

Summer 2006

Book Review: Father, Son, & Spirit

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Recommended Citation

Tarwater, John, "Book Review: Father, Son, & Spirit" (2006). *Business Administration Faculty Publications*. 139.
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Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance, by Bruce A. Ware. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005. Pp. 158.

Bruce Ware's *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* is both pleasurable and heartening. He was initially asked to present a series of lectures for a pastor's conference in March 2004 entitled "Beholding the Wonder of the Trinity." Ware, Senior Associate Dean and Professor of Christian Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, later refined his lectures into the present volume. Readers of his previous works, such as *God's Lesser Glory*, *God's Greater Glory*, and *Their God Is Too Small*, will find this work noticeably less confrontational, yet equally doxological.

Ware explores the biblical doctrine of the Trinity first, by broadly surveying Old and New Testament references to the doctrine, and secondly, by investigating more thoroughly each Person of the Trinity. In both, there is no lack of biblical analysis, evidenced by the large number of entries in the Scripture index. Nonetheless, Ware's use of the biblical text moves far beyond mere quotation to considering more fully the theological foundations upon which the doctrine of the Trinity rests. Consequently, Ware provides the conscientious reader a basis for answering a multiplicity of issues arising from the doctrine of the Trinity.

What makes this book especially enjoyable is Ware's ability to demonstrate the relevancy of this topic to everyday Christian living. From the opening chapter's nine reasons given for why the topic is important to the closing chapter's ten lessons for our lives resulting from the doctrine, Ware painstakingly explains the significance of doctrine of the Trinity for orthodox Christianity. For example, Ware shows how the Trinitarian relationship inherently expresses authority and submission, which as part of the Godhead are thus good. Later, Ware applies this truth to both the marriage relationship (roles and responsibilities for husbands and wives), as well as to the relationships between pastoral leaders and congregations. In addition to applying the doctrine to relationships, Ware discloses how the doctrine should inform the Christian's prayer life and worship. Indeed, Ware exposes a number of important areas related to the doctrine of the Trinity.

I highly recommend this book. Although primarily written for lay readers, the book's wide-ranging biblical analysis and incisive application for everyday living provides sufficient fodder for even the professionally trained. If for no other reason, this book deserves a spot on one's bookshelf for its ability to lead the reader into greater worship of the One God who has revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

John Tarwater