



**Reeves, Michael.**

***Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith***

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

New Jersey

In *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* Michael Reeves (theological adviser for the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship) has produced what might be the finest introductory work on the Trinity that I've read to date. The same volume is published in the UK (by Paternoster) as *The Good God: Enjoying Father, Son and Spirit*. Each title highlights an important aspect of Reeves' project.

Introductions to the Christian faith abound, as do introductions to the doctrine of the Trinity; but how many introductions to the Christian faith are specifically about the Trinity? Not many. Why is this? Some might like to lay the blame at the feet of Friedrich Schleiermacher who treated the Trinity in an appendix of his *The Christian Faith*; I'm not so sure. We need to ask a more fundamental question—one that precedes the placement of the doctrine of the Trinity in published books on the Christian faith—we need to ask what exactly the Christian faith is.

Reeves says that it's delighting in the Trinity; enjoying Father, Son, and Spirit. The Christian faith is all about sharing in the love that the Father has had for the Son in the Spirit for all eternity. And this is what Reeves spends the entire book talking about. He neatly arranges his chapters to speak of Father, Son, and Spirit respectively, but he can never speak of any one Person without reference to the other two. And he can't speak about their love for each other without speaking about how that love overflows resulting in creation and salvation.

A friend asked on Twitter whether or not this was an apologetic book and my initial response was to say that it wasn't. After thinking for a moment I tweeted back that it was—and it is—a brilliant one at that! Building on key insights from Richard of St. Victor, this is one of the finest expositions on 1 John 4:8 (“God is love”) that has ever appeared in print, and Reeves uses this in the service of showing just why this is *only* possible with the Trinity, and in doing so he ably dismantles Unitarian and polytheistic conceptions of God.

But this isn't a unique example; equally impressive is how he manages to take some of the most significant theological insights from Christian thinkers such as Athanasius, Augustine, and Jonathan Edwards, to name but a few, and present them in language that even the most uninitiated person can understand. Aside from incorporating their ideas into the main text, there are 16 sidebars that break up the reading but help to strengthen the point of the section. One can imagine these sidebars serving as a devotional to be enjoyed every couple of weeks.

I could go on and on about how Reeves brilliantly makes a case for the importance of the Father's *monarchē* by pointing out how starting with the Father, who loves the Son in the Spirit, helps us to avoid thinking of some nebulous “God stuff” standing behind the Trinity like an impersonal fourth member; or mention how he rightly points out that God's holiness is not inconsistent with his love but rather the outworking of his love; or even how the Trinity was the key to solving the issues that were at stake in Augustine's debates with Pelagius; but you really need to read this all for yourself.

What I love so much about this book is that Reeves manages to teach the reader about the immanent Trinity, the economic Trinity, *perichorēsis*, essential attributes, personal properties, the eternal trinitarian *taxis*, and so much more, and yet he never once has to resort to using any of these technical terms and he manages to keep Scripture at the foundation without resorting to proof-texting. The reader gets all of the key info in language that's easy to understand. Reeves' tone is conversational; his wit and humor apparent; but most importantly, his love for the Trinity is written all over every page; he's an evangelist and an apologist in the best senses of each word.

I've been asked countless times to recommend introductory texts on the Trinity and I've always suggested Gerald O'Collins' *The Tripersonal God* because it's short, covers the biblical foundation, the historical development, and delves into some contemporary discussions; and I still think it's a great book; but it has just moved to #2 on my list of recommendations. *Delighting in the Trinity/The Good God* is my new #1 pick. I'm convinced that Christians, new or old, should take a few moments and spend some time enjoying Father, Son, and Spirit with Reeves.