

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

An Introduction to the New Testament: The Good News

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Philippine Studies vol. 13, no. 3 (1965): 750

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE GOOD NEWS: An Introduction to the Catholic Theology of the New Testament. By Quentin Quesnell, S.J. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1964. 224 pp.

Father Quesnell has written a book on the New Testament in popular style. The average reader who is interested in keeping up on the latest biblical scholarship will find this book most informative.

Father Quesnell divides his book into four main parts with an appended postscript on biblical theology. The first part deals with the main themes of the apostolic preaching in Acts. The second part treats of the principal doctrines in the letters of St. Paul and the other New Testament Epistles. The third part concentrates on the teachings of Jesus Himself. The fourth part concerns the handing on of these central ideas to later generations in and through the Church, Christ's Mystical Body. The postscript brings out the contribution which Biblical Theology can make for the dogmatic theologian.

In this outline, Father Quesnell groups together many basic biblical ideas under four general headings: 1) the death and resurrection of Jesus as the source of our salvation; 2) God's general plan for our redemption culminating in these two events; 3) Jesus' call for repentance, belief and baptism; and 4) the development of other ideas on suffering, love, endurance, the Church, new life and forgiveness of sin.

In accord with the modern trends in exegesis, Father Quesnell brings out the chief interests of the first-century Church. He compares texts and analyzes them in the background of the interest and practice of the earliest Christian community. Father Quesnell both draws on the latest work of biblical scholars and presents their findings in a non-technical and informative style.

Although the book makes no pretense to be an exhaustive study of the New Testament, the average Catholic reader will find much new information in reading Father Quesnell's book. He may even react like the two disciples of Emmaus: 'Was not our heart burning within us while he was... explaining to us the Scriptures?'

This book, I believe, will help the average Catholic formulate and appreciate more faithfully 'This Good News'. It may perhaps spur him on to further reading and to a more complete understanding of the central truths of the New Testament.