



Ryken, Philip and Michael LeFebvre.

Our Triune God: Living in the Love of the Three-In-One

Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011. Pp. 121. Paper. \$12.99. ISBN 9781433519871.

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

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Our Triune God: Living in the Love of the Three-In-One is a book best described as devotional in content and character. This isn't an introduction to the doctrine of the Trinity in the traditional sense (e.g., in the style of Olson & Hall's *The Trinity* or O'Collins' *The Tripersonal God*), nor is it a history of the doctrine's development amidst the intense debates of the third and fourth centuries, but rather it is "designed instead to help Christians grow in their personal relationship with God as triune." (16)

In the first chapter the authors focus their attention on "The Saving Trinity" through an examination of the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We're offered a Reformed interpretation of Ephesians 1 with talk of eternal decrees, predestination, unconditional election, and regeneration preceding faith, but the main point of the chapter is to say that the Father administers salvation while the Son accomplished it and the Spirit applies it. Salvation is a trinitarian work from beginning to end.

The second chapter addresses two questions/objections. The first is the alleged illogicality of the Trinity. The authors note that the problem isn't a logical one, but rather an analogical one. In other words, since God is unique we have nothing in creation that serves as a proper analogy to him, and this in turn can lead us into thinking that the Trinity is illogical when in fact it violates no laws of logic. The second question addressed is the consistency of NT trinitarian theology

with OT monotheism. The authors argue that the OT and intertestamental literature provide a picture of “differentiated oneness” (56, 60) while not going as far as the trinitarianism that could only occur after the incarnation of the Son and sending of the Spirit at Pentecost.

The third chapter addresses practical Christian living and the Trinity with an emphasis on Jesus’ upper room discourse in John 13-17. The authors make a good case for the Christian life as being a life lived in response to both the love and commands of the Trinity. I greatly appreciated this chapter because of the emphasis on response rather than imitation. It’s quite popular these days to suggest that the Trinity provides a model that we are to mirror in our personal relationships, ignoring the fact that we can never reflect the perichoretic relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. The authors do well to avoid this line of thinking. They only go so far as to suggest that being created in the image and likeness of God is to be created to be in relation to others.

The final chapter looks at the cooperation between the Father, Son, and Spirit through an examination of several passages in Luke’s Gospel, namely the episodes of Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration as well as his conversation with the disciples on the road to Emmaus and his promise of the gift of the Spirit. Some attention is also given to Jesus correcting the disciples who return from their first missionary trip rejoicing in the fact that they have power to cast out demons when they should be rejoicing that their names are written in heaven.

I can’t say whether or not *Our Triune God* accomplished its intended goal to help Christians grow in their personal relationship with God. Ultimately that’s a subjective enterprise and every reader will have to answer that for him or herself. The Trinity goes to the very fabric of my being a Christian. It’s something I intentionally and unintentionally think about all the time so reading this book didn’t cause any more reflection on my part, but it certainly didn’t cause any less. I think this slim volume will serve the general audience that it’s intended for. Non-Reformed readers might find themselves a bit off-put by the Reformed soteriology that’s prominent in the opening chapter but it’s easy to look past. Those looking for a quick and easy read about the Trinity will do well to read this volume.