

In this book Professor Stendahl, a leading Lutheran theologian, takes issue with the traditional Lutheran interpretation of St. Paul. We all "cannot help reading Paul through the experience of persons like Luther or Calvin. And this is the chief reason for most of our misunderstandings of Paul". (p. 12). Through the influence of Luther, we tend to read Paul as if his main question was: On what grounds, on what terms, are we to be saved? But in fact the main lines of Pauline interpretation "have for centuries been out of touch with one of the most basic of the questions and concerns that shaped Paul's thinking in the first place: the relation between Jews and Gentiles". (p. 1). The question is the relationship between two communities and their coexistence in the mysterious plan of God. Most of this book is a re-reading of St. Paul by Professor Stendahl in the light of such a view, and the first two essays "are partly an attempt to get at some of the roots of Christian anti-Semit-

ism". Upon the author's reading, Paul's argument about justification by faith neither grows out of his dissatisfaction with Judaism, nor is intended as a frontal attack on "legalism", and so cannot serve as a basis for theological anti-Judaism. This is a well-intentioned book; the Professor comes across as a most endearing personality.

It is not obvious from the title that other subjects are covered in the book. We find an edifying speech the author gave at an American civil rights meeting, another paper read to a conference on the charismatic movement, and at the end a rambling discussion of current literature. Overall, this is a thoughtful piece of work, and those interested in St. Paul would find it stimulating. Nonetheless for a larger discussion of the subject they would still be thrown back upon the standard works of Daube and others.

RICHARD JUDD

JESUS AHEAD, by Gerald Bessiere, Burns & Oates, London, 1976. 129 pp. £1.95

I suppose one must admit that this is a trendy book (though, pace the publishers, it is not self-evident that it emanates from "the reflective and charismatic movement"—whatever species of mongrel that may be!); it celebrates the God of the future, the God who can only really be loved in our fellow men, the God who elicits from us simple "primitive" Christian reactions, the God who is not interested in moral or religious distinctions. But even so, the author's at times brilliant imaginative recreation of biblical imagery and of our Lord's parables makes his book an original and valuable aid to meditation. It leads us, through the ways of paradox and poetry, to see that maybe we can, after all, face the adventure of life in our crazy world, our crazy church. "I love a man uncertain of his ends, Like a fruit tree in April," as he quotes from a modern French poet. We do not *have* to

know where we are going.

But the adventure into the unknown future, to which Bessiere calls us so convincingly, surely needs to be balanced by another adventure, one less trendy, but all the more necessary if we are to escape the tyranny, not just of the past, but also of the present—the adventure into the great and diverse tradition of the church, which is the normal way, after all, by which our taste is formed to distinguish the beckoning of the Holy Spirit from the allurements of the *Zeitgeist*, in the voices that summon us into the future.

I suspect that Bessiere is perhaps inclined to underestimate the capacity of orthodoxy to exhilarate.

The translation seems, on the whole, to be excellent.

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