



Benson, Clarence H.

The One True God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004. Pp. 128. Paper. \$12.99. ISBN 9781581345735.

Nick Norelli

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
New Jersey

The One True God is a tough book to review because of its content. It's not really a book that details the development of the doctrine of the Trinity through history, nor is it a book that delves into the different strains of Trinitarian theology. It doesn't offer much narrative at all. What it is, is an introductory study guide to the Biblical foundation for the doctrine of the Trinity.

Each of the 12 short chapters is about 10 pages in length and set forth certain propositions, the sum total of which is the doctrine of the Trinity. For instance, Benton begins by briefly summarizing (in my opinion much too simplistically) the various arguments for the existence of God (e.g., the cosmological, teleological, moral, ontological, and religious arguments) concluding that "[p]erhaps none of these arguments alone carries compelling proof, but together they testify forcibly to the reasonableness of Christian belief in a living God." (8) This is the only thing that doesn't follow the template that is seen throughout the rest of the book.

After this the book mainly follows a pattern of: proposition → scripture reference → 1-2 paragraph commentary → repeat until → review questions at the end of chapter. There's nothing out of the ordinary in this book. Benson does well to cite the relevant passages showing monotheism, the deity of the Father, the deity of the Son, the deity of the Spirit, and the personality of them all. He spends time citing scriptures concerning the preexistence of the Son as well as his sacrificial death, resurrection, and return.

This book is meant for a teacher to lead a Bible study with. Benson pulls together the various passages that can act as a starting point for further study and discussion without which I don't think the reader would come away with too great an understanding of the doctrine. The review questions at the end are helpful for memorization and there are also a couple of questions meant to make the reader reflect on how one might apply what they've just learned to life.

There's not a whole lot to criticize about this book but at the same time there isn't much to commend. With no footnotes, end notes, index, or bibliography *The One True God* comes in at 124 pages. I could recommend this book to those with no knowledge of the doctrine but anyone who has a grasp of the basic concepts of Trinitarianism would be wasting their time with this slim volume. I believe that Benson accomplished what he set out to do but in my mind his goals weren't all that ambitious.