

Plato & Christian Personalism

by D.T. Sheffler

Foreword by Mark K. Spencer

An Ancient Foundation for Modern Thought

This groundbreaking study challenges a scholarly impasse that has persisted for generations. Personalist philosophers have criticized Plato for allegedly devaluing the individual person, while Platonic scholars have confined their subject to the archives of ancient history. D.T. Sheffler reveals that both traditions have missed something crucial: Plato's philosophy offers unexpected resources for understanding personalist commitments.

Sheffler demonstrates that Plato's revolutionary insights about the soul—its transcendence, its dignity, its capacity for self-knowledge—established philosophical foundations that resonate deeply with later Christian personalism. Far from reducing persons to abstract ideas, Plato articulated what makes each human soul irreducibly unique and infinitely valuable in ways that anticipate central personalist concerns.

Drawing on careful textual analysis and engaging particularly with Dietrich von Hildebrand's phenomenological personalism, this book reveals surprising points of contact and mutual enrichment between ancient Athens and contemporary philosophy. Sheffler shows how Plato's understanding of consciousness, moral agency, and human dignity addresses questions that remain central to personalist thought.

A Living Tradition

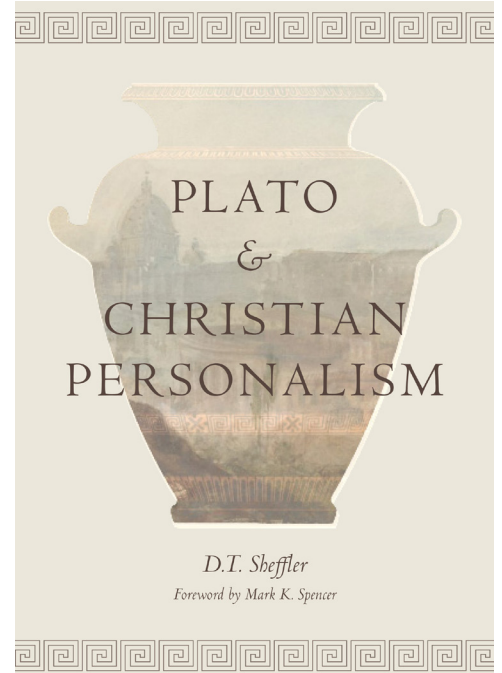
This is not intellectual archaeology but a recovery of living wisdom. Sheffler argues that ancient philosophy and Christian personalism, despite their historical distance, share concerns about human nature, freedom, and the good life. Understanding this connection enriches both Platonic studies and personalist philosophy, revealing resources that remain vital for contemporary thought.

About the Author

D.T. Sheffler is a professor of philosophy and academic dean at Memoria College, and an Associated Scholar at the Hildebrand Project. His research and writing focus on Christian Platonism, early Christianity, and beauty.

Mark K. Spencer is a professor of philosophy at the University of St. Thomas, MN, and author of *The Irreducibility of the Human Person* and *Catholicism and the Problem of God*.

For students and scholars exploring the relationship between ancient philosophy and personalist thought, or seeking to understand how Platonic insights contribute to contemporary debates about human dignity and moral agency—this book opens new paths for research and teaching.



Course Adoption

- Philosophy of the Human Person
- Ancient / Contemporary Philosophy
- Phenomenology and Personalism
- Theological Anthropology

Related Titles

- Lloyd Gerson, *From Plato to Platonism*
- Eric Perl, *Thinking Being*
- Robert Spaemann, *Persons*
- John Rist, *What is a Person?*
- John F. Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person*

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