

Chapter 6 surveys the fundamental *tasks* performed by leaders. In recognizing the primary objective of leaders as 'building up' the church, Clarke draws upon two Pauline church metaphors suggestive of their duties. First, the church is a 'body' with many parts and, although some parts are more honorable than others, none are dispensable. Paul's early leaders were therefore responsible for recognizing and honoring all members of the church, as well as encouraging them to contribute to corporate up-building. The second metaphor is the 'household'. As fathers of God's household, Paul's leaders provided paternal guidance characterized by love; yet as slaves, they served the church sacrificially. Clarke also casts leaders as teachers who were responsible for instructing the church.

Chapter 7 examines the essential *tools* Paul prescribed for leading churches. Clarke specifically highlights two: *rhetoric* and *imitation*. Despite Paul's criticisms of rhetoric, Clarke asserts that the apostle, who was fully competent in the art of persuasion, frequently applied rhetoric to elicit emotional responses in his audiences. Furthermore, Paul's imitation motif served as an important instrument to illustrate Christian living. Thus, leaders were expected to exemplify the faith personally as they in turn emulated the life of Christ.

Clarke's compilation of Pauline leadership principles is an excellent contribution in many ways. His awareness of significant tensions within both the Pauline literature and contemporary scholarship deeply informs his theological queries. Moreover, Clarke's expertise in NT social history surfaces throughout as he illuminates many details pertaining to the original context of Paul's letters. Finally, Clarke's analyses of concepts such as power, rhetoric, and imitation demonstrate his attentiveness to the inner workings of the apostle, which have previously been overlooked in shallower theologies. Clarke's treatment, however, is by no means exhaustive. Certainly, more could have been said concerning both the role of Scripture as the leader's primary tool for directing and protecting the church, and Paul's teaching on the relationship between Scripture and authority. Clarke's theses might have also been clearer had he differentiated more consistently between apostolic and non-apostolic leadership privileges and responsibilities. Nevertheless, Clarke has produced an erudite and thought-provoking volume which will be a tremendous resource for any scholar, pastor, or student interested in this topic.

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Jesus: A Question of Identity

J. L. Houlden

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SUMMARY

In this book, Leslie Houlden weaves together history, biblical studies, theology and apologetics in an effort to explore what we can know about Jesus. He does not shy away from some of the hard questions and tensions involved in such a quest, but with humility and a non-technical style invites us to engage seriously with the question of Jesus' identity both as a historical figure and as the object of faith.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Buch bringt Leslie Houlden Geschichtswissenschaft, Bibelwissenschaft, Theologie und Apologetik im Hinblick auf die Untersuchung dessen zusammen, was wir von Jesus wissen können. Er drückt sich nicht vor einigen der schwierigen Fragen und Spannungen, die so eine Suche beinhaltet. Mit Demut und in verständlicher Sprache lädt er uns ein, uns ernsthaft mit der Frage nach der Identität Jesu sowohl als historischer Figur als auch als Gegenstand des Glaubens zu befassen.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce livre, Leslie Houlden explore ce que nous pouvons savoir de Jésus à l'aide de diverses approches, historique, biblique, théologique et apologetique. Il ne recule pas devant certaines des questions difficiles et des tensions que peut rencontrer une telle quête, mais, avec humilité et sans adopter un style technique, il nous invite à considérer sérieusement la question de l'identité de Jésus à la fois comme une figure historique et comme l'objet de la foi.

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At a time when the print run of new books seems to expire almost while the ink is still drying on the copies as they first arrive on the shelf, any volume that is still being republished fourteen years after its initial appearance probably ought to deservedly attract our attention.

In this primer, which grew out of lectures given at King's College, University of London, J. Leslie Houlden, Emeritus Professor of Theology at King's College, cogently interweaves together history, biblical studies, theology and apologetics in an effort to explore what we can know about Jesus. While not shying away from some of the perennial 'problems' and tensions involved in such a quest, Houlden, with eloquence, humility and non-technical style, invites his readers to engage seriously with the question of Jesus' identity, not only as a Galilean carpenter's son, but as God's; as not merely the object of cool enquiry but as the subject and centre of living faith. He asks: 'What are we now to make of Jesus, both as a historical figure and as involved with belief?' (pp. 8-9).

Houlden is acutely aware that with the history of Jesus, both as recorded in the centuries following his

death, and its subsequent developments, we have to do with interpreted history. 'In this sense', he writes, 'theology takes precedence over history in the Christian story' (p. 11). 'The Gospels', he contends, 'are slanted. They were not written to answer our modern questions, about the order of events, causality and psychological awareness, but to commend faith' (pp. 42-3). That is why Houlden turns first to Paul, and then the Gospels, while properly steering clear of driving any wedge between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history. He is well aware throughout the essay that the modern 'quest for a neutral view of Jesus and of Christian origins, one fully and solely evidenced from "the facts" (for example, from the Jewish context of his life), is a chimera' (p. 124). He characterises the historians' task thus:

The historian's assessment has to steer a careful course: between seeing Jesus as so distinctive that he makes no sense in the context of his times and seeing him as so ordinary, so thoroughly part of his background, that the massive and speedy effects of his life become incomprehensible. Two extremes are unlikely: on the one hand, that our accounts of Jesus are wholly shaped by faith and that in reality he was nothing very remarkable; and on the other hand, that the accounts owe nothing to faith and that all happened and was said exactly as told. What is hard is to know at what point between the extremes truth lies. (pp. 53-4)

Tracing the story of Jesus – and the 'vast yet specific tradition' (p. 111) that pertains to him – as interpreted from the first century through to the early ecumenical councils, from Pliny and Ignatius of Antioch to Aberlard and Julian of Norwich, from John of the Cross and Aquinas to Schleiermacher and Schweitzer, from Reimarus and Strauss to Hengel and Sanders, from Kant, Tillich and Cupitt to Bonhoeffer, Barth and Moltmann, Houlden offers us a portrait of Jesus impressed with the wrestle marks of the Christian community.

But, as Houlden insists, no matter which of the many different postures about Jesus one adopts, in order to be 'meaningful', Jesus cannot be coolly and disengagedly observed from a distance: 'Jesus *must* be (at least) *my* saviour: in that sense subjectivity has to be part of the picture. We are concerned with a *religion*, at whose heart he stands, not in the first instance a theory, which must be consistent if it is to be satisfactory' (p. 113).

Houlden possesses a gift all too rare among Christian theologians and biblical scholars – the ability to harness the breadth of the Church's thinking regarding its Lord and communicate it in a way that is palatable, uncondescending and clear to a readership still finding its footing both inside and outside of the Church and the Academy. While some readers may wish to question some of Houlden's presuppositions regarding the dating of divine recognition among Jesus' first disciples, for example, and not all will follow all of Houlden's theological conclusions, nor perhaps even the route taken itself, his essay remains both informed and constructive, suitably identifies many of the important issues at stake, avoids most of the usual pitfalls, and provides us with some direction for how we might proceed. To this end, the volume includes – in addition to an index – a helpful list of suggestions for further reading linked with each chapter.

While Houlden's opusculum is intended for the enquiring lay person – both 'sceptics and enthusiastic believers' (p. 118) – who wishes to 'understand more about Jesus as a historical figure and as the object of devotion and faith' (p. vii), it will not fail to educate and inform those more conversant with the technical issues at stake not only in the life and ministry of Jesus but also how that life and ministry touches our life and that of our multi-faith world. A commendable contribution to an ever-growing library of Jesus studies.

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