ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

RELIGION

The Battle for the Spirits of Mankind
Xlibris
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Three Stars (out of Five)

"In simple terms to live the Christian life is to follow Christ's example," V.W. Thomson writes. "This includes all the teachings of the New Testament, not adding or subtracting…" The author's summary of the Christian life is a good one.

The Battle for the Spirits of Mankind faithfully represents a traditional Christian view of most of the major doctrines of the Church. More specifically, it reflects the doctrinal stand of the Disciples of Christ denomination, including points about the cessation of miracles, allowing no women elders or deacons, and using no instrumental music in worship The book, which consists of Bible verses arranged by subject with minimal commentary, is half-way between a Bible study and compendium of New Testament doctrine. This is not an original idea, but it can be a useful one. The volume's usefulness is enhanced by a quiz at the end of each chapter, plus an appendix containing the answers to the quizzes and Scripture references used in each chapter. A checklist of what to look for in a church that "follows the Bible exactly" is also included. The checklist will probably turn up few churches besides Disciples of Christ congregations.

Thomson teaches that Christians are to use no creeds or catechisms, but despite his attempt to put this work beyond criticism, it could be viewed as just such a manmade aid. In the "Writer's Note," at the beginning of the book, Thomson writes, "The Author of this book is the Holy Spirit, since only the Bible is used." But he fails to acknowledge that he has commented, edited, rearranged, and selectively presented the material. That, along with the interpretive process that cannot be avoided in understanding the Bible, makes it clear that Thomson, not God, is the author of this book.

Subsections of each chapter are introduced with brief commentary. For example a section on salvation is introduced by, "The gospel plan of salvation includes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Christ was the sacrificial lamb, pure and sinless—Titus 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This section is completed by three more Biblical quotes.

The book could be used as an introduction to Christianity in general, but most Christians

will consider the narrow perspective to be a drawback. *The Battle for the Spirits of Mankind* will appeal mainly to Disciples of Christ.