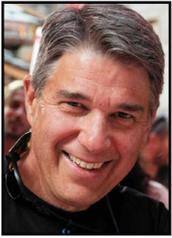


# A C A D E M I C

NEWSLETTER

## A PUBLISHER OF ESSENTIAL BOOKS ABOUT THE TRINITY



John Hughes

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity, properly understood (e.g., WCF 2.3), distinguishes Christianity from every other religion in the world, including other monotheistic ones. No doctrine is more essential for a proper understanding of God, ourselves, and salvation than is the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, and no doctrine is more mysterious or easier to misconstrue! In his *On the Trinity* (1.5), Augustine wrote that “in no other subject is error more dangerous, or inquiry more laborious, or the discovery of truth more profitable.”

P&R has a long history of publishing sound books about the Trinity. In 2004, we published Robert Letham’s *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (568 pages), which was the 2005 ECPA Gold Medallion Book Award Winner in the Theology/Doctrine category. The last issue of this newsletter featured Letham’s *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Wor-*

*ship, Revised and Expanded* (P&R, 2019, 696 pages). In 2018, we published Vern S. Poythress’s *Knowing and the Trinity: How Perspectives in Human Knowledge Imitate the Trinity* (488 pages), and this year we published his *The Mystery of the Trinity: A Trinitarian Approach to the Attributes of God* (728 pages).

Letham’s and Poythress’s books on the Trinity are meaty and weighty—solid food for serious Christians—but they are accessible to anyone with sound biblical knowledge. Letham’s 2019 *The Holy Trinity* and Poythress’s two books on the Trinity include end-of-chapter helps—key terms, study questions, and “for further reading”—as well as full glossaries and robust bibliographies, making them perfect for self-study, small group study, Sunday schools, and college and seminary use.

In 2012, as part of our [Basics of the Faith](#) series, we published David F. Wells’s 40-page *What Is the Trinity?* This Trinity “primer” explores the teaching on the Trinity throughout the Bible and through history. It addresses how God is both one and tripersonal and goes on to define the *(cont’d on page 2)*



## CONTENTS

### 1. Letter

### 1. P&R Spotlight

### 3. Author Interview

### 4. New Releases

### 5. New Releases

### 6. New Releases

### 7. Submissions

### 7. Exam Copies

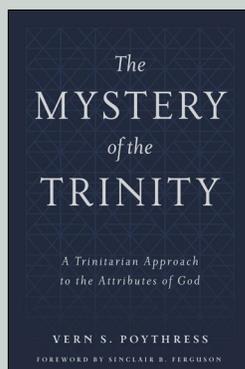
### 8. ETS Book Giveaway

## P&R SPOTLIGHT:

*The Mystery of the Trinity: A Trinitarian Approach to the Attributes of God, Revised and Expanded*, by Vern S. Poythress. Foreword by Sinclair Ferguson. | 728 pages.

In 2018, P&R published Vern Poythress’s *Knowing and the Trinity: How Perspectives in Human Knowledge Imitate the Trinity*, an epistemologically focused book that shows how triperspectivalism reflects God’s Trinitarian nature. In his foreword, Sinclair Ferguson said that it might be “the capstone of [Poythress’s] work thus far” and “the foundation stone of everything else he has written.”

This year we are releasing Dr. Poythress’s *The Mystery of the Trinity: A Trinitarian Approach to the Attributes of*



*God*. Like *Knowing and the Trinity*, *The Mystery of the Trinity* has an epistemological focus, which is to discuss the attributes of God through the doctrine of the Trinity.

D. A. Carson notes in his endorsement that one of the book’s big goals is to call “for a revolutionary change in how we engage in theological reflection.” Carson states:

“While broadly endorsing the classical doctrine of God, [Poythress] is suspicious of our reliance on well-defined technical terms that are *(cont’d on page 2)*

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## SOCIAL MEDIA



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*(A Publisher of Essential Books cont'd from page 1)*

Trinity and its implications for Christian living.

In 2014, as part of our [Best of Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology](#) (PCRT) series, we published *The Triune God* (352 pages), which was edited by Ronald L. Kohl and which includes contributions from Joel R. Beeke, D. A. Carson, Bryan Chapell, Kevin DeYoung, Iain M. Duguid, Michael S. Horton, Hywel R. Jones, Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and R.C. Sproul. The chapters in this book will expand your knowledge of each person of the Trinity and show you how to rightly respond to each one. The more we know how to relate to the Trinity, the more we can enrich our love for the triune God.

In 2017, we published Brandon D. Crowe's and Carl R. Trueman's 320-page book *The Essential Trinity: New Testament Foundations and Practical Relevance*, which includes chapters by Richard Bauckham, Brandon D. Crowe, Mark S. Gignilliat, Benjamin L. Gladd, Jonathan I. Griffiths, Daniel Johansson, Robert Letham, Michael Reeves, Brian S. Rosner, Scott R. Swain, Alan J. Thompson, Mark D. Thompson, and Carl R. Trueman. Part 1, "New Testament Foundations," includes nine chapters, and part 2, "Practical Relevance," includes five chapters. "In a work geared especially toward leaders in the church," the cover copy says, "scholars of the Trinity give Old Testament background, provide Trinitarian readings of the entire New Testament corpus, and explore the practical relevance of the doctrine to prayer, worship, and other aspects of Christian life and ministry."

Also in 2017, as part of our [Reformed Academic Dissertations](#) series, we published Timothy E. Miller's *The Tri-*

*une God of Unity in Diversity: An Analysis of Perspectivalism, the Trinitarian Theological Method of John Frame and Vern Poythress* (384 pages). In this book, Timothy Miller defends and further develops the foundationally Trinitarian, multiperspectival theological method of John Frame and Vern Poythress—an eminently useful, historically Reformed tool for understanding all created reality.

In 2018, also as part of our [Reformed Academic Dissertations](#) series, we published Pierce T. Hibbs's 256-page *The Trinity, Language, and Human Behavior: A Reformed Exposition of the Language Theory of Kenneth L. Pike*. Hibbs explores the Trinitarian structure of Kenneth Pike's language theory from a Reformed perspective and illustrates how language theory and theology are closely related—how various facets of language are analogically linked to relations between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not surprisingly, Vern Poythress's *Knowing and the Trinity: How Perspectives in Human Knowledge Imitate the Trinity* includes three appendices—D: "Views for Theorizing," E: "Triads of Metaperspectives," and F: "Perspectives for Language Theory"—that explain how Pike's triad of particle view (static view), wave view (dynamic view), and field view (relational view) comprises three "perspectives for theorizing" and is fruitful for exploring the mystery of the Trinity.

We invite you to use this [link](#) to browse the books mentioned above.

John Hughes

Academic Project Manager  
john@prpbooks.com



*(P&R Spotlight cont'd from page 1)*

required to do our work for us. He wants us to abandon our implicit reliance on Aristotelian metaphysics in favor of the shaping power of the mystery of the Trinity. Above all, he wants us to turn aside from our unquestioning reliance on 'tight, abstract logic' as our primary resource for 'affirming and maintaining' the orthodox doctrine of God."

*The Mystery of the Trinity* begins with these simple words:

We are seeking in this book to deepen our knowledge of God in his majesty. Knowing God involves deep challenges because God is infinite; it is impossible for human beings to understand him completely. We will focus on some challenges concerning God's attributes. All the challenges have to do in some way with God's relation to the world and things in the world. Here are a number of the challenges.

Dr. Poythress lists six challenges:

1. How can God be independent and yet have relations to the world and things in the world?
2. How can God be immutable (not able to change) and act toward the world?
3. How can God be eternal and act in a differentiated way at different points in time?
4. How can descriptions that some people see as "unworthy of God" be used by Scripture to describe him? God is angry, regrets, and is grieved (Deut. 4:21; 1 Sam. 15:11; Eph. 4:30).
5. How can finite man truly know the infinite God? How can human beings know God when

they can never know him completely (comprehensively)?

6. How can God's attributes be identical with God and also be distinguished from one another?

It takes forty-eight chapters, five appendices, 157 illustrations, a personal reflection, and over 700 pages to answer those questions and to arrive at this conclusion:

Our discussion functions not as the end but as a beginning. Let us pray that as the church continues to grow in the Spirit, we will lose nothing out of the positive insights from the centuries of classical Christian theism and from any genuinely positive insights in newer discussions. . . .

Within the context of a biblical worldview, and the context of submitting to the teaching of the Bible, and the context of exercising humility to God, there can be fruitful growth in understanding. A perspective that starts from transcendence can harmonize in principle with a perspective that starts from immanence. A perspective that starts with the desire for rational consistency can harmonize in principle with a perspective that starts with individual biblical texts, each with its unique texture. Where a perspective starts is not the same as the whole process. Rather, each perspective should take into account the insights gained from complementary perspectives. Harmonies exist in these perspectives because God harmonizes with himself, in the mystery of the Trinity. But we may have to grow in order to see how. (589)

## AUTHOR INTERVIEW: VERN POYTHRESS

*The following is an exclusive interview with author Vern Poythress, conducted by John Hughes.*

*Check out other author interviews on P&R's blog, [www.prpbooks.com/blog](http://www.prpbooks.com/blog).*

### WHAT LED YOU TO WRITE *THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY*? HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THE BIBLE'S TEACHING ON THIS TOPIC?



*Vern Poythress*

**VSP:** In 2018 P&R Publishing published an earlier book that I wrote on the topic of the Trinity (*Knowing and the Trinity: How Perspectives in Human Knowledge Imitate the Trinity*). It focused on some ways in which the Trinity is the foundation for human knowledge. You proposed that I write on the attributes of God, because there was a controversy among evangelicals on that subject. I thought that this subject

of the attributes of God, and their relation to the Trinity, was mysterious and difficult. I was apprehensive about doing it. But I undertook it nevertheless, because I sensed that I might be able to help. I thought that the only way I could help was by going back to the Bible itself and primarily appealing to its teaching. The teaching on the Trinity, in particular, could be a help in exploring more deeply the meaning of the attributes of God.

### WHAT ARE THE MAIN THINGS YOU LEARNED FROM RESEARCHING *THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY*?

**VSP:** I appreciated more deeply the greatness of God, and stood in awe of him. I also grew in appreciating the struggles that had taken place in the history of theology as people tried to obtain a biblically based view of God and also interact with philosophy—unfortunately, mostly pagan philosophy.

### WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT TRUTHS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE READERS TO REMEMBER FROM READING *THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY*?

**VSP:** Most important, I hope readers understand that God is God. We should stand in awe of him and understand that we can know him truly and deeply, but that we will never know him completely, exhaustively. He is infinite.

Second, I hope that readers will remember how I emphasize the centrality of Christ and his resurrection in coming to know God. We do not know God in a saving way by speculation or by mysticism or by contemplation outside the Bible, but only through Christ: “no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matt. 11:27). “Jesus said to him [Thomas], ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6).

Third, I hope they remember that God is always the Trinitarian God, and that we understand his attributes in the light of the Trinity. Also, we understand the Trinity in the light of the attributes. The unity of God and his distinctiveness in three persons are both ultimate in who God is.

“I HOPE READERS UNDERSTAND THAT GOD IS GOD. WE SHOULD STAND IN AWE OF HIM AND UNDERSTAND THAT WE CAN KNOW HIM TRULY AND DEEPLY, BUT THAT WE WILL NEVER KNOW HIM COMPLETELY, EXHAUSTIVELY. HE IS INFINITE.”

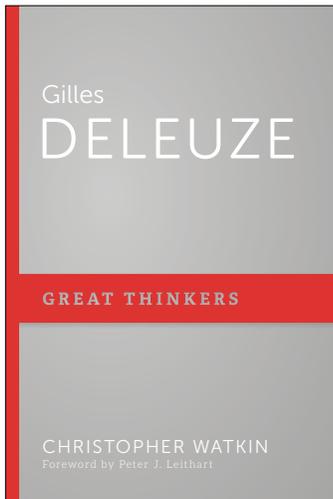
Fourth, I hope that readers remember that it is not a problem *for* God to be the infinite, unchangeable, self-sufficient God and also to be a God who created the world and who interacts intimately with us. God is eternally active, eternally speaking, eternally knowing, and eternally loving in the activities of the persons of the Trinity. He reflects and displays to us his eternal activity in his activity toward us. He loves us in Christ. Praise the Lord!

### WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK *THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY*?

**VSP:** The primary purpose is that people would grow in knowing God. This knowledge includes knowing facts about God, but our goal should be to know God himself. Jesus says,

*(cont'd on page 7)*

## NEW RELEASES



### Gilles Deleuze

**CHRISTOPHER WATKIN**

*Price: \$15.99*

*ISBN: 978-1-62995-743-2*

*Binding: Paper*

Gilles Deleuze's ideas are indispensable to understanding how truth and ethics no longer have theological reference points. Watkin's biblical critique enables us to culturally reengage with our Deleuze-influenced society.

**CHRISTOPHER WATKIN**

(MPhil, PhD, Jesus College, Cambridge) researches and writes on modern and contemporary French thought, atheism, and religion. Currently, he is a senior lecturer in French studies at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. He blogs at [christopherwatkin.com](http://christopherwatkin.com), and you can find him on Twitter @DrChrisWatkin.

### Immanuel Kant

**SHAO KAI TSENG**

*Price: \$15.99*

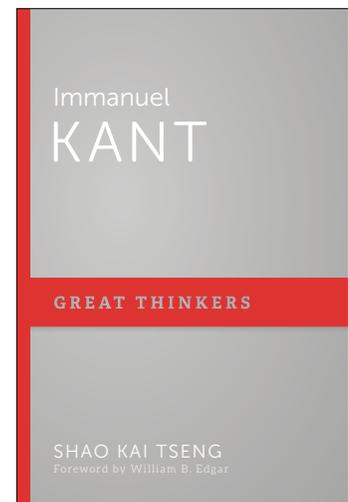
*ISBN: 978-1-62995-701-2*

*Binding: Paper*

Writing firmly in the Reformed tradition, Professor Shao Kai Tseng presents a reinterpretation and critical appreciation of Kant—whose complex philosophy gave rise to the secularization of modern society.

**SHAO KAI ("ALEX") TSENG**

(MDiv, Regent College; ThM, Princeton Theological Seminary; MSt, DPhil, University of Oxford) is research professor in the philosophy department of Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China. He is the author of *Karl Barth's Infralapsarian Theology and Barth's Ontology of Sin and Grace*, as well as *G. W. F. Hegel in the Great Thinkers series*, and a contributor to the *Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought*.



### Plato

**DAVID TALCOTT**

*Price: \$TBD*

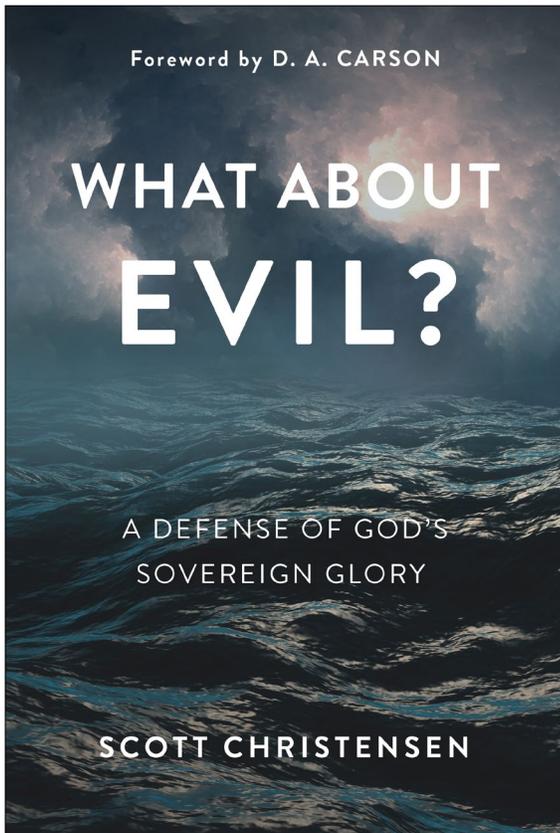
*ISBN: 978-1-62995-869-9*

*Binding: Paper*

A surprising intellectual ally to Christians, Plato critiqued the relativism, materialism, and hedonism of his day. However, Talcott shows that he fell short in notable ways, making our discernment vital.

**DAVID TALCOTT**

(Ph.D. Philosophy, Indiana University, Bloomington) is Associate Professor of Philosophy at The King's College in New York City. David's writing has appeared in *USA Today*, *First Things* online, *Public Discourse*, *Eikon: A Journal of Biblical Anthropology*, *Religious Studies Review*, and other venues. He is an Elder at Covenant Presbyterian Church of Millburn and Short Hills, New Jersey, a congregation in the Presbyterian Church in America.



*Price: \$39.99*

*ISBN: 978-1-62995-535-3*

*Binding: Cloth*

#### **SCOTT CHRISTENSEN**

(MDiv, The Master's Seminary) is the author of *What about Free Will?* He worked for nine years at the award-winning CCY Architects in Aspen, Colorado; several of his home designs were featured in *Architectural Digest* magazine. Called out of this work to the ministry, he graduated with honors from seminary and now serves as the associate pastor of Kerrville Bible Church in Kerrville, Texas.

## **WHAT ABOUT EVIL?**

**A Defense of God's Sovereign Glory**

**SCOTT CHRISTENSEN**

Reconciling the existence of God and evil has been a long-standing conundrum in Christian theology, yet a philosophical approach—rather than a theological one—dominates the discussion. Turning to the Bible's grand storyline, Scott Christensen examines how sin, evil, corruption, and death fit into the broad outlines of redemptive history. He argues that God's ultimate end in creation is to magnify his glory to his image-bearers, most notably by defeating evil through the atoning work of Christ.

"Scott Christensen has a real gift for answering difficult theological questions plainly, thoroughly, and above all biblically—with colorful, engaging writing that readers at practically any level can easily comprehend and learn from. If you're troubled by the question of why a good and omnipotent God would create a universe that includes evil—or if you are a Christian struggling to explain the problem of evil to someone else—you will greatly benefit from this book."

—**JOHN MACARTHUR**, *Pastor-Teacher, Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California; Chancellor Emeritus, The Master's University and Seminary*

"Christians take the problem of evil more seriously than anyone else. This book avoids simplistic philosophical solutions. Instead, the author appreciates that the historical fact of Christ's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and return provides the only hope when we just don't know all the answers."

—**MICHAEL S. HORTON**, *J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics, Westminster Seminary California*

"Christensen gets beyond the more traditional approaches to the problem [of evil] by reminding us that God's wisdom pervades everything he ordains so that the very existence of evil serves his purpose of maximizing goodness and glorifying himself. Of course, Romans 8:28 and other verses say that this is true. But Christensen shows us how it is true. . . . I commend this book to readers who seek a serious and thoughtful treatment of this issue."

—**JOHN M. FRAME**, *Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy Emeritus, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando*

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### **MARK D. LIEDERBACH**

(MA, Denver Seminary; PhD, University of Virginia) is professor of theology, ethics, and culture; dean of students; and vice president for student services at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

### **EVAN LENOW**

(PhD, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) is director of church and minister relations at Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi.

## **ETHICS AS WORSHIP**

**MARK D. LIEDERBACH, EVAN LENOW**

Often we think of ethics as a system of codified rules and behavior modification. But when ethics takes our personal, saving God into account, it rightly becomes a system in which an attitude of worship shapes our hearts and actions.

*Ethics as Worship* provides a gospel-centered and missionally-focused interpretation of Christian ethics that emphasizes the worship and glorification of God as the key component to the ethical endeavor. It stresses the importance of conformity to Christ through virtue formation, obedience to the ethical norms revealed in Scripture, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as the means to personal sanctification and cultural transformation. Building on these foundational elements, *Ethics as Worship* then explores how the pursuit of the glory of God ought to shape our engagement with the prevailing ethical topics and issues of our day.

Virtue and character formation in conformity to Christ must be guided by—and wed to—the biblical ethical norms revealed in Scripture. Readers will ultimately see every aspect of their lives as a response to God's gift of salvation.

“In a day and age of great moral confusion, it is imperative that we recapture the biblical notion that all our choices and actions are meant to maximize the glory of God as a part of whole life worship. *Ethics as Worship* is much more than a great title for book; it is a great concept by which to order our lives, our moral discipleship, and our missional purpose.”

—**DANNY AKIN**, *President, Professor of Preaching and Theology, Ed Young, Sr. Chair of Preaching, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary*

“I am looking forward to the publication of *Ethics as Worship*. I teach worship at Covenant Theological Seminary, where I emphasize the importance of corporate worship as equipping and transforming the people of God into greater Christ-likeness in a way that is lived out between Sundays. All of life is to be lived before the face of God, as a moment-by-moment expression of worship service. *Ethics as Worship* has great potential to introduce, enhance, and bring this focus into the field of ethics.”

—**MARK L. DALBEY**, *President, Associate Professor of Applied Theology, Covenant Theological Seminary*

*(Author Interview cont'd from page 3)*

“And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). I desire people to grow in worshiping God, in living their lives in a God-centered way, and in standing in awe of him.

I also hope that my words would be a help in moving us forward as the people of God, in dealing with corruptions of the knowledge of God that come from unbelieving philosophy, and in dealing with the present controversy over the attributes of God. But primarily, I see the book as positive. What does God show us about himself in the Bible, and how can we know him and know what the Bible is saying more deeply?

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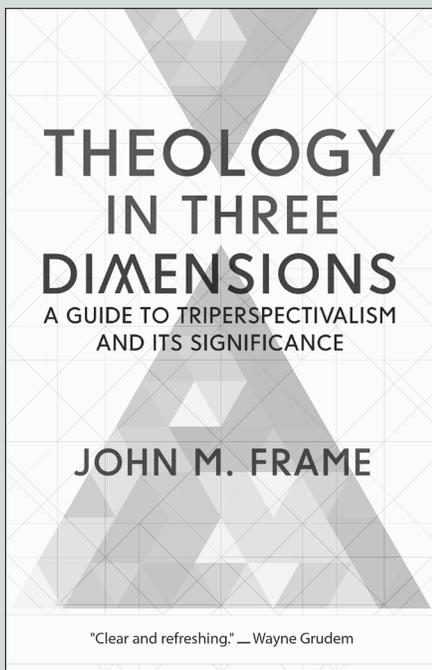
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