

Neill, Stephen. *Jesus through Many Eyes: Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976. ix + 214 pp. Paperback, \$5.50.

The *raison d'être* that the author presents for this book is the need for an introduction to NT theology that students with limited biblical background and thoughtful lay people can use with the hope that from this beginning they would be encouraged to move to larger and more difficult works. For this reason, the author provides at the end of the book a bibliography for each chapter. The method that Neill follows in the book may appear complicated to the special audience for whom he is writing, but it is necessitated by his rejection "of two presuppositions—that every part of the New Testament is equally inspired, and that, for all the variety that exists in the different parts, they can all in the end be reduced to an undifferentiated harmony" (p. 2).

His is a combination of methods. He combines the different circles of response to the original event and certain groups of writing that have affinities. Thus after discussing "The Earliest Church," that group which is described in the earlier chapters of Acts, he takes "The Pauline Corpus" (excluding 2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, and the Pastorals), Mark and 1 Peter, "The Tradition of Israel: Matthew, James, Hebrews, Revelation," the Gentile world (Luke and Acts), the Fourth Gospel, and the rest of the NT (2 Peter, Jude, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus). The final chapter, picking up from the new quest, is Neill's own quest of the historical Jesus.

Neill stresses the shortness of the period from the time of Jesus to the time when the last book was written (before A.D. 96). He also challenges the assumption that the writers of the NT were not interested in history. While it is true that chronological details such as the year of the birth and death of Jesus are not provided, in a larger sense these writers were tremendously concerned with history. "The church never lost the sense of its origins, which were in a series of identifiable historical happenings" (p. 10). Another assumption he challenges is that we cannot get beyond the faith of the early disciples. The historian, he counters, is always moving beyond the evidences to the actual event. Though mathematical certainty is not possible, he can establish strong probability. If research on the origins of Buddhism can establish a credible picture of Gautama based on evidence written four centuries after his time, the same is more than possible for Jesus based on works written only twenty years after his death. Neill's parable of the tree and its shade forms a fitting conclusion to this section. Even if one can see only the shade of a tree, one must conclude that the tree itself is standing.

Neill sees the earliest church as more homogeneous than some who see real differences between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. He feels that too much has been made of the Gentile origins of the terms *Kyrios* and *mysterion* which can be explained on the basis of the OT. While the author is critical in his approach, his conclusions are relatively conservative in line with general British scholarship. Thus he writes at the end, "The task of the student today is frankly to recognize the differences within the unity, but also to consider how far we can recover the unity out of which all the differences have sprung" (p. 169).

Neill has written in his usual lucid style and has provided another useful book. It appeared to the reviewer, however, that the last chapter did not tie

in with the preceding chapters. It is a fitting chapter after a discussion of the problems of the historical quest, but it follows chapters on the different theologies of the NT. What I looked for was a synthesis of these earlier chapters. What Neill has given us is that which can be known about the historical Jesus or the source from which all the NT writings sprang. Perhaps the only synthesis is Jesus Christ; in that case, the chapter is too short to do justice to this theme itself and to its relationship to each of the preceding chapters. Some link appears to be missing.

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Richard, Lucien Joseph. *The Spirituality of John Calvin*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1974. [vi] + 207 pp. Paperback, \$5.00.

In the preceding issue of *AUSS*, pp. 51-56, I have already given fairly extensive attention to the publication here under review, specifically in relationship to the question of the *Devotio Moderna's* impact on John Calvin. Here I will give a broader overview of Richard's book and will deal primarily with aspects not touched upon in my earlier discussion.

In addition to Richard's "Introduction" (pp. 1-11), his volume consists of six main chapters: (1) "The *Devotio Moderna*" (pp. 12-47); (2) "The *Devotio Moderna* and the Spiritualities of the 16th Century: The Context of John Calvin's Spirituality" (pp. 48-77); (3) "*Devotio* and *Pietas*: A Linguistic Approach to John Calvin's Spirituality" (pp. 78-96); (4) "The Spirituality of John Calvin: Its Genesis, Dynamics and Content" (pp. 97-135); (5) "The Epistemological Relevance of the Word and the Spirit: Calvin's Contribution to a New Spirituality" (pp. 136-173); and (6) "Conclusion" (pp. 174-194). There is a Bibliography (pp. 195-203) and an Index (pp. 204-207).

It is well, first of all, to note Richard's own definition of "spirituality": By this term he means "the personal assimilation of the salvific mission of Christ by each Christian and this in the framework of new and ever evolving forms of Christian conduct. Spirituality means the forms that holiness takes in the concrete life of the believer" (p. 1).

In my earlier discussion I have already indicated pitfalls into which Richard has fallen in his treatment of the *Devotio Moderna*, dealt with mainly in his first two chapters. Here I would mention, first of all, that his chap. 3 provides a helpful analysis of the historical backgrounds for the terms *devotio* and *pietas*, traced from the early church through the Renaissance. When the external manifestations of religious activity that were included in the concept of *devotio* lost connection with the interior dimension, the word *devotio* "took a pejorative sense and was gradually replaced by the Renaissance authors with the word *pietas*" (p. 86).

In chaps. 4 and 5, Richard's attention to "Justification and Sanctification" and to the relationship of "the Word and the Spirit" in Calvin's thought is useful. The material presented will not be new to Calvin scholars, but the clarity and balance with which Richard presents it provide one of the strong features of his book. Also, he clearly and forcefully brings to attention the emphasis of Calvin on the Holy Spirit's work for the individual,