminary, Canada

“The love of God has long languished as the Benjamin of theological concepts. Not only has it not received the sustained attention that it deserves, but it has not always been clear where to locate it – in a discussion of the divine attributes, the Trinity, soteriology, creation,



ENDORSEMENTS



John C. Peckham (PhD, Andrews University) is associate professor of theology and Christian philosophy at the Theological Seminary of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. He is the author of *The Concept of Divine Love in the Context of the God-World Relationship* and has published articles on issues of systematic theology and canon in journals such as *Trinity Journal*, *Philosophia Christi*, *Andrews University Seminary Studies* and *Themelios*.

providence, somewhere else, everywhere? Another problem is that the love of God is too often conflated with images of human love. John Peckham rightly takes aim at this mistake and at other popular myths about God's love. Here is a study of God's love, based on the whole canon of God, that I admire even at those points (and there are a few) where I disagree."

—**Kevin J. Vanhoozer**, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

"What strikes me about *The Love of God: A Canonical Model* is four things: its learning, sophistication, originality and comprehensiveness. Concerning its learning: the author is impressively conversant with almost all of the relevant literature, so far as I can see. Regarding its sophistication: the author displays a subtle and sophisticated grasp of the issues; he is sure-footed in theology, biblical interpretation and philosophical theology. That combination is hard to come by. Concerning its originality: rather than running with the crowd, the author questions common assumptions on a lot of points, on almost all of which, in my view, he is correct. And concerning its comprehensiveness: the author looks at God's love from a large number of different angles; every other treatment that I know of is 'pinched' by comparison. My judgment is that this promises to be a very influential book."

—**Nicholas Wolterstorff**, Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology, Yale University

"John Peckham brilliantly reassesses the concept of God's love, which is foundational for the theological framework of the entire Bible. Employing mastery of wide-ranging sources and keen, balanced logic, he shows how layers of philosophical and traditional assumptions and notions have come to filter and obscure the biblical perspective. Implications of this study for major aspects of Christian theology are profound. No doubt some scholars will resist Peckham's challenge to commonly held views, but none can justifiably ignore it."

—**Roy Gane**, professor of Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern languages, Andrews University

"To my knowledge, no other book on the subject of divine love tackles such an all-encompassing range of issues, lays such a solid biblical foundation for the argumentation, dares to question with such insightfulness many long-held assumptions about God's love that need revision, presents such cogent and erudite discussion of relevant philosophical/theological questions, and provides a model for divine love consciously derived from a *sola Scriptura* canonical perspective."

—**Richard M. Davidson**, J. N. Andrews Professor of Old Testament Interpretation, Andrews University