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Clarion Review

The Way: The Spiritual Journey The Path to Glory
Robert H. Johnston
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Four Stars (out of Five)

This scholarly look at the Christian journey is for readers who prefer to be persuaded by reason and logic rather than an overtly emotional appeal. Still one can sense the earnestness that underlies the author's calm approach.

The Way presents the author's take on what it means to follow the path of Christian faith. In contrast to many inspirational books out there the writer makes no attempt to tell readers how to live their lives with a number of steps or clever catchphrases. The book which includes footnotes is a measured view of topics like "Seeking the Greater Good" and "Overcoming Evil." The writer takes himself out of the equation with the exceptions of some references to the alienation he experienced in the workplace as a result of his beliefs.

Robert Johnston was born in 1924 and grew up in the church. He was educated at MIT and worked for many years as an engineer beginning in the 1940s. Johnston is an elder in the Presbyterian Church and now resides in a retirement home.

Readers may be surprised that despite the writer's age and traditional approach he outlines several beliefs that are at odds with mainstream theology. He de-emphasizes the concept of "religion" and advocates the acceptance of non-Christian religions. When discussing hell he does not describe a fiery afterlife but writes "A much more meaningful case can be made for the concept of Hell in not a place but rather a spiritual condition." And in the chapter "Christian Faith and the Life/Death Cycle" we find that he is not opposed to the possibility of reincarnation.

The book is well written and well edited. It is not for everyone but the writer stayed true to his purpose “to challenge and encourage readers to seek the Lord.” If there is any unevenness it is due to the fact that the author did not originally write this as a book but as separate articles one of which was previously published. Some chapters have a section with questions while other chapters do not and it does not have the standard format that some religious and inspirational books have. Even so there are efforts to connect different chapters and build on themes.

Jada Bradley