



Books in Review

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

by Ron Rhodes

Harvest House Publishers, 397 pages, \$13.99

Ron Rhodes has done it again with another handy — and valuable — reference work. His latest effort, *The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations*, will help readers better understand some of the more prominent denominations of the 300 or so in existence today. The religious terrain he covers includes Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, the Orthodox Church, and much more.

The book's chapters comprise 17 broad groupings or major headings of particular religious bodies. Then, within these general classifications, the reader is furnished with an overview of particular or specific denominations. For instance, the second chapter (the heftiest chapter in the book) covers "Baptist Churches" wherein Rhodes covers over a dozen different Baptist denominations. Be it Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, or any of the other religious families, each individual entry is supplied with relevant information as to when it was founded, membership, and congregations.

This volume is not intended to be an apologetic critique, but rather to furnish a history and doctrinal sketch of an individual denomination's teachings on the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin and salvation, church polity, sacraments, and eschatology. The data is easy to digest with each entry two to three pages in length. Additionally, at the end of each entry is a web site address for further information.

Rhodes' book is also full of other helpful information. Throughout the chapters are multiple interesting charts called "Fast Facts On ..." Included, for instance, are charts on Arminianism, Calvinism, Liberal vs. Conservative Christianity, Biblical Hymnology, Ministries of the Holy Spirit, Millennial Views, Famous Christian Creeds, and the Trinity, just to name a few. Of great help are the various indexes in the back of the book. They include an Index of Denominations, an Index of Persons, and a Chart Index of "Fast Facts On ..." Each provides quick retrieval of the helpful information. The extensive bibliography for those who might want to do additional research is also quite beneficial.

In addition to broadening one's knowledge of various prominent denominations, this book is full of nuggets of information and is well worth its price.

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GROWING BY GRACE

by Jay E. Adams

Timeless Texts, 96 pages, \$9.99

A distorted view of sanctification is not limited to cults and aberrational groups. The error of "higher life" and "holiness" teaching can be found within the Church. In his book, Jay Adams cuts through the myths and errors, stating that sanctification is the ongoing process a person goes through from the time he is saved until death. Understanding how this process takes place is just as important as the need for sanctification.

Adams explains that within the sanctification process there are three forces that work together to help achieve this goal. They are the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the regenerated saint. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to enable the believer to practice the commandments given. The process of sanctification is performed solely by God. And although the Holy Spirit does give us the power to follow God's instructions, we should not simply just sit around and wait for results. God has given us the intelligence and responsibility to do what He wants us to do.

Adams underscores this balance: "It is important, then, to develop from the Bible the doctrine of human responsibility for sanctification. But always make it clear that part of that responsibility is to call upon God for the wisdom and strength to obey" (pg. 38).

Adams does a great job of stating why we will never reach a point of perfection in this life. As Christians we need to learn that we are required to be a follower of Christ and not be Christ. If we try to be Jesus, we will never make it and will always fall short. It is a goal no one can achieve; a burden no one can bear. Subjective perfectionism always leads one down a path into pride, judgmentalism, and elitism.

Growing by Grace clearly and succinctly lays out the biblical view of sanctification for its readers. It is a work which also defines how sanctification and counseling go together and therefore can be used not only for self-edification, but to help others grow closer to the Lord.

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