

norms of their contemporaries. The chapter on rituals assists readers in establishing an adequate scenario for assessing status changes and transformations by raising several unanswered questions. The chapter on ceremonies gives Luke's narrative of Jesus' meals and table fellowship as ideal ceremonies and suggests how they should be perceived. It also raises questions respecting the genders of those who ate with Jesus. Perhaps one might question whether, in light of Luke 8:1-8, which is not discussed, Jesus' table companions should be regarded as only men.

This significant work accomplishes what it sets out to do. The book raises questions, provides some answers, stimulates debate, challenges students and other readers to further investigation of controversial issues and themes. Furthermore, it has a good bibliography and reflects research and thought, even though one might not agree with all the conclusions.

Although the book purports to provide Western readers with a better understanding of the times of Luke, most of its comparisons are with American society: There are at least 72 references to America, Americans, and American society, while there are very few to Western society generally and none to any other country. Whether American society is viewed as synonymous with Western society or as illustrative of the latter, is not made clear. Again, while I applaud Vernon Robbins' conclusion that "Luke-Acts celebrates diversity and claims that God has 'cleansed' it" (332), and while it is refreshing to see his references to the ethnic variety in the Christian movement, it is disappointing that he employs standard groupings and is neither inclusive nor interpretative.

On the whole, I would recommend this volume as a reference work for undergraduate students and a text for graduate students. Biblical scholars and researchers will also find it provocative and helpful.

Columbia Union College  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

BERTRAM MELBOURNE

Rice, Richard. *Reason and the Contours of Faith*. Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press, 1991. 310 pp. \$14.95.

In his book, *Reason and the Contours of Faith*, Richard Rice argues for the importance of reason in every imaginable theological enterprise, with the repeated proviso that reason must not be thought to possess *intensive* persuasiveness despite its *extensive* applicability. To put it differently, reason speaks to faith at *every* point but does not compel faith at *any* point: "there is a positive relation between faith and reason, but...rational investigation cannot produce personal religious commitment" (preface, x). Thus, Rice conceives the relationship between faith and reason as lying midway between *fideism* (the radical independence of faith from reason) and *rationalism* (the radical dependence of faith upon reason).

The shape of Rice's discussion is predetermined by what he presupposes about faith, reason, and his audience. The first self-imposed parameter determines the structure of the entire book. Rice has chosen to examine the relationship of reason not only to the subjective experience of faith, from which standpoint the faith-reason problem is most frequently discussed, but also with a view to faith's objective sense, i.e., as pertains to the *contents* of religious belief. Parts II and III, therefore, examine how reason speaks to the *contents* and the *experience* of faith respectively.

Part II asks whether the contents of religious faith profit from the use of reason. Rice maintains that both specific Scriptures and the long history of theological reflection on the biblical text support the practice of rational reflection upon "private evidence" for faith, that is, upon special revelation. Likewise, reason can be properly applied to "public evidence" or general revelation. Not only does special revelation itself condone such activity; but, moreover, publicly accessible evidence actually corroborates revealed truths, making natural theology a profitable enterprise for all of Christian theology.

Part III appears to be the heart and soul of Rice's volume. In it he argues that rational inquiry serves a positive, though limited, role in our experience of faith. Since faith embraces the whole person, the mind as well as the will, it cannot be nonrational any more than it can be nonvolitional. Yet, because a person is more than a mind, faith must also be more than merely discursive reasoning. "To put it simply, faith is a *reasonable*, but not a *reasoned*, decision" (282).

The second parameter that predetermines the shape of Rice's solution is epistemological. Rice works hard to weaken the stranglehold that a foundational epistemology has had on religion ever since David Hume. By citing foundationalism with eight counts of inadequacy (46-62), Rice makes a strong case for asserting that we can be rationally entitled to beliefs which do not measure up to the "rational ideal"—beliefs for which the evidence is neither conclusive, beyond reasonable doubt, nor clearly preponderant (65).

Ironically, while Rice longs to be free from rationalistic foundationalism, he still finds its metaphors useful. Thus, he speaks of reason as that which "undergirds" and strengthens "foundations" for faith (256). Unfortunately, a foundation which can use strengthening conjures images of one which is crumbling. This was Hume's point in the first place—if there is no rock-solid foundation of self-evident truths, there is no foundation at all. To try to pass off "private evidence and . . . nonevidential factors" (65) as grounds for reasonable belief is to do nothing more than retreat into the radical subjectivism of Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, or into the expressivism of Braithwaite, against whom Rice argues (222-223).

It is not immediately clear why Rice does not completely discard foundationalism for a holistic epistemology (cf. Nancey Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning* [Cornell University Press, 1990]). In the

latter paradigm, beliefs form a mutually supportive web or network, rather than an edifice whose strength is derived entirely from its foundation. In a holistic model, reason serves to increase the coherence, consistency, and comprehensiveness of the network without becoming the warrant or ground of belief. To his credit, Rice gives brief mention of such an "organismic" epistemology in his defense of natural theology (198-199). But if he has broken with foundationalism, he has not done so cleanly enough to avoid lingering images of chips and cracks. However, perhaps the audience Rice has chosen to address precludes such a move.

The third parameter which constrains Rice involves his decision to write not to reasoning people who are reticent to believe, but to believing people who are reluctant to think. Rice's apparent objective is to encourage laypersons or beginning students to apply their minds to the whole of theology. To accommodate his readership Rice uses means of persuasion he feels most appropriate, such as appeals to common sense and the use of foundationalist metaphors. As a result, the shape of his book is predetermined by the lack of education Rice anticipates in his audience. Positively, Rice has provided a rich "inventory" (289) of positions surrounding the historic debate. Negatively, Rice feels that he must avoid technical argumentation for fear of losing the average layperson. At many points Rice is content to substitute explanation for demonstration.

For example, Rice states: "for the Christian faith to be a viable option for thinking people . . . its claims must make sense to them, and for its claims to be intelligible, they must have the support of public evidence" (197). This assertion is offered without defense, as if one's ability to comprehend its meaning makes its truth self-evident. Is it self-evident? George Lindbeck (*The Nature of Doctrine* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984]) has suggested that religious conversion is more like language acquisition than a thoughtful decision. Whether or not Lindbeck is correct, Rice runs the risk of losing credibility by not teasing out all the options.

A second example of the lack of logical rigor in *Reasons* is the overall circularity of the book. In chapter 1 Rice describes the character of biblical faith as volitional, receptive and, above all, concessive (16-28). By *concessive* he means that faith stretches beyond the evidence to retain confidence in the absence of proof. It is faith "in spite of." Although his explanation is straightforward and "common-sensical," it lacks the thorough exegetical demonstration and/or historical continuity required to make it the cornerstone of his argument in Part III. In chapter 8 Rice asserts that reason has a very limited contribution to the experience of faith, precisely because of faith's receptive, volitional, and concessive nature. What began as a foreshadowing of the book's argument in chapter 1 mysteriously has become a foregone conclusion by chapter 8.

Does Rice succeed in what he has set out to do? Those who hope to find a new paradigm for approaching the faith-reason problem will be disappointed. But those who understand the parameters that Rice has adopted will appreciate the book for what it is—a fair and well-balanced

introduction to the issues which enables the novice to plot a personal course through rough terrain.

San Bernardino, CA 92405

BRAD J. KALLENBERG

Stein, Robert H. *The Gospels and Tradition: Studies on Redaction Criticism of the Synoptic Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. 208 pp. \$10.95.

*Gospels and Tradition* by Robert H. Stein apparently attempts to introduce conservative Christians to the discipline of redaction criticism, complete with praise of the merits and warnings of the dangers involved in the methodology. Stein endeavors to play a mediating role between evangelical theology and critical biblical studies. His efforts, though worthy, are not always successful from the viewpoint of either party. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the book is limited by its being a collection of discrete elements rather than a continuous narrative.

The nine chapters in *Gospels and Tradition* are reprintings of various articles published by Stein between 1969 and 1983, combined with a paper read to the Evangelical Theological Society in 1982. The preface provides a bibliography of the original publication information for the chapters as found in the book. The introduction provides a brief report on the surge and decline of redaction critical studies, a statement of the central premise of the priority of Mark, and a warning concerning what redaction criticism can and cannot do. Stein defines redaction criticism as "the attempt to ascertain the unique theological purpose or purposes, views, and emphases that the Evangelists have imposed upon the materials available to them" (30).

The first chapter is a brief account of the rise of redaction criticism. It contains a short definition of the term and a description of how redaction criticism differs from form criticism.

Chapter 2 uses Luke 1:1-4 to illustrate three distinct *Sitze im Leben* visible within the Gospels. Stein identifies these "situations" as (1) the events themselves, (2) the oral handing on of these events, and (3) the recording of the oral traditions both in their initial forms (which Gospel writers like Luke himself used) and in their reuse in the Gospels as we know them. This recognition of the existence of different layers in the tradition is, indeed, foundational to redaction-critical study.

In chapter 3, Stein identifies and gives examples of recognized categories of Mark's redactional activities, which involve: (1) connectors between individual pericopes (story units); (2) insertions into the tradition; (3) composed summaries; (4) created pericopes; (5) modifications, selections, omissions, and arrangements of material; (6) composition of an introduction to the Gospel; (7) composition of a conclusion for the Gospel; (8) vocabulary; and (9) Christological titles.