



# Books in Review

## CHRISTIANITY ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

by Ron Rhodes

Harvest House Publishers, 287 pages, \$12.99

Sometimes what we think we know about the Christian faith may not be so. Apologist Ron Rhodes asks whether his readers are “experiencing authentic Christianity or a cultural counterfeit?” And in his latest volume, *Christianity According to the Bible*, he tries to help them explore and correct their misunderstandings of a biblically based faith. The book is subtitled, “Separating Cultural Religion from Biblical Truth.” Rhodes says that the “truth of the matter is that America is very religious but biblically ignorant.”

While this book could be filed under “Systematic Theology,” one need not be frightened by that designation. Rhodes has a real ability to take what some see as difficult and unappealing, and make it clear, coherent, and palatable. That talent again comes across in this book.

In the Introduction, Rhodes writes, “the more research I do, the stronger my conviction becomes that today’s Christianity has become tainted — at least to some degree — by modern culture.” With that statement, Rhodes is off and running. He emphasizes that tainted beliefs will yield tainted Christians. (For example, he points out, “many Christians openly attend R-rated movies with nudity and divorces.”) That’s why it is so important for one to adhere to genuine biblical teaching.

The pieces of the Christian faith Rhodes sews together include the Bible and its interpretation, the nature and attributes of God, the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin and its consequences, the Church, angels, Satan, and more. Scripture warns believers to “rightly divide the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). If one doesn’t cut and assemble the theological pieces of the faith correctly, the result is distorted patchwork of Christianity.

This is a wonderful book for all — even unbelievers — to read and ponder. It is also an excellent volume from which any Sunday school or Bible study teacher could draw to develop a generous curriculum on the essential

tenets of the Christian faith. Each chapter concludes with a handful of “Discussion Questions.” The book is also enhanced with occasional subject diagrams.

The book’s back cover states, “Make sure your Christianity is shaping your culture — not the other way around.” In a day and age when that is a tragic and sundry reality, *Christianity According to the Bible* is a summons to biblical doctrine and practice.

—MKG

## WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE?

by David Swavely

P&R Publishing, 213 pages, \$13.99

One thing you have to say about David Swavely — he is an equal opportunity offender. In this excellent volume on judging others, Swavely manages to offend almost every one of his readers. His premise is simple: “The sin of judging is negatively evaluating someone’s conduct or spiritual state on the basis of nonbiblical standards or suspected motives” (pg. 8). With this definition most would probably agree — in principle. It is when this principle intersects our way of living that the trouble begins.

*Who Are You to Judge?* challenges our thinking in the areas of music, working mothers, birth control, gambling, alcohol consumption, demand feeding, frequency of the Lord’s Supper, home/Christian school vs. public school, fasting, movies, television, art, and even coffee drinking.

Swavely is not content with abstract principles. If he were, he would probably attract more fans, but then his work would be far less valuable. The author wants to apply these principles to life and here it gets sticky.

If Swavely doesn’t pull the rug out from under you on at least one of these, you would be the exception. And, according to the contents of this book, you would have escaped the error of legalism.

I like Dave Swavely, not just because he is bold (which he is), and not just because he writes clearly and understandably (which he does). I like him mostly because he is biblical. He takes every issue back to Scripture, examines it in the light of God’s Word, and refuses to go where God does not go.

—GEG

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