

Biblical Authority: The Critical Issue for the Body of Christ by James T. Draper, Jr. and Kenneth Keathley
Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, 148 pp., paperback, \$12.99

This book is the result of the authors' concern that the authority of the Word of God is being compromised in today's culture, and especially in today's churches. They state that, "many professing Christians have slowly moved away from the historic position on the nature of the Bible....When one takes that tragic step the result is usually a loss of mission and evangelistic zeal; theological defection; undue emphasis upon the material and temporal with a corresponding loss of consciousness of the eternal; reliance upon mystical, personal experience instead of revealed truth; unjustified attachment to human reasoning – to name but a few spiritually destructive results." (p. 1-2) Draper and Keathley thoroughly examine three competing sources of authority, and in the process they confront the errors of such diverse issues as postmodernism, naturalism, the charismatic movement, biblical criticism, existential theology, the "seeker sensitive" church movement, Catholicism, feminism, subjectivism, and the "King James only" controversy.

This small volume provides an excellent summary of each branch of biblical criticism, as well as a brief overview of church history regarding the doctrine of biblical authority. It also examines what the Bible itself claims about its inspiration and authority. Because it is difficult to deal with the topic of biblical authority apart from the issues of biblical inspiration and inerrancy, the authors include a very helpful chapter on biblical inspiration. They also maintain that, "An inerrant Bible is an authoritative Bible. Just as the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture logically leads to belief in its authority, even so the doctrine of the authority of the Bible necessitates the confidence that the Scriptures are sufficient...to address every area of human existence." (p. 108)

Biblical Authority provides a brief yet comprehensive treatment of the doctrine of the Scriptures as it relates to the issues of modern culture. It would be an excellent book for use in a Bible college course, a church teaching ministry, or an advanced Sunday School class. Citations are documented in endnotes, but an index is not provided.

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