

## PHILOSOPHIA CHRISTI

|  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
| EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION  | CRAIG J. HAZEN                         | 267 |
| THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY: A SYMPOSIUM<br>ON KEITH WARD'S <i>CHRIST AND THE COSMOS</i>                               |  |     |
| Rethinking the Trinity: On<br>Being Orthodox and <i>Au Courant</i>   | CHAD MEISTER                           | 271 |
| Reimagining the Trinity: On Not Three Gods   | KEITH WARD                             | 281 |
| Response to Keith Ward, <i>Christ and the Cosmos</i>   | RICHARD SWINBURNE                      | 297 |
| Comments on Keith Ward's <i>Christ and the Cosmos</i>  | STEPHEN T. DAVIS                       | 307 |
| Professor Ward and Polytheism  | THOMAS MCCALL                          | 313 |
| A Medieval Approach to Keith Ward's<br>Christ and the Cosmos: A Reformulation<br>of Trinitarian Doctrine               | KATHERIN A. ROGERS                     | 323 |
| A Cosmic Christ?   | WILLIAM HASKER                         | 333 |
| <i>Christ and the Cosmos: A Reformulation<br/>of Trinitarian Doctrine—A Reflection</i>                                 | FRANCIS X. CLOONEY, SJ                 | 343 |
| Can God Be Essentially Loving without Being<br>Essentially Social? An Affirmation of and<br>Alternative for Keith Ward | THOMAS JAY OORD                        | 353 |
| Some Objections to Ward's Trinitarian Theology   | DALE TUGGY                             | 363 |
| Ward's Trinity and the Stubborn Jews   | JEROME GELLMAN                         | 375 |
| Responses to Essays on <i>Christ and the Cosmos</i>  | KEITH WARD                             | 387 |
| ARTICLES   |  |     |
| The Rationality of Faith: How Does<br>Christianity Make Sense of Things?   | ALISTER E. MCGRATH                     | 395 |
| Can Ordinary Materialists Be Autonomous?   | DAVID HERSHENOV<br>ADAM P. TAYLOR      | 411 |
| Theism, Naturalism, and Worlds:<br>The Puzzle and the Problem  | STEPHEN E. PARRISH                     | 433 |
| Reformed Epistemology and the Pandora's Box<br>Objection: The <i>Vaiśeṣika</i> and Mormon Traditions                   | TYLER DALTON MCNABB<br>ERIK D. BALDWIN | 451 |

PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES

|   |   |     |
|---|---|-----|
| The Distasteful Conditional Analysis:<br>On Compatibilism and the Not-so-Wretched<br>Counterfactual Ability to Do Otherwise                                 | GUILLAUME BIGNON                        | 469 |
| “Absolute Creation” and “Theistic Activism”:<br>A Plea for Terminological Uniformity  | WILLIAM LANE CRAIG                      | 481 |
| Agnostic Historical Jesus Scholars Decimate the<br>Mythical Jesus Popularists: A Review Essay on<br><i>Jesus: Evidence and Argument or Mythicist Myths?</i> | GARY R. HABERMAS<br>BENJAMIN C. F. SHAW | 485 |

BOOK REVIEWS

|  |                   |     |
|--|-------------------|-----|
| <i>Four Views on Christianity and Philosophy</i> ,<br>edited by Paul M. Gould and Richard Brian Davis                | MICHAEL T. MCFALL | 499 |
| <i>The Best Argument against God</i> , by Graham Oppy  | GREG GANSSLE      | 503 |
| <i>Four Views on Hell</i> , edited by Preston M. Sprinkle  | ERIC B. OLDENBURG | 507 |
| <i>Moral Responsibility and Desert of<br/>Praise and Blame</i> , by Audrey L. Anton                                  | LOREN PANKRATZ    | 512 |
| <i>The Knower and the Known: Physicalism,<br/>Dualism, and the Nature of Intelligibility</i> ,<br>by Stephen Parrish | R. SCOTT SMITH    | 518 |

|                        |  |     |
|------------------------|--|-----|
| NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS |  | 523 |
|------------------------|--|-----|

### *Editor's Introduction*

I have to start out by congratulating Chad Meister on putting together a really stimulating symposium on the Trinity that is published in full in this issue. It's a real scholarly romp through and around this ancient Christian doctrine and comes at it from a wide range of perspectives. I also have to congratulate Chad for his introductory essay. It is delightfully good. I've never really thought about what a model introduction to a collection of published papers ought to be. I think Chad may have written an introduction close to "than which no greater can be conceived." I say this so that you stop to read it instead of launching right into the first invited contribution—as I'm sure has been done occasionally in the long history of journal reading.

One other bit of congratulations goes to Chad, Betty Talbert (our managing editor), and Gary Hartenburg (our assistant editor) for nearly getting this issue out before the big ETS/EPS conference in San Antonio, the theme of which was the Trinity. They really gave it the old college try to get this issue in your mailbox before the annual meeting. But there were just too many hurdles to overcome. It would have been nice for you to have your appetites whetted on things Trinitarian before going to Texas. But now (and perhaps this is better) the conversation that was started at the conference will be continued in these pages at your home, *sans* the Alamo, Spurs, and River Walk.

One other positive factor for this journal arriving to you after the annual meeting is that we were able to insert a paper that we were not expecting. Alistair McGrath, our featured EPS conference speaker, provided us a copy of his very stimulating plenary address, which we were able to include in this issue. The title is "The Rationality of Faith: How Does Christianity Make Sense of Things." We think you will really enjoy it.

One other positive factor for this journal landing just after Christmas: you can use it to avoid taking down Christmas lights. In fact, here is the line you can use: "My dear spouse, I must read and digest a very important set of essays on the Trinity that has just arrived. You don't want me to be left behind, do you?" Of course this leaves some helpful ambiguity surrounding the nature of "left behind." Was it meant in the sense of academic progress or did it refer to some eschatological finality? What loving spouse would take the chance?

So find a comfy chair next to a lovely fireplace and read this issue. The neighbor kid can take down the lights. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from me and the Executive Committee of the EPS.

Craig J. Hazen  
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The Doctrine  
of the Trinity:  
A Symposium on  
Keith Ward's  
*Christ and the  
Cosmos*

## *Rethinking the Trinity* On Being Orthodox and *Au Courant*

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### *Early Debates on Trinitarian Doctrine*

The Christian Bible bears witness to a divine triunity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To this virtually all theologians, past and present, agree. But what, precisely, is the meaning of this tripartite understanding of God? After all, there is a strong monotheistic emphasis in the Old Testament. Prophetic proclamations, such as that in Isaiah 45:5, illuminate the point: “I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no God.” The monotheism affirmed in the Old Testament is reaffirmed in the New Testament. For example, in 1 Timothy 2:5 we find these words: “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” Other relevant passages could be cited as well.

So far, so good. But then we find biblical passages which at first glance appear to contradict its monotheistic sentiments. For example, strong affirmations of a divine reality with God are offered in the New Testament, which seem to imply more than one divinity. Consider the opening words of the book of John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and apart from him nothing came into being that has come into being” (John 1:1–3). Furthermore, in addition to this “Word” (who “became flesh,” it says in that same chapter in John), there is another divine reality referred to as the “Holy Spirit,”—“another Advocate” whom the world will not know but the disciples will know (John 14:16–17). This

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ABSTRACT: There is a renaissance of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity. Keith Ward’s book, *Christ and the Cosmos: A Reformulation of the Trinitarian Doctrine*, is a recent and important work that attempts to reimagine the doctrine of the Trinity in a contemporary context. The following symposium engages with this important work and offers profitable discussion on the doctrine of the Trinity today. It includes an opening essay in which Professor Ward delineates his views, nine essays by leading philosophers and theologians responding to his work, and his replies to the respondents. This essay provides some background to the discussion.

Holy Spirit will intercede, guide, speak, and command (Rom. 8:14, 26; John 15:26; Acts 8:29). So there is a third member of the divine triunity. This threefold notion of God is repeated in the Gospels formulaically as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (for example, Matt. 28:19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”).<sup>1</sup> So there is one God, but yet there are three members or individuals or aspects of the Godhead. How are these seemingly inconsistent claims to be reconciled? Some of the best minds of the early church (such as Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Arius, Athanasius, and the three Cappadocian fathers—Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus) took on the challenge of attempting to bring theological coherence to this biblical enigma.

One of the early debates about this triunity centered on how the Word (Logos, Λόγος) originated. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” The one who became flesh was begotten from the Father. Some of the early thinkers, such as Hippolytus, interpreted “begotten” as “coming to be” and maintained that the Logos as a personal being did not exist eternally with God, but had an absolute beginning at a point in time prior to the creation of this world. On his view, God subsisted alone prior to creation, though God was also many in the sense that God was never “reasonless, or wisdomless, or powerless . . . , but all things were in Him, and He was in all.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, the Logos of God, understood abstractly as the rationality or wisdom of God, always existed, but the personal Logos came to be at a definite moment in time, according to Hippolytus. The Logos as person (*prosopon*, πρόσωπον; *hypostasis*, ὑπόστασις), then, came to be by the will of the Father as a special creative act of the Father.<sup>3</sup> In other words, on Hippolytus’s view, the Logos is a creature of the Father’s will.

As recent scholarship has demonstrated, this view—a form of which was adopted in the fourth century by Arius, a presbyter and priest in Alexandria, Egypt—was in fact widely disseminated in the church in the third and fourth centuries.<sup>4</sup> In agreement with Hippolytus, Arius argued that God ex-

1. As Stephen Holmes notes, second-century martyrologies commonly included the triadic formula—so much so that it “suggests strongly that speaking of the three-fold name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, was essential to, and normal within, Christian devotion” (Stephen R. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 57).

2. Hippolytus, quoted in Frederick Loetscher, “Tertullian and the Beginnings of the Doctrine of the Trinity,” *The Princeton Theological Review* 2 (1906): 152.

3. The meanings of these Greek terms as applied to the Trinity were debated by the ancient theologians and continue to be a matter of debate today.

4. For more on this, see Lewis Ayers, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011); and William Hasker, “The ‘New’ Fourth Century,” in *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11–18.

isted alone prior to creating the Logos. But he went further, contending that since the Logos did not belong to the very substance (*ousia*, οὐσία) of God, there was nothing from which the Logos could have come; the Logos, therefore, must have been *created ex nihilo*, along with all other created beings.

The first ecumenical (worldwide) council of the Christian church was held in Nicaea (roughly within the modern Turkish city of Iznik) in 325 AD.<sup>5</sup> Many theological viewpoints on the Trinity were addressed at the council, but Arianism was front and center. In the end Arius's teaching on the subject was condemned, and a creed was adopted which affirmed that the Son of God was "begotten, not made," which made clear that he was not a creation, not a creature. It also affirmed the Son's being *homoousias* (ὁμοούσιος, the Greek term for "of one substance") with the Father. But this Nicene Creed did not put an end to the controversy. In fact, it may have fostered even more debate and for several reasons, not the least of which is that the Greek term *homoousias* has various meanings.<sup>6</sup> In any case, the council did make clear a central point against Arianism: the Son is divine like the Father—the Son shares the divine essence or substance or nature with the Father—and thus cannot be a being created by the Father.

A developmental process continued through the fourth century, which brought about the next council, held in Constantinople in 381, from which the traditional "Nicene Creed" was formulated.<sup>7</sup> A problem that had been discussed in the intervening decades between the two councils was that some were interpreting the *homoousios* clause as meaning that the Father and the Son were one being, thus avoiding the charge of polytheism. That meaning of the term was also affirmed by Sabellius, an influential priest and theologian in the third century who argued for a modalistic view of God that came to be called Sabellianism or modalistic monarchianism.<sup>8</sup> Like Athanasius and other orthodox theologians of the time, Sabellius maintained that the

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5. The ecumenical councils are a central part of Christian tradition. They represent an attempt by church leaders from across the Roman Empire from the fourth to the eighth centuries to reach an orthodox consensus on central Christian doctrines, and to develop a unified Christendom throughout the empire. The seven ecumenical councils are Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), Constantinople II (553), Constantinople III (680), and Nicaea II (787). Further ecumenical councils were rendered impossible by the widening split between Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic churches, a split that was rendered official in 1054 and has not yet been reconciled.

6. One factor that complicated matters is that the Greek term *ousia* (οὐσία) itself had various meanings in antiquity, such as being, essence, nature, substance, and kind of stuff.

7. This creed, which is commonly referred to as the "Nicene Creed" and is repeated in churches throughout the world every Sunday, is more accurately referred to as the "Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed."

8. More accurately, Noetus of Smyrna developed modalistic Monarchianism which is an early form of modalism that emphasizes the indivisibility of God (the Father) at the expense of the other persons of the Trinity. As we will see, Nicaea's concern about avoiding the extremes of modalism and polytheism are still relevant concerns today with respect to formulations of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Father and the Son are *homoousios*. But unlike the orthodox thinkers, Sabellius held that this one God is one person represented by different temporal modes or appearances of God: at one time Father, at another time Son, and at yet another Holy Spirit.

Though at Nicaea the divinity of the Son was affirmed, and even the divine unity, ambiguity still existed in the council's creed about a real distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This led some to believe that at Nicaea there was a concession to Sabellianism. To make matters worse, the Arian view still loomed decades after Nicaea. The doctrinal decisions which emerged from the council at Constantinople in 381 attempted to further clarify the matter on the consubstantiality and coeternity of the three divine persons against the Sabellians, Arians, and other "heretics." Here the Greek Fathers from Cappadocia were instrumental in clarifying the orthodox view of the Trinity in which the Son and the Holy Spirit are *homoousios* (of one *kind*, they argued) with the Father, and yet not identical to the Father.<sup>9</sup>

The Trinitarian theology that emerged from the work of these early theologians and the ecumenical councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, and several others to follow became the defining orthodoxy regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. In the centuries that followed, many important Christian theologians continued discussing and debating Trinitarian doctrine, including such luminaries as Augustine, John of Damascus, Thomas Aquinas, Gregory Palamas, John Calvin, Martin Luther, Karl Barth, and Karl Rahner. For theologians today in the Eastern Orthodox church, the Roman Catholic church, and many Protestant churches, this orthodox understanding of Trinitarian doctrine is taken to be *the* definitive view of the Trinity such that any deviation is considered to be unorthodox, if not heretical.<sup>10</sup>

### *Contemporary Discussion on Trinitarian Doctrine*

As we have seen, theological discussion and debate about the doctrine of the Trinity were front and center in the Christian church for hundreds of

9. They are not identical because the Son is "begotten" of the Father and the Holy Spirit "proceeds from" the Father. The *filioque* (Latin for "and the Son") clause was later added by the Western theologians so that the Nicene Creed utilized in the West now reads that the Holy Spirit proceeds "from the Father and the Son." This is still a matter of conflict between the Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic churches.

10. The authority of the ecumenical councils of the early church was and is still considered by many Christians to be on a par with scripture itself. E.g., in the sixth century Pope Gregory I made the following proclamation: "I confess that I accept and venerate the four councils (Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon) in the same way as I do the four books of the holy Gospel" (quoted in Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1 (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 23). Katherin Rogers, in her essay in this symposium, maintains that "If the statements [given by the ecumenical councils] on the Trinity and Incarnation are not the work of Christ's Church, met in council, and guided by the Holy Spirit, then it is unclear why we should accept that there is a Trinity or Incarnation at all."



years, especially between the second and seventh centuries and in the various ecumenical councils. But the doctrine of the Trinity is no mere theological relic; philosophers and theologians in our own day are crafting articles and monographs on Trinitarian doctrine at an incredible pace.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, it is not overstating the case to say that there is a renaissance of Trinitarian theology today. Keith Ward's book, *Christ and the Cosmos: A Reformulation of the Trinitarian Doctrine*, is a recent and significant work in this genre which attempts to reimagine the doctrine of the Trinity in our contemporary context. The following symposium is an attempt to engage with this important work and to provide a profitable discourse on the doctrine of the Trinity today.

The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity is generally expressed as the view that God is triune; one God exists as three divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. According to this orthodox understanding of the Trinity, as we saw earlier, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the same in substance but yet not the same in person. However, as centuries pass, words and concepts often evolve, their meaning and use varying over time. So contemporary theologians and philosophers are not only fraught with *conceptual* difficulties of understanding the notion of a God who is three persons (*prosopon*; *hypostasis*) in one substance (*ousia*; *substantia*), but they are further confronted with attempting to understand what, precisely, the patristic theologians even meant by their technical Greek and Latin terms.

In contemporary discussions on the subject, a central challenge faced by the ancients remains: how to affirm the Trinitarian doctrine—one that is consistent with the conclusions of the councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon—without landing in either *modalism* on the one hand or *polytheism* on the other. As Thomas Morris puts it, “Modalism and polytheism are the Scylla and Charybdis between which all orthodox accounts of the Trinity must steer.”<sup>12</sup> Two types of theories are generally advocated today among Trinitarian theologians who attempt to affirm an orthodox view that avoids these extremes: singularity theories and social theories.<sup>13</sup> Singularity theories, sometimes referred to as “Latin Trinitarianism,” have been affirmed by such theologians and philosophers as Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Brian Leftow, and Sarah

11. As a sampling of some recent and important works, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Trinity and Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014); Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders, eds., *Advancing Trinitarian Theology: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014); Jason S. Sexton and Stanley N. Gundry, eds., *Two Views on the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014); and William Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God*.

12. Thomas V. Morris, *Our Idea of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 176.

13. It should be noted that the individuals listed may not have preferred such terminology for classifying their positions. Also, a third view, whose most ardent advocate is Michael Rea, has been called “Relative Trinitarianism” or the “relative identity” view. For a defense of this view, see Michael C. Rea, “The Trinity,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, ed. Thomas H. Flint and Michael C. Rea (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 403–29. This relative view of the Trinity is not discussed in this symposium.

Coakley.<sup>14</sup> These theories emphasize the oneness and unity of God while attempting to avoid modalism. Social theories, on the other hand, sometimes referred to as “Greek Trinitarianism,” are affirmed by such theologians and philosophers as David Brown, Richard Swinburne, Peter van Inwagen, and Katherin Rogers. These theories emphasize the distinctness of the three persons of the Trinity while attempting to avoid polytheism.

Proponents of social theories of the Trinity generally maintain that there is one divine being—one God—with three distinct centers of consciousness, and each center has its own distinctive will and mental content. A difficulty generated by this view is how to articulate the divine unity and identity. Generally, for social Trinitarians, the identity of the Persons of the Trinity is grounded in their each instantiating the core attributes of divinity (omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, omnibenevolence, and so on). The unity is established in the harmony or conformity of purpose, will, and action among the three Persons.

Proponents of singularity theories of the Trinity emphasize the oneness of the divine and argue that God is a single bearer of properties. On this view, God is a metaphysical individual. Singularity theorists often argue that social theories, especially those modeled on a society of three human individuals, cannot avoid either polytheism on the one hand or a form of Arianism on the other in which one or two of the divine Persons are lesser deities.<sup>15</sup> For singularity theorists, the “persons” of the Trinity should not be understood to be a community or society of three divine individuals. Rather, the threeness has to do with the internal relatedness of the life of God and God’s modes of action.

Keith Ward affirms a view of the Trinity that is more akin to a singularity view than to a social view. He maintains that there is only one mind of God. Yet he also affirms that he is “a Christian who believes that God is a Trinity, ‘three persons in one substance,’ as the tradition puts it,” and he says emphatically that he is not rejecting Nicaea or Chalcedon.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, he argues that the doctrine of the Trinity needs to be rethought today. He attempts to demonstrate that the recent concept of the social Trinity radically revised the traditional idea of God, but not in a helpful way, for it threatens the very unity of Godself. Instead, he proposes a return to a more purely monotheistic vision of the divine nature.

While Ward’s primary focus is on making sense of the triunity of God in a modern context, another important aspect of *Christ and the Cosmos* is

14. See, e.g., Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I, The Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans. G. T. Thomson, chap. 2, part 1, “The Triumph of God” (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936); Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (London: Continuum, 1979); and Sarah Coakley, “Why Three? Some Further Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity,” in *The Making and Remaking of Christian Doctrine*, ed. Sarah Coakley and D. A. Pailin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 29–56.

15. See, e.g., Brian Leftow, “Anti Social Trinitarianism,” in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, Stephen T. Davis; Daniel Kendall, SJ; and Gerald O’Collins, SJ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 202–49.

16. Ward, *Christ and the Cosmos*, ix and xv respectively.

the attempt to rethink the doctrine of the Trinity from a cosmic perspective, bringing cosmology and other sciences to bear on theological thinking. Such a perspective analyzes the notion of God within a scientific purview and considers the possibility that God's creation of conscious, rational beings may expand beyond our own planet and what this might mean for our understanding of God and the ways of God. Some of the respondents interact with these ideas as well.

### *The Symposium: An Overview*

For the symposium that follows, I invited Professor Keith Ward to write an article that culls from his *Christ and the Cosmos* some of the key points and arguments and expresses the central message of the book. Professor Ward is a leading philosophical theologian. He is the Regius Professor of Divinity Emeritus at the University of Oxford, was a Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and is a Fellow of the British Academy. He has written a number of highly influential books in both philosophy and theology. I also invited nine leading philosophers and theologians from very different perspectives who have done important work on the doctrine of the Trinity to respond to Professor Ward's work. Their responses are directly engaging with *Christ and the Cosmos*, which, as a monograph, develops in more detail the points and arguments expressed in Ward's article. So do keep in mind as you read the responses that they are responding to the book itself and not the article. Professor Ward was also kind enough to reply to each of the respondents, and his replies are found in his essay at the end of this symposium.

The first respondent, Richard Swinburne, is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford. He also held the position of the Nolloth Professor of the Christian Religion at the University of Oxford. Professor Swinburne writes from the Eastern Orthodox tradition, and he affirms a social theory of the Trinity. He argues that Ward, who understands the persons of the Trinity to be three necessary modes of divine action, provides no reason that there must be only three such modes. Swinburne then defends his argument for a social theory in which there are three and only three divine persons of the Trinity.

The second respondent, Stephen Davis, is Russell K. Pitzer Professor of Philosophy at Claremont McKenna College. In his article Professor Davis raises two criticisms. First, he argues that Ward's claim that we can know nothing about the essence of God leads to the disturbing conclusion that what God has revealed to us about the divine nature may be very different from God's nature in itself. A second criticism raised by Davis is that Ward's nonsocial view of the Trinity may be a form of modalism.

The next respondent is Thomas McCall, Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology and Director of the Carl F. H. Henry Center for Theologi-

cal Understanding at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Professor McCall focuses on Ward's view of the identity of Jesus Christ and raises concerns about it. He also argues that Ward's theological motivation for a "radical reformulation" of the doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation raises some important worries as well.

The fourth respondent is Katherin Rogers, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Delaware. Writing as a Roman Catholic philosopher who specializes in medieval thought, Professor Rogers argues that Ward's attempt to reformulate the doctrine of the Trinity for our current scientific age is unwarranted and unnecessary. She also raises concerns about his reformulation, in particular his account of the nature of Jesus, arguing that it leads to the conclusion that Christians have been practicing idolatry from early on in Christian history.

Next is William Hasker, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Huntington University. Professor Hasker, an open theist, notes that some aspects of Ward's reformulation of the doctrine of the Trinity are akin to some views affirmed by open theists, though not his rejection of social views of the Trinity (the social view is often affirmed by open theists). Hasker also argues that Ward's reformulation of the Trinity is inconsistent with the historic view which is expressed in the ecumenical creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon. In addition, he examines some of the implications of Ward's view, including that it is not as cosmic as the traditional view.

The sixth respondent is Francis Clooney, Parkman Professor of Divinity and Director of the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School. Professor Clooney argues that, while Ward is to be commended for what he has accomplished in *Christ and the Cosmos*, including his incorporation of comparative religion, the work in this book is too general and laconic as the religions play a very small role. Furthermore, Clooney maintains that, while Ward may well be warranted in leaving behind ancient terminology and concepts in the Christian tradition and moving forward with new terms and ideas (given Ward's own expertise in the area), he is not so warranted in doing so with other religious traditions, such as Hinduism, which Ward touches on. Based on his own expertise in that particular field, Clooney argues that careful attention to Hindu thought might help clarify Christian notions of the Trinity.

The next respondent, Thomas Oord, is Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Northwest Nazarene University. In his article Professor Oord is much in agreement with the overall project of *Christ and the Cosmos*. Notably, he agrees that the social theory of the Trinity is a bad idea. He maintains that conceiving God as being comprised of three distinct persons (each with a distinct consciousness and will) is more akin to polytheism than to monotheism. He also argues that it would be better for Ward to maintain that God

is essentially loving and essentially related to the creation rather than being contingently so.

Next is Dale Tuggy, Professor of Philosophy at State University of New York at Fredonia. Professor Tuggy is writing from the perspective of a biblical Unitarian (which, unlike Unitarian Universalism, affirms belief in God, Jesus Christ, and the gift of the “holy spirit”). He argues that Ward’s reformulation of the Trinity doctrine is not, in fact, a “reformulation” of a previous understanding of the doctrine after all. He also argues that it is in conflict with the New Testament’s identification of Jesus with the Son and also in its denial of the identification of the Father with the one God.

The final respondent, Jerome Gellman, is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel. His essay is written from the perspective of an Orthodox Jewish analytic philosopher. One of Ward’s hopes is that his reformulation of the Trinity doctrine opens up the possibility of Jews and Christians becoming closer theologically than in previous times. Professor Gellman argues that Ward’s reformulated Trinity doctrine is not, in fact, discordant with Jewish tradition and that a Jew could accept its logical implications. While Gellman is sympathetic with a high view of Jesus, he sets forth a new Jewish understanding of Jesus—one that is consistent with Orthodox Jewish thought in denying that Jesus is divine, but one which also attempts to move Jewish and Christian theology closer to one another.

In a final essay, Professor Ward offers a brief response to the main criticisms raised by these nine respondents.

## Conclusion

The doctrine of the Trinity has been the topic of theological discussion and debate since it was first conceived, very probably early in the second century by Tertullian, who is generally taken to be the originator of the idea that God is three persons in one substance (*tres personae, una substantia*).<sup>17</sup> Christians who want to affirm an orthodox view of the Trinity today must be consistent with the doctrine that emerged from the orthodox-defining councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon. But it is not always easy to know whether one is being consistent with them.

Whether you agree with Keith Ward’s reimagined view of the Trinity, he undoubtedly provides many penetrating points about how to think about the doctrine of the Trinity today. His respondents do as well.

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17. However, Dale Tuggy argues in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* that “Tertullian’s trinity [is] not a triune God, but rather a triad or group of three, with God as the founding member” (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/trinity/trinity-history.html#Tertul>).

I conclude with a rather long but I think insightful quotation by Professor Ward about the Trinity with which all Christians could agree:

The doctrine of the Trinity may sound rather complicated—but it is not after all surprising that human attempts to understand God should stretch the human mind as far as it can go. Despite these crude and faltering attempts to comprehend the threefold nature of God, it should not be forgotten that the idea of the Trinity is basically very simple. Christians worship God as the creator of the universe, always beyond and greater than the whole of creation. Christians worship God as one who enters into the universe, especially in the person of Jesus, to liberate persons from hatred and greed, and lead them to eternal life. Christians worship God as the Spirit who inspires, guides and strengthens the hearts and minds of created persons, and brings them into the closest loving union with God.

God the sustainer of all creation, God revealed and known in the person of Jesus, and God active within human minds and hearts—all these are forms of the one true God. . . . Whatever their interpretations of the Trinity, these are the fundamental beliefs about God that all Christians share.<sup>18</sup>

*Christ and the Cosmos* and the ten articles that follow are an adventure in philosophical theology with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity. They will challenge us with ideas and arguments that may well provide deeper insights about the triune God.

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18. Keith Ward, *Christianity: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 94.