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**Special issue on the gospels**

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## Back Numbers

Each issue of *Themelios* can only contain a few articles; but there is a wealth of useful material in back issues. Information about the contents and availability of back issues may be obtained from RTSF, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GP, England.

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# Editorial:

## The good news of the gospels

What are scholars saying about the gospels these days? If you want to know the answer to that question, read on in this *Themelios*! We are privileged to have expert survey articles on the four gospels from four internationally known scholars.

Even given an expert guide or team of guides, gospel studies can seem very confusing, and the student faced with the bewildering variety of scholarly opinions and ideas may well be tempted to despair — either to despair of having any assurance about the gospels and about Jesus whom they portray, or despair of scholars and scholarship and so to ignore scholarly ideas and approaches when reading the gospels. Such despair is understandable, but not necessary nor desirable.

In particular it is not necessary or desirable to despair of knowing about Jesus through the gospels. The common-sense reading of the gospels as historical accounts of a historical person is one that scholars often scorn or simply ignore, but it is in fact a much sounder approach than the subtle semi-allegorical method of interpretation which characterizes much modern scholarship. Scholars regularly bypass the obvious surface meaning of the gospel texts and look for other more subtle levels of meaning — e.g. for what the text says about the church or the theology of the evangelist. The texts do indeed give us clues about the evangelists' ideas and situations — and there is value in noting these — but the main point of the gospels is to tell about Jesus of Nazareth. It is no wonder that scholarship which is blind to the primary purpose of the gospels and which concentrates on things that are secondary (and inevitably difficult to establish) is often very speculative, tending to confuse rather than clarify.

The fashionable 'non-historical' approach to the gospels is in part at least the legacy of the rationalism and scepticism that have been so strong an influence in Western biblical scholarship for the last two centuries: scholars have felt unable to believe the miracles of the gospels and so unable to take the gospels at face value. But the fashion deserves to be challenged. The gospels have every right to be considered as what they purport to be — historical accounts of Jesus' life; not, of course, accounts written by unbiased, trained historians — no historian, ancient or modern, is unbiased — but still accounts intended to inform us about historical events and written by intelligent, honest men.

It may be helpful briefly to summarize some of the reasons for viewing the gospels as historical and historically reliable.

(1) They claim to be historical themselves. This claim is explicit most notably in Luke's prologue, where he speaks of 'eyewitnesses' and having 'followed everything accurately' and of writing 'so that you may know the truth' (Lk. 1:1-4; note also the emphasis on eyewitnesses in Acts 1:21,22, and Jn. 19:35; 21:24). But the claim is implied in all the gospels; they are, *prima facie*, accounts of the life of Jesus in first-

century Palestine, and the onus of proof is on those who deny that this is what they are intended to be. It is extraordinary how some scholars can blandly say that 'there is no historical evidence' for this or that event described in the gospels, when the gospel narrative itself is such evidence (whether reliable or not).

(2) The gospels' claim to be writing historically about events in first-century Palestine is supported by a wealth of historical and archaeological evidence. Whether it is the Jewish historian Josephus and his descriptions of people like Herod the Great and Pontius Pilate, or whether it is the Dead Sea Scrolls and the insight that they give into the Judaism of Jesus' day, or whether it is archaeological finds (of a Galilean fishing boat, or of the Galilean city of Bethsaida), there is a growing volume of evidence which corroborates the gospels' picture of Jesus' life and ministry in first-century Palestine (not directly by referring to Jesus, but indirectly by the ways it fits in with the gospel story). For example, Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God and his references to himself as 'Son of man' make excellent sense in the context of first-century Palestine, but not in the context of the later Greek-speaking church. Despite the contrary assertions of critics, the gospels do not very strongly reflect the concerns and interests of the early church; but they are remarkably faithful accounts of Jesus' ministry — for example, recording honestly the failures and weaknesses of the disciples.

(3) The very fact that there are four different gospels, which are to some extent at least independent of each other but which give a very similar picture of Jesus and his ministry, is an indication of their historical reliability. It may be that Matthew and Luke knew Mark (as most recent scholars have supposed) and perhaps that John knew some or all of the synoptic gospels, but each of the evangelists had his own sources of information, and the same general picture of Jesus emerges in what scholars have called 'Markan', 'Q', 'M', 'L' and Johannine tradition. Furthermore, just as different witnesses in a courtroom may give significantly different and yet ultimately complementary accounts of the same event, so the gospel accounts can often be shown to fit together in striking ways. Even John's gospel, which is so often discounted by scholars as a historical source, helps make historical sense of Jesus' ministry (for example, in its description of Jesus' early ministry in Judea or in its reference to people trying to make Jesus king after the feeding of the 5,000 — see 3:22-4:3; 6:15). Paul too confirms the gospel stories, not very often it must be said, but still in significant ways (e.g. his summary of Jesus' teaching on divorce in 1 Cor. 7:10-11, echoing Mt. 19:6-9, and his reference to the risen Jesus appearing to Peter in 1 Cor. 15:5 confirming Lk. 24:34).

(4) Although it is remarkably difficult to date the gospels, most scholars agree that the gospels were all written prior to AD 100, *i.e.* within or almost within the lifetime of eye-

witnesses of Jesus. A significant minority of scholars considers that Mark's gospel could have been written as early as the '40s. In any case the gospels are not folk tales that evolved via a long and unreliable process of transmission. Of course, the human memory can forget and distort things in a relatively short period of time. But (a) the gospel stories were not preserved by people trying to think back over decades about events that had almost been forgotten; the stories and sayings of Jesus were preserved as a living tradition in the teaching and preaching of the church, as is evident from Paul's references to Jesus' teaching. The stories and sayings which we find in our gospels were well-known at a very early date, when friendly and unfriendly eyewitnesses were around who could confirm and contradict the stories (*cf.* 1 Cor. 15:6). (b) We need to be aware of the importance and power of memorization in the ancient world, and we must not ascribe our inability to memorize accurately to the contemporaries of Jesus and to the evangelists. There is a good case for believing that there was a strong oral tradition in the early church, and that the stories of Jesus were deliberately and carefully preserved and transmitted.

(5) The traditional ascription of the gospels to Matthew, Mark (associate of Peter), Luke and John, although discounted by many scholars, deserves to be taken quite seriously. It is too easily accepted (a) that the gospels were written anonymously by authors unknown — who were these people who undertook this important task? Surely individuals of some significance, whose names might have been remembered — and/or that their original authorship was forgotten; (b) that people in the early church came to ascribe the gospels to apostolic figures who had no real connection with them — in fact Mark and Luke were not apostles, of

course, and so it is not obvious why anyone should have ascribed gospels to them — and (c) that these mis-ascriptions came to be accepted in the early Christian church. The case for connecting the gospels in some way at least with their traditional authors is much stronger than is often supposed.

The question of the gospels and history is, of course, a complex one. There are historical difficulties in the gospels, and we have only given a simplified summary of the case for seeing the gospels as reliable. (For a much fuller and excellent discussion see Craig Blomberg's *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, IVP, 1987.) But the cumulative weight of the sort of considerations we have noted is such that we need not despair of the historical value of the gospels. On the contrary, although there are all sorts of unresolved issues of gospel interpretation that scholars can profitably seek to clarify, the only satisfactory explanation of the remarkable story that the gospels tell is that the historical Jesus was indeed the remarkable and wonderful person the gospels describe. The evangelists believed they were writing about momentarily important history, and wanted to share the good news with others. We today may and should share their excitement about the good news of the gospels.

#### Reviews editor

We are very grateful to Mr Tony Lane for all he has done as British reviews editor of *Themelios*. As he is going to be on sabbatical this coming year at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, he is handing over responsibility (as from April) to Mr David Deboys, the librarian of Tyndale House in Cambridge, whom we welcome warmly. Being reviews editor is one of the more onerous, but also one of the most important, tasks in the life of *Themelios*, and we appreciate our editors' work.

# Matthew's gospel in recent study

Dick France

*Dr France is the newly appointed principal of Wycliffe Hall in Oxford and the author of the Tyndale commentary on Matthew. We are grateful to him for this foretaste of his forthcoming book on Matthew studies (see below) and to all the contributors to this gospels edition of Themelios.*

An excellent sixty-page survey of the study of Matthew since the Second World War up to 1980 has been compiled by Graham Stanton,<sup>1</sup> and as this should be available in most theological libraries there is no need for me to cover the same ground here. My own *Matthew, Evangelist and Teacher*, forthcoming from Paternoster/Zondervan, will soon offer another, fuller, discussion. So this article can concentrate on some main trends and issues, without listing every relevant book and article of recent decades.

## Synoptic questions

When I was a student we had no doubt that the synoptic problem was solved in all essentials, and that 'Matthew used Mark and Q'. Most of us neither knew nor cared that this was a very recent idea, and that the priority of Matthew had been the almost universal assumption of the church until the mid-nineteenth century. Like all 'pre-critical' theories, it could safely be relegated to the theological museum, and no one took seriously the few Catholic scholars who had attempted to resurrect the 'Augustinian' view of synoptic relationships.<sup>2</sup>

Today the situation has changed. The Augustinian view has won few adherents, but in its place a vigorous resuscitation of the 'Griesbach Hypothesis', spearheaded by W. R. Farmer, has won a significant number of supporters.<sup>3</sup> On this view Matthew came first, and Mark is a deliberate conflation and 'reduction' (if such a term can be used for a gospel which in parallel narratives is typically at least twice as long as Matthew!) of material from the other two synoptic gospels. This is not the place to chronicle the revival of Griesbach's eighteenth-century theory,<sup>4</sup> but it is obvious that if a significant number of scholars cease to believe that 'Matthew used Mark' the effect on Matthean studies will be enormous. This is particularly true of redaction-critical studies, which have typically assumed, and based their results squarely on, the priority of Mark. There have not so far been many significant attempts at redaction criticism on the basis of the priority of Matthew, but C. S. Mann's *Anchor Bible* commentary on Mark (1986) points the way, and the determination of the Griesbach lobby is such that we must expect to see others.

Of course you do not need to be a convinced Griesbachian (or even Augustinian) to have qualms about saying that 'Matthew used Mark'. Many others have come to feel that the simple linear dependence of traditional synoptic theories is too mechanical to be true. The 'awkward' data of the actual literary relationships between the finished gospels which

have always kept synoptic specialists busy, and some of which have proved suitable ammunition for the Griesbachians (though others are as powerfully deployed against them!), perhaps suggest that no such tidy theory is likely to correspond to the way books were actually written in the experimental atmosphere of early Christianity. While to speak simply of 'the independence of Matthew and Mark'<sup>5</sup> may be too radical, there is a lot to be said for the recognition of a more 'living' process of interaction between strands of gospel tradition, written and oral, lying behind the completion of the gospels as we know them, which casts doubt on any simple assumption of the 'priority' of one gospel to another.<sup>6</sup>

So while some redaction-critical studies continue to comb through every minute 'alteration of Mark by Matthew' and discuss what made him do it, others now prefer to study the character of the gospel as it stands (using comparison with the other gospels as one means to this end) without assuming that Matthew had the text of Mark in front of him at all times. This change of synoptic perspective has appropriately coincided with the rise of 'narrative criticism', which approaches each gospel as an independent text with a character and message of its own, rather than primarily as one element in a network of literary relationships.<sup>7</sup> We may expect the next few years to see a developing (and, I hope, creative) tension between these two approaches to the gospels.

## Who and when?

While most scholars continue to assume that the gospel was written some time after AD 80, and that its attribution to Matthew is at best a pious guess, both points continue to be contested by a minority.

The most stimulating recent protest against the consensus view is in the 'Higher-Critical Conclusions' to Gundry's commentary,<sup>8</sup> which offer a date before AD 63 and the apostle Matthew as the author. Gundry's arguments include a controversial reassessment of Eusebius' famous quotation from Papias — controversial both in that he proposes to date Papias a generation earlier than has been normal (and thus make him a direct disciple of the original apostles), and also in that he adopts Kürzinger's translation of Papias' *Hebraidi dialecto* as 'in a Hebrew style' and thus understands him to be speaking of the *Greek Gospel of Matthew*. But even if his reinterpretation of the Papias tradition is debatable, Gundry offers other arguments derived from the text itself which deserve to be taken seriously as pointing to a period before the Jewish War.

The *Anchor Bible* commentary on Matthew by Albright and Mann (1971) also contains an unusually confident, if idiosyncratic, argument on internal grounds for the apostle Matthew-Levi as the author. And of course no one disputes the unanimity of the patristic tradition after Papias for apostolic authorship. But second-century and later traditions

and irreversible, so that there was no further point in evangelism among Jews — God had rejected Israel.<sup>32</sup> This negative attitude to Israel comes into sharpest focus in the statement that ‘the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation which produces its fruits’ (21:43), and in the embarrassing contrast of 27:24-25 between the declared innocence of Pilate and the eager acceptance by ‘all the people’ of the responsibility for the death of Jesus. It is further underlined by the strong stress on judgment which runs through the book, particularly judgment on Jerusalem, on the temple, and on ‘this generation’, in whom all Israel’s past rebellion has come to its climax (23:29-39).<sup>33</sup> It is this sort of language which underlies the proposals mentioned earlier to regard Matthew as in its final form an anti-Jewish manifesto by a Gentile Christian writer.

Two factors, however, must not be overlooked in evaluating these negative elements in Matthew’s attitude to Israel. One is the sustained contrast which the gospel draws between the leaders of Israel and the people as a whole. The leaders (who up to chapter 23 are most frequently characterized as scribes and/or Pharisees,<sup>34</sup> while the ‘chief priests and elders’ come to the centre of the stage for the passion narrative) are presented as almost uniformly hostile to Jesus and intent on destroying him. It is to them specifically that most of the threats of judgment (particularly in the three polemical parables of 21:28-22:14) are addressed. The ‘crowds’, by contrast, are represented as still open to persuasion, impressed by Jesus’ authority and enjoying his verbal victories over his opponents, so that when Jesus launches into his diatribe against the scribes and Pharisees in chapter 23 it is addressed over their heads to the crowds who are warned against following their lead.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, it must be noted that the judgment pronounced against the Jewish leadership seems at times to involve a larger community (‘another nation’, 21:43; ‘their city’, 22:7); it is Jerusalem and its temple that is to be destroyed, not just its leadership replaced (23:37-24:2). And by the time the leaders’ rejection of Jesus reaches its climax they have the crowds on their side as well (26:55; 27:15-23) so that ultimately ‘all the people’ accept their responsibility for his death (27:25).<sup>36</sup>

The other factor is, once again, the idea of ‘fulfilment’. If it is right in one sense to speak of the failure and rejection of ‘Israel’ in Matthew’s perspective, this does not entail that God has changed his mind about having ‘a people’, but only that that people are no longer to be identified in racial, still less political, terms. An important strand in Matthew’s ‘typological’ allusions to the OT is the conception of Jesus as himself the ‘fulfilment’ of Israel, the one in whom the national ideal reaches its full embodiment, and of the disciples of Jesus as thus taking over the role of Israel as the people of God. As ‘many from east and west’ (8:11-12) thus find their way into the people of God through faith in Jesus, this church drawn from all nations comes to be seen as itself the true Israel, the *ekklesia* of Jesus (16:18). It is, to use Dodd’s phrase, ‘not a matter of replacement but of resurrection’.<sup>37</sup>

The suggestion that only a Gentile author could have espoused such a theology of the people of God was interestingly called in question in a short article by Graham Stanton in which he showed how the same theology is further developed in the second-century 5 Ezra, a clearly Jewish-

Christian work which nonetheless pictures the church as a ‘people soon to come’ which will inherit the privileges which Israel lost by disobedience. Yet this new community, like its predecessor, looks to Jerusalem as its ‘mother’. Here we see Matthew’s careful balance of continuity and discontinuity maintained by his Jewish-Christian successors.<sup>38</sup>

### Matthew’s church

Matthew’s has traditionally been seen as an especially ‘ecclesiastical’ gospel, not only on the (remarkably flimsy) grounds that it, unlike the other gospels, twice includes the word *ekklesia*, but also because chapter 18 in particular has been seen as a sort of ‘manual of discipline’ designed for the use of church leaders.<sup>39</sup> A thorough study of chapter 18 by W. G. Thompson<sup>40</sup> has, however, questioned this view of its function, pointing out its lack of reference to any leadership structure, and its focus on pastoral concern rather than on formal ‘church discipline’.

The lack of reference to church offices has been emphasized by E. Schweizer, whose portrait of ‘Matthew’s Church’<sup>41</sup> offers a stimulating alternative to the traditional ‘ecclesiastical’ image; he pictures a church in which prophets, wise men and scribes have an important role, but do not occupy exclusive office, where all disciples recognize one another as ‘little ones’, and where any move towards a formally constituted leadership is resisted. If Schweizer’s picture is overdrawn, it nevertheless seems closer to the atmosphere of Matthew 18 than do those who read into Matthew’s ‘ecclesial’ language an anachronistic scenario of formal ecclesiastical organization.

It has been generally recognized, however, that Matthew writes as a pastor/teacher in his church, with an eye to the relevance of his material to the life and thinking of a typical first-century congregation.<sup>42</sup> The organization of his teaching material into extended ‘discourses’ with coherent themes points to such a purpose, and the repeated emphasis on the nature of the church as a *corpus mixtum* seems to reflect the unsettling experience of division within the professing Christian group.<sup>43</sup> It has been argued by some that Matthew is better characterized as a pastor than as a theologian.<sup>44</sup>

### Christology

Among the various christological titles used in Matthew, two have been the subject of interesting recent discussion.

‘Son of David’ is clearly of special importance for Matthew’s presentation of Jesus as Messiah, but attention to the contexts in which it occurs indicates a particular connection with his healing ministry. While this could be purely coincidental (in that it tends to be used by ‘outsiders’ approaching Jesus, and such approaches are often in connection with a request for healing), the suggestion has been made that a healing Son of David formed part of Jewish messianic hope, perhaps modelled on the reputation of Solomon in later Jewish tradition as a healer and exorcist.<sup>45</sup> But it is more probable that Matthew associates the title ‘Son of David’ with Jesus’ ministry of healing and compassion in order to distance Jesus from the more triumphalistic aspects of popular messianic expectation, since it has been pointed out that the title is used of him predominantly by those of no standing in Jewish society — the blind, the lame, the dumb, and even the Gentile mother of a possessed girl.<sup>46</sup>

J. D. Kingsbury has become well known for his reiterated emphasis on the central importance of 'Son of God' for Matthew's (and Mark's) christology,<sup>47</sup> a point with which few would disagree, though not so many have been convinced by his desire to find the title present by implication where Matthew actually uses other titles for Jesus (as 'surrogates', so Kingsbury).<sup>48</sup> A stimulating recent article by D. J. Verspeut<sup>49</sup> offers a more restricted understanding of Matthew's use of the term than Kingsbury envisages, designed to focus attention on Jesus' filial relationship with God (rather than his ontological status) and the obedient, gentle, suffering ministry in which this resulted, in deliberate contrast to 'the imperial triumphal traits of Jewish Davidic expectation'; the term therefore represents a calculated challenge to popular 'Son of David' messianism. This is an important article, but it is not the last word on the subject, and it is to be hoped that subsequent discussion will do fuller justice to the 'ontological' implications of Matthew's 'Son of God' language, especially in the light of his deliberate presentation of the virgin conception of Jesus in chapter 1, and of his extension of the role of 'the Son' beyond Jesus' earthly ministry, culminating in the trinitarian formula of 28:19.

Two other christological themes have been usefully opened up. B. Gerhardsson has shown the importance for Matthew of the Isaianic figure of the Servant (the subject of two of his formula-quotations) as the basis of a motif of service running through the whole gospel, and culminating in Jesus' obedient self-giving as a ransom for many.<sup>50</sup> And while M. J. Suggs has not convinced many in his attempt to elevate the theme of Wisdom to a central place in Matthew's christology,<sup>51</sup> he has successfully drawn attention to Matthew's careful adaptation of the tradition of a few of Jesus' sayings in order to present Jesus as not merely Wisdom's messenger but himself the presence of the divine Wisdom among men.<sup>52</sup>

But Matthew's Jesus is not to be confined within ready-made models and titles, however exalted. Running through the gospel is a perception of Jesus as breaking through existing categories. It is seen in his authority,<sup>53</sup> particularly as displayed in his miracles.<sup>54</sup> In this authority men are confronted with the presence of God in a new way, and are forced to ask, 'Who is this?' And Matthew has made his answer clear from the start, in the phrase 'God with us' (1:23), an idea which is progressively filled out until it culminates in the final declaration of the risen Jesus, 'I am with you always' (28:20).<sup>55</sup>

Most recent interpreters agree in finding in the final scene in the hills of Galilee (28:16-20) the culmination of and the key to the gospel's christology.<sup>56</sup> There the vision of 'the enthronement of the Son of Man' drawn from Daniel 7:13-14 reaches its triumphant fulfilment in the universal authority of the risen Lord, who can now be included (as 'the Son') together with the Father and the Holy Spirit as the object of allegiance for disciples from all nations.<sup>57</sup>

London: SPCK, 1983), for a collection of some significant essays on Matthew from 1928 to 1974.

<sup>2</sup> J. Chapman, *Matthew, Mark and Luke* (London: Longmans, 1937); B. C. Butler, *The Originality of St. Matthew* (Cambridge: UP, 1951).

<sup>3</sup> W. R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem* (Dillsboro: Western North Carolina Press, 1976), and other articles; J. B. Orchard, *Matthew, Luke and Mark* (Manchester: Koinonia, 1976); and many others. An important weapon used against the 'post-Streeter consensus' has been H.-H. Stoldt, *History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis* (ET Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980).

<sup>4</sup> See C. M. Tuckett, *The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis* (Cambridge: UP, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> J. M. Rist, *On the Independence of Matthew and Mark* (Cambridge: UP, 1978). Rist does, of course, recognize common tradition, both oral and written, but denies that either gospel is based on the other.

<sup>6</sup> E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: UP, 1969), pointed this way. The approach is more fully developed in J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976), pp. 92-117.

<sup>7</sup> For 'narrative-critical' studies of Matthew see e.g. R. A. Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), and his articles in *JSNT* 21 (1984), pp. 3-36, and *JSNT* 25 (1985), pp. 61-81.

<sup>8</sup> R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: a Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 599-622.

<sup>9</sup> M. Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (ET London: SCM, 1985), pp. 64-84.

<sup>10</sup> N. B. Stonehouse, *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), pp. 46-47.

<sup>11</sup> The opposing sides are conveniently surveyed in J. P. Meier, *Law and History In Matthew's Gospel* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), pp. 9-13, and by Stanton in 'Origin' (see n. 1), pp. 1911-1916.

<sup>12</sup> See R. Kimelman in E. P. Sanders *et al.* (ed.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* vol. 2 (London: SCM, 1981), pp. 226-244.

<sup>13</sup> *JBL* 66 (1947), pp. 165-172.

<sup>14</sup> Notably P. Nepper-Christensen, *Das Matthäusevangelium: ein judenchristliches Evangelium?* (Aarhus, 1958); G. Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), pp. 15-35. Also R. Walker, E. L. Abel, S. Van Tilborg, W. Pesch, L. Gaston, J. P. Meier and perhaps, with caution, W. Trilling.

<sup>15</sup> M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lecture in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974), pp. 21-24, deals trenchantly with Strecker's arguments. On the specific question of Matthew's alleged ignorance about Sadducees, see D. A. Carson, *JETS* 25 (1982), pp. 161-174.

<sup>16</sup> Major studies include K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew* (Uppsala, 1954); R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); W. Rothfuchs, *Die Erfüllungszitate des Matthäus-Evangeliums* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969); G. M. Soares Prabhu, *The Formula-Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976).

<sup>17</sup> Stendahl's proposal of a 'school' rather than an individual as the source of the material has been quietly set aside with the rise of redaction-criticism and its focus on individual authorship.

<sup>18</sup> I have attempted to trace some of these hermeneutical patterns in the four formula-quotations of Matthew 2 in *NTS* 27 (1980/81), pp. 233-251.

<sup>19</sup> Gundry, *Use*, pp. 172-174; cf. Soares Prabhu, *Formula-Quotations*, pp. 73-77.

<sup>20</sup> An interestingly moderate and sympathetic presentation of this charge is by C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: UP, 1977), pp. 127-134. Moule distinguishes more sharply than I would wish to do between the (unacceptable) exegetical technique and the (acceptable) theology which gives rise to it.

<sup>21</sup> See L. Morris in *Gospel Perspectives* 3 (see n. 23), pp. 129-156.

<sup>22</sup> Gundry, *Matthew, a Commentary*, pp. 623-640 ('A Theological Postscript').

<sup>23</sup> R. T. France and D. Wenham (eds.), *Gospel Perspectives* 3 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1983).

<sup>24</sup> An important corrective to Goulder's approach from the point of view of Jewish studies is P. Alexander's paper 'Midrash and the

<sup>1</sup> G. N. Stanton, 'The Origin and Purpose of Matthew's Gospel: Matthean Scholarship from 1945 to 1980', in H. Temporini and W. Haase (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. II Principat* vol. 25, part 3 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1985), pp. 1889-1951. See also G. N. Stanton (ed.), *The Interpretation of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress/

Gospels', in C. M. Tuckett (ed.), *Synoptic Studies* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), pp. 1-18.

<sup>25</sup> H. Frankemölle, *Jahwe-Bund und Kirche Christi* (Münster: Aschendorf, 1984), pp. 382-394; T. L. Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain: a Study in Matthean Theology* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), pp. 204-205.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. E. P. Blair, *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960), pp. 124-137. Donaldson's focus on a different OT mountain leads him to play down this theme (as had W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 25-93); see D. C. Allison, *ExpT* 98 (1986/7), pp. 203-205, for a recent response to Donaldson.

<sup>27</sup> R. H. Gundry, *Use*, pp. 2-5, drew attention to the importance of the allusive references over against Stendahl's concentration on direct quotations.

<sup>28</sup> This interpretation of Matthew as 'conservative' with regard to the observance of the law is most recently defended by R. Mohrlang, *Matthew and Paul* (Cambridge: UP, 1984), pp. 7-26, 42-47.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew's concern with antinomianism was stressed especially by G. Barth in G. Bornkamm, G. Barth & H. J. Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (ET London: SCM, 1963), esp. pp. 159-164; cf. J. Zumstein, *La Condition du Croyant dans l'Evangile selon Matthieu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), pp. 199-200.

<sup>30</sup> R. J. Banks, *JBL* 93 (1974), pp. 226-242; *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: UP, 1975), pp. 182-235. Substantially the same interpretation is supported e.g. by Meier, *Law*, pp. 41-124, 160-161; R. A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Waco: Word, 1982), pp. 134-174; D. J. Moo, *JSNT* 20 (1984), pp. 3-49 (in the course of a more wide-ranging and significant survey of Jesus and the law), and by the commentaries of Carson and myself.

<sup>31</sup> For this interpretation cf. Banks, *Jesus*, pp. 175-180. On chapter 23 as a whole see the excellent study of D. E. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23* (Leiden: Brill, 1979).

<sup>32</sup> So especially D. R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (Cambridge: UP, 1967). A specific application of this understanding of Matthew was in the proposal of Hare and D. J. Harrington (*CBQ* 37 [1975], pp. 359-369) that *panta ta ethne* in 28:19 should be translated 'all the Gentiles', thus excluding the Jews from the Great Commission; in response see J. P. Meier, *CBQ* 39 (1977), pp. 94-102.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew's emphasis on judgment is exhaustively studied by D. Marguerat, *Le Jugement dans l'Evangile de Matthieu* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1981).

<sup>34</sup> For Matthew's particularly hostile presentation of the Pharisees see G. Strecker, *Weg*, pp. 137-143; D. R. A. Hare, *Persecution*, pp. 80-96.

<sup>35</sup> For this more favourable attitude to the crowds see S. Van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 142-165; P. S. Minear, *ATR Supp.* 3 (1974), pp. 28-44.

<sup>36</sup> There is a sensitive discussion of this issue by S. Légasse, 'L' "antijudaïsme" dans l'Evangile selon Matthieu', in M. Didier (ed.), *L'Evangile selon Matthieu* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1972), pp. 417-428. Cf. also Garland, *Intention*, pp. 39-41, 213f.

<sup>37</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (London: Collins, 1970), p. 90.

<sup>38</sup> G. N. Stanton, '5 Ezra and Matthean Christianity in the Second Century', in *JTS* 28 (1977), pp. 67-83.

<sup>39</sup> The attempt of Stendahl, *School*, to read Matthew in the light of the Qumran texts played a part in promoting this view. The term *Gemeindeordnung* was applied to Mt. 18 especially by G. Bornkamm

in his 1956 essay on 'End-expectation and Church in Matthew' (Bornkamm, Barth & Held, *Tradition*, pp. 15-51), and the theme of disciplinary authority in his 'The Authority to "Bind" and "Loose" in the Church in Matthew's Gospel' (in Stanton, *Interpretation*, pp. 85-97).

<sup>40</sup> W. G. Thompson, *Matthew's Advice to a Divided Community: Mt. 17:22-18:35* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970).

<sup>41</sup> E. Schweizer, 'Matthew's Church', in Stanton, *Interpretation*, pp. 129-155, an extract from a collection of essays entitled *Matthäus und seine Gemeinde* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1974); cf. *NTS* 16 (1969/70), pp. 213-230.

<sup>42</sup> P. S. Minear, *Matthew: the Teacher's Gospel* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1982), sees Matthew as a teacher writing for teachers in the congregation.

<sup>43</sup> This emphasis of the gospel is noted by Bornkamm in the 1956 essay referred to in n. 39 above, and is discussed e.g. by Zumstein, *Condition*, pp. 381-385; Marguerat, *Jugement*, pp. 424-447.

<sup>44</sup> W. Pesch, *Matthäus, der Seelsorger* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1966); R. Thysman, *Communauté et directives éthiques: la catéchèse de Matthieu* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1974).

<sup>45</sup> C. Burger, *Jesus als Davidssohn* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970); B. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 158-215. The Solomonic connection has been explored further by D. C. Duling, *HTR* 68 (1975), pp. 235-252; *NTS* 24 (1977/8), pp. 392-410.

<sup>46</sup> J. M. Gibbs, *NTS* 10 (1964/5), pp. 446-464; J. D. Kingsbury, *JBL* 95 (1976), pp. 591-602; W. R. G. Loader, *CBQ* 44 (1982), pp. 570-585.

<sup>47</sup> J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 40-127; *JSNT* 21 (1984), pp. 3-36.

<sup>48</sup> See e.g. D. Hill, *JSNT* 6 (1980), pp. 2-16.

<sup>49</sup> D. J. Versepunt, 'The Role and Meaning of the "Son of God" Title in Matthew's Gospel', *NTS* 33 (1987), pp. 532-556.

<sup>50</sup> B. Gerhardsson, *ST* 27 (1973), pp. 73-106; and in R. J. Banks (ed.), *Reconciliation and Hope* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1974), pp. 25-35.

<sup>51</sup> M. J. Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology and Law in Matthew's Gospel* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1970); critical review by M. D. Johnson, *CBQ* 36 (1974), pp. 44-64.

<sup>52</sup> E.g. J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (London: SCM, 1980), pp. 197-206. For a full study of the Wisdom motif in Mt. 11:25-30 (the most significant instance) see C. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987).

<sup>53</sup> See esp. Blair, *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew*.

<sup>54</sup> See the fine study by B. Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts of Jesus according to Matthew* (Lund: Gleerup, 1979).

<sup>55</sup> See Frankemölle, *Jahwe-Bund*, pp. 7-83, for the 'being with theme'.

<sup>56</sup> O. Michel's famous essay (in Stanton, *Interpretation*, pp. 30-41) was followed e.g. by W. Trilling, *Das wahre Israel* (München: Kösel, 1964), pp. 21-51; G. Bornkamm in J. M. Robinson (ed.), *The Future of our Religious Past* (London: SCM, 1971), pp. 203-229; J. P. Meier, *JBL* 96 (1977), pp. 407-424; O. S. Brooks, *JSNT* 10 (1981), pp. 2-18; Donaldson, *Jesus*, pp. 170-190. A valuable dissertation on 28:16-20 is B. J. Hubbard, *The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning* (Missoula: Scholars' Press, 1974).

<sup>57</sup> Davies, *Setting*, pp. 196-198. The view of the 'Son of Man' as king is one of the most distinctive features of Matthew's christology; cf. 13:41; 16:28; 19:28; 25:31ff. For a substantial demonstration of the essential connection between the kingdom of God and the Son of Man (so long denied in German scholarship) see C. C. Caragounis, *The Son of Man* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986).

# The Gospel of Mark in recent study

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The Gospel of Mark is a major centre of vigorous and creative discussion among NT scholars. In the following pages, after some remarks about commentaries, I focus on major developments and trends in Marcan scholarship within approximately the last ten years (since 1978), as coverage of earlier work is readily available.<sup>1</sup> Within each unit of this essay, I briefly discuss selected works that represent the particular development under consideration. The notes contain references to additional publications which space considerations do not allow me to address in the discussion.

## 1. Commentaries

Only one major English-language commentary has appeared in the last decade though several recent general-reader commentaries are available.<sup>2</sup> There are also several large German commentaries of relatively recent vintage.

C. S. Mann's *Anchor Bible* commentary on Mark<sup>3</sup> advocates the 'Griesbach hypothesis' (Mark dependent upon Matthew and Luke), giving us the only major modern commentary on Mark built upon this premise. Mann proposes that Mark was written in two drafts: the first in Rome c. AD 55, and the final draft in Palestine c. AD 65, drawing upon and shortening Matthew and Luke. This 700-page study is, however, a disappointingly unremarkable analysis of the text of Mark that is particularly weak in awareness of the narrative design of the gospel.<sup>4</sup>

Of the major German commentaries published around the early part of the period covered here, none really represents a major breakthrough. Pesch's view of Mark as basically a passive redactor seems out of touch with the impressive recent demonstrations of strong Marcan authorial purposes, and looks backward rather than forward. Schmithals' set is too idiosyncratic to be a reliable guide, and the works by Gnlika and Ernst are informed but uninspiringly 'safe' discussions.<sup>5</sup>

A thorough scholars' commentary on Mark in English is a definite desideratum. But to meet the need fully, such a work will have to take fully into account the sort of wide-ranging and complex discussion illustrated in the following sections of this essay.

## 2. Marcan priority

A large part of the reason for the fervent investigation of Mark is the common conviction that it is the earliest surviving gospel. But Mann's commentary is evidence that the two-source hypothesis involving the priority of Mark has been

challenged by several scholars in recent decades. C. M. Tuckett's analysis of the recent attempt to overthrow the theory of Marcan priority by advocates of the 'Griesbach hypothesis' shows cogently, however, that major characteristics of Mark fit more easily the basic two-source hypothesis, and that the case against it involves a number of fallacies and inaccuracies.<sup>6</sup> In order for the Griesbach position to become a truly alternative theory, advocates will have to produce detailed studies of Mark that account for the text persuasively on the theory that it is a harmonization of Matthew and Luke.

## 3. Provenance

In the past few decades, the traditional view that Mark was composed in Rome was rejected by several influential scholars. For example, Marxsen<sup>7</sup> and Kelber<sup>8</sup> set Mark's origin in Galilee, either near the beginning of the Jewish revolt (Marxsen), or just after this war (Kelber). Kee suggested that the setting of Mark was in southern Syria, sometime during the revolt but before the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup>

This whole question has now been re-examined by M. Hengel, who argues for a Roman origin of Mark, probably in AD 69, the year of terror and confusion when three Emperors took power and were killed in quick succession.<sup>10</sup> Hengel's discussion of Mark 13 as indicating the situation of the Marcan church is particularly impressive. Hengel also insists that the ancient tradition is correct about Mark's connection with tradition stemming from the apostle Peter.<sup>11</sup>

The use of Marcan geographical references as evidence of the author's setting by advocates of a Syro-Palestinian provenance has been criticized succinctly by E. S. Malbon as representing a kind of referential fallacy.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps a similar sort of critique could be levelled against the tendencies of scholars, such as G. Theissen and Kee, to read out conclusions about the social and economic situation of Mark's audience from details of the Marcan narratives about the itinerant ministry of Jesus and his first followers.<sup>13</sup> Their approach seems to reflect a failure to reckon with the reasons religious groups preserve traditions even after social and economic situations change.<sup>14</sup>

Donald Senior has drawn attention to the concern for a universal mission in Mark (e.g. 13:9-13) as reason to question the tendency among some to read Mark as occasioned purely by hypothetical intra-church polemics (e.g. Weeden, Kelber, et al.).<sup>15</sup> Most scholars seem to remain convinced that Mark's gospel was written (at least in part) to advance a particular understanding of Christ and of Christian life, perhaps over against alternative interpretations (those who 'lead astray' in 13:5-6, 21-22?). But Senior and others recently remind us that the author's purposes and stimuli were probably more complex.<sup>16</sup>

Koester has proposed the hypothesis that canonical Mark is a later edition of a text known as 'secret Mark', an intriguing but so far unpersuasive suggestion.<sup>17</sup> Most scholars seem to have concluded that, if the fragments of 'secret Mark' are genuine, they probably derive from a secondary alteration of canonical Mark or from some other writing that may have been attributed to Mark.

#### 4. Literary nature/setting

In the recent analysis of Mark, there have been two main types of literary-critical developments. One approach uses modern literary criticism (as practised, e.g., in English literature studies). The other approach attempts to set Mark's gospel into the Greco-Roman literary and cultural environment, and emphasizes the conventions and aims of ancient literature.

##### *Modern literary criticism and Mark*

The analysis of Mark through the use of modern literary criticism is varied and fervent.<sup>18</sup> J. G. Williams has drawn upon modern theories about narrative and parables to argue that Mark constitutes the attempt to overcome the 'mysterious polyvalent quality of parables by placing them in a narrative context which limits the possibilities for interpretation'.<sup>19</sup> However, this study may be too much controlled by assumptions arising from peculiarly modern hermeneutical issues and insufficiently based on inductive study of how such things as parables actually functioned in the ancient setting.

More general understanding of narratives and their components as developed in modern literary criticism is given in an article by D. Rhoads,<sup>20</sup> who has also co-authored a book-length analysis of Mark informed by narrative criticism.<sup>21</sup> Contemporary students of Mark are enabled to identify such matters as the Marcan 'plot', the 'characters' and their roles in the narrative, and the way in which the author has constructed the narrative to achieve his ends. The broad result of recent literary-critical studies has been to strengthen the view that Mark is a generally well-constructed narrative with evident and successfully-executed authorial purposes and emphases.<sup>22</sup>

A particular type of literary-critical investigation of Mark adapted from contemporary literary studies is represented by 'reader-response' analysis. Here the text is analysed in terms of how it would be construed by the careful reader.<sup>23</sup> Fowler's study of the two feeding accounts incorporates this approach.<sup>24</sup> He argues that both these stories fit meaningfully within the narrative. His redaction-critical analysis leads him to conclude that Mark created the story in 6:30-44 in order to achieve his narrative purposes, a surprising but debatable suggestion.

Reader-response analysis has received a valuable corrective, however, from M. A. Beavis, who criticizes Fowler and other reader-response critics for working with an 'ideal reader' unrooted in time. She insists that with ancient texts such as Mark one should attempt to acquire as accurate a picture as possible of the nature of the *ancient reader* and the ancient reading *process*.<sup>25</sup> Mark was probably written to be read out publicly before gathered Christians as a 'reading performance', and reader-response analysis should recognize the more complex process involved in the ancient reading/listening experience.<sup>26</sup>

##### *Mark and ancient literature*

Until recently the dominant view has been that the gospels (especially Mark) represented a significantly new Christian type of writing, and that comparison with Greco-Roman literature is not productive.<sup>27</sup> However, this conventional view is being questioned in recent publications and a strong case has been made for a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the NT gospels and their Greco-Roman literary background and conventions.<sup>28</sup>

There is C. H. Talbert's 1977 comparison of the gospels with other examples of ancient *bios* literature.<sup>29</sup> More recently, H. Cancik has argued for the relevance of Greco-Roman biographical writings in the study of Mark.<sup>30</sup>

V. K. Robbins has produced an analysis of the Marcan portrait of Jesus as a wandering, disciple-gathering teacher, drawing comparisons with motifs in Greco-Roman literature, and concluding that Mark's Jesus was significantly compatible with ancient Mediterranean traditions.<sup>31</sup> Robbins' book is instructive, but his portrayal of Mark's christology is sometimes faulty, and in estimating the relationship of the Marcan Jesus to ancient traditions of virtuous suffering he has not reckoned adequately with the offensiveness to Greco-Roman tastes of Mark's emphasis on the crucified Jesus.<sup>32</sup>

An interesting development in Marcan studies recently is the renewed analysis of Mark's narrative in comparison with ancient dramatic conventions. In the late 70s several scholars independently released studies along this line: G. G. Bilezikian (1977), F. G. Lange (1977), and B. Standaert (1978).<sup>33</sup> All these scholars have produced impressive parallels between the plotting and structure of Mark and Greek tragedies. Bilezikian argues for direct influence of dramatic plotting upon Mark's arrangement of his story of Jesus. Standaert likewise sees the structure of Mark as influenced by ancient tragedy, but also sees the influence of other aspects of Greco-Roman culture as well, particularly rhetoric.

Further assistance to seeing Mark's gospel in the Greco-Roman context is provided with M. A. Beavis' recent Cambridge thesis.<sup>34</sup> Particularly illuminating for NT scholars here is discussion of the way people with even elementary levels of education in Greco-Roman times were taught to write, read, and use texts. Beavis concludes that Mark shows familiarity with Greco-Roman literary and dramatic conventions, that the author was likely an early Christian missionary/teacher or 'scribe' in a Christian group that was not a closed sect but evangelistic in ethos, and offers her own original analysis of several key Marcan motifs and the design of the narrative.<sup>35</sup>

Failure to set Mark within a fully-informed view of the Greco-Roman world and its practices of writing, reading, and speaking is illustrated in W. Kelber's *The Oral and Written Gospel*.<sup>36</sup> His overly rigid stereotypes of 'orality' and 'textuality' cannot do justice to the complex and highly-developed cultural setting of the first-century Mediterranean world, in which features of 'orality' (e.g. rhetorical conventions) existed side by side with, influenced, and were influenced by, features of 'textuality'. For example, conventions of oral communication influenced texts, which were usually prepared for oral delivery, and the actual reading out of texts could involve ad hoc expansions and other 'fluid' features that Kelber thinks pertain only to 'oral tradition'.

Moreover, Kelber obscures the fact that Christianity was from its inception deeply immersed both in 'orality' and 'textuality'. The earliest Christian theological reflection involved 'Christo-centric' exegesis of OT passages,<sup>37</sup> and all evidence indicates that first-century Palestine was an avidly reading-and-writing setting.<sup>38</sup>

His view of texts as static and fixed is not appropriate until after the printing press. Anyone familiar with the NT manuscript tradition (too much to expect of NT scholars nowadays) would have known how much more fluid and susceptible to alterations (sometimes considerable) ancient texts were when they had to be copied by hand.<sup>39</sup> This is surely one reason why ancients preferred eye-witnesses and tended to distrust written accounts.

Kelber focuses on valid questions: Why did early Christians begin writing continuous narratives of the ministry of Jesus? And, if Mark's gospel was the first such account, what sort of development did the appearance of this document constitute? But his attempt to deal with these questions only succeeds in demonstrating the need for a more historically controlled and genuinely critical endeavour.

### 5. Marcan style

The several investigations of Marcan style that have appeared in the last decade can be organized according to the basic questions that fuel them. The studies by Pryke,<sup>40</sup> Dschulnigg,<sup>41</sup> and Peabody<sup>42</sup> are mainly prompted by the question of whether Marcan redactional style can be distinguished from whatever source material he may have used. Their basic conclusion, that the style of the Gospel of Mark is consistent and pervasive throughout the writing, ought to make us more cautious about distinguishing Mark from his sources.

Peabody is somewhat distinctive in approach. His work does not presume a particular solution to the synoptic problem (he is a pupil of Farmer), and focuses on 'recurrent phraseology' in Mark as the means to provide 'the isolation, analysis, and systematic display of the favourite or habitual expressions of the author of Mark's gospel'.<sup>43</sup>

It would be particularly worthwhile to have the work of Dschulnigg and Peabody compared in detail, both as to approach and results. Both scholars give detailed analysis of particular features of Marcan style, and the degree to which they complement each other and cohere in results would be an important finding for future Marcan studies.

Other scholars have attempted to characterize Marcan style with a view to the question of whether it reflects the influence of Semitic languages (Aramaic or Hebrew). Both E. C. Maloney<sup>44</sup> and M. Reiser<sup>45</sup> have dealt with this question recently from different standpoints. Reiser investigated how Marcan style fits within the spectrum of popular Greek literature, whereas Maloney tried to determine how much Marcan style shows Semitic linguistic 'interference' (influence).

The problem is that these two studies seem to disagree, at least in emphasis. Maloney concludes that there is Semitic influence in Marcan syntax on 'every page of the gospel',<sup>46</sup> while Reiser finds Mark largely free of Semitisms and essentially an example of popular-level Greek literary style of

the Greco-Roman period. Both scholars could be correct, actually, but further analysis of this matter is necessary.<sup>47</sup>

### 6. The ending of Mark

Perhaps the most well-known problem in Mark is the ending. There are really two major questions here. The text-critical question is whether we are able to determine the original ending of Mark and account for the variant endings in the textual tradition. On text-critical grounds it is likely that either the original ending was lost or else 16:8 is the Marcan ending.<sup>48</sup> Increasingly, scholars seem to be working with the assumption that the original ending of Mark was 16:8. This view in turn generates the second question as to how to interpret this remarkable closure of the narrative.

In 1981, two complementary articles appeared in the same issue of *JBL* dealing with this passage. In the one article, T. Boomershine and G. Bartholomew show that the final words of 16:8 ('for they were afraid') form one of many Marcan examples of explanatory clauses, often at the end of individual stories, and argue that 16:8 is the original ending.<sup>49</sup> In the other article, Boomershine studies 16:8 in the context of the passion account and concludes that this final description of the fearful women was intended to provoke the 'audience' (Boomershine properly emphasizes the originally oral delivery of the narrative before Christian groups) to reflect on their own responsibility to proclaim the gospel message in the face of opposition.<sup>50</sup>

Some other scholars who take 16:8 as the original ending have seen in it a particularly striking christological emphasis that we might call a 'christology of absence'. In this interpretation, 16:8 was intended to shift attention totally from resurrection appearances, and counter the beliefs of 'enthusiasts' in the wonder-working presence of the risen Christ with an understanding of Christ that focused on his pre-Easter ministry and viewed Christ as 'absent' in the present until the *parousia*. This basic view was defended by a 1976 collection of essays by a particular circle of American Marcan scholars,<sup>51</sup> and has been elaborated and re-affirmed since by Crossan<sup>52</sup> and Kelber<sup>53</sup> particularly. Essentially a mutation of Weeden's theory of a Marcan anti-Jerusalem polemic (with perhaps a dash of existentialism), this view comes under the same criticism of being an illogical construal of the plot of Mark as N. Petersen levelled against Weeden.<sup>54</sup>

The most recent study of the short ending of Mark is by J. Magness.<sup>55</sup> Drawing upon modern analysis of narrative closure, Magness argues (somewhat similarly to Boomershine and Petersen) that the overall narrative of Mark was planned to prepare readers to cope with concluding at 16:8, and that this abrupt ending was essentially a narrative device intended to involve the readers more thoroughly in the drama of the Marcan account of Jesus. It is unlikely, however, that Magness has had the last word.

Two other noteworthy studies have been devoted to the 'long ending' of Mark (16:9-20), a passage often ignored by Marcan scholars. J. Hug concludes that the passage was composed in the early second century and was not a compilation of material from the other gospels but an independent tradition of some historical significance.<sup>56</sup> P. Mirecki's analyses formal, redactional, and narrative features of the passage, arguing that the 'core narrative' was 16:9-15, 20a, to which was added vv. 16-19, 20b, with some provocative

proposals about the christological views reflected in these two bodies of material.<sup>57</sup>

### 7. Christology and discipleship

Discussion of the contents of Mark has continued to concentrate on two main items: Mark's picture of Jesus and his treatment of the disciples/discipleship theme.<sup>58</sup>

Mark has been the centre of recent discussion about narrative as a 'mode' of christology.<sup>59</sup> This discussion usually involves application of aspects of modern literary criticism and is concerned with Mark's (pioneering?) use of narrative as a means of advocating a particular christology.

The most substantial study of Mark's christology recently, by J. D. Kingsbury, however, is mainly concerned with resolving some long-standing issues among Marcan students.<sup>60</sup> Building on several developments of recent research (e.g. the decline of earlier claims about the *theios aner* category and the apocalyptic 'Son of Man' title, and the employment of modern narrative analysis to discern the 'authoritative voice' in a narrative), Kingsbury's analysis is a significant advance. He rejects earlier 'corrective christology' interpretations of Mark and concludes that there are two basic aspects to the Marcan portrayal of Jesus: the inner secret of Jesus as the 'Davidic Messiah-King, the Son of God', and the outer or public disclosure of Jesus under the label 'the Son of Man'. Contrary to numerous earlier studies, these two aspects do not correct each other, but are complementary aspects of the Marcan portrait. I am not persuaded, however, that Kingsbury's emphasis upon Marcan christology as essentially 'Messianic' has done justice to Mark's emphasis upon the transcendent significance/nature of Jesus, the Son of God.

P. Davis' unpublished thesis is an original and significant study of Marcan christology that unfortunately is hardly known.<sup>61</sup> He argues that Mark works with a fundamental God/human polarity, and that Jesus is presented as both reconciling this polarity and embodying it in his very self.<sup>62</sup> Davis is certainly correct that the Marcan christology is by no means 'low' or 'adoptionist', and that the most crucial and immediate 'background' for interpreting Mark's christological language is early Christianity, rather than either Jewish messianism or pagan interest in 'divine men'.

A perennial matter connected with Mark's christology is the secrecy motif. There is now a useful anthology of studies on this topic which includes a helpful survey of research by C. Tuckett.<sup>63</sup> F. Watson has argued that the secrecy motif has no connection with christology but is simply the rhetoric of early Christians who, though despised and rejected, viewed themselves as having elite status in the plan of God.<sup>64</sup> However, Watson fails to deal with the fact that in Mark the secret of Jesus' person escapes both outsiders and insiders. Kingsbury's study includes a worthwhile discussion of Marcan secrecy.<sup>65</sup>

One of the key passages in considering the Marcan secrecy theme is chapter 4, the parables chapter, and in particular vv. 10-12. J. Marcus has offered a redaction-critical analysis of this chapter, but we have earlier noted the difficulties involved in such analysis of Mark.<sup>66</sup> Beavis'

thesis mentioned earlier includes an analysis of the secrecy crux in 4:10-12.

On Mark's treatment of the disciples and discipleship, Tannehill's 1977 study was influential in refuting Weeden's notion that Mark intended simply to discredit the Jerusalem apostles, and remains instructive.<sup>67</sup> Best has contributed several worthwhile discussions of discipleship in Mark.<sup>68</sup> And Donahue's study of this topic is perceptive and recommended.<sup>69</sup> Reflecting contemporary concerns about the status of women, there are also several studies dealing with Mark's treatment of women disciples.<sup>70</sup> Via's discussion of Marcan ethics is heavily phenomenological and existentialist in mode.<sup>71</sup>

### Conclusion

The last ten years of intense and varied work on the Gospel of Mark have included some significant re-examinations of major questions (e.g. provenance and christology) and the application and refinement of newer approaches (e.g. narrative criticism). There is growing recognition of Mark as a well-designed story of Jesus; and there is increased emphasis that Mark should be analysed in light of Jewish and pagan literary traditions of the Greco-Roman era.

For the investigation of practically any question concerning Jesus, the nature and origin of the gospels, and the development of early Christianity, the Gospel of Mark will continue to be a centre of activity.

<sup>1</sup> Several surveys of Marcan scholarship were published in the 1978-9 period. See J. A. Brooks, 'An Annotated Bibliography on Mark', *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 21(1978), pp. 75-82; H. C. Kee, 'Mark's Gospel in Recent Research', *Int* 32(1978), pp. 353-368; J. D. Kingsbury, 'The Gospel of Mark in Current Research', *RelSRev* 5(1979), pp. 101-107; W. L. Lane, 'From Historian to Theologian: Milestones in Marcan Scholarship', *RevExp* 75(1978), pp. 601-617. Also valuable for discussion of earlier work is R. P. Martin, *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1972; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973). More recent surveys include D. J. Harrington, 'A Map of Books on Mark (1975-1984)', *BTB* 15(1985), pp. 12-16; P. Pokorny, 'Das Markusevangelium. Literarische und theologische Einleitung mit Forschungsbericht', *ANRW* 2: p. 25/3: pp. 1969-2035; and F. F. Matera, *What are They Saying About Mark?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987). See also S. Kealy, *Mark's Gospel: A History of Its Interpretation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982); and H. M. Humphrey, *A Bibliography for the Gospel of Mark 1954-1980* (New York/Toronto: Edwin Mellen, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> For an evaluation of English-language commentaries on Mark, see J. A. Ziesler, 'Which is the Best Commentary? VII. The Gospel According to Mark', *ExpT* 98(1987), pp. 263-267. Among the commentaries directed primarily to 'general readers', my own volume (I am happy to report) has received enthusiastic acceptance — L. M. Hurtado, *Mark: A Good News Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983).

<sup>3</sup> C. S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1986).

<sup>4</sup> See reviews by F. Matera in *Int* 42(1988), pp. 192-196, and E. S. Malbon in *CBQ* 59(1988), pp. 141-143.

<sup>5</sup> The commentaries by R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium I-II* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976, 1977); W. Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I-II* (Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1979); J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I-II* (Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979); and J. Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1981), are discussed by F. Neiryneck, *Evangelica, Gospel studies — Etudes d'évangile* (BETL 60; Louvain: Leuven Univ., 1982), pp. 491-564; U. Luz, 'Markusforschung in der

Sackgasse?'. *TLZ* 105(1980), pp. 641-655; and briefly by M. Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SCM, 1985), pp. 31-32.

<sup>6</sup> C. M. Tuckett, *The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis: An Analysis and Appraisal* (SNTSMS 44; Cambridge: CUP, 1983). Cf. H. H. Stoldt, *History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis* (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. Press, 1980 [German orig. 1977]). On the relationship of Mark to Q, see now R. Laufen, *Die Doppelüberlieferungen der Logienquelle und der Markusevangeliums* (BBB 54; Bonn, 1980).

<sup>7</sup> W. Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969 [German orig. 1956]).

<sup>8</sup> W. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Time and a New Place* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974).

<sup>9</sup> H. C. Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977).

<sup>10</sup> M. Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SCM, 1985), pp. 1-30. Others who recently argue for a Roman provenance include E. Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983); B. Standaert, *L'évangile selon Marc: Composition et genre littéraire* (Nijmegen: Stichting Studentenpers, 1978); and D. Senior, "With Swords and Clubs" . . . The Setting of Mark's Community and His Critique of Abusive Power', *BTB* 17(1987), pp. 10-20.

<sup>11</sup> Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, pp. 31-58.

<sup>12</sup> E. S. Malbon, 'Galilee and Jerusalem: History and Literature in Marcan Interpretation', *CBQ* 44(1982), pp. 242-255.

<sup>13</sup> G. Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) [published in Britain as *The First Followers of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1978)]; H. C. Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977). For criticism of this approach, see e.g. the review of Theissen's book by B. J. Malina in *CBQ* 41(1979), pp. 176-178; and R. L. Rohrbaugh, "Social Location of Thought" as a Heuristic Construct in New Testament Study', *JSNT* 30(1987), pp. 103-119.

<sup>14</sup> See also criticisms by D. O. Via, Jr., *The Ethics of Mark's Gospel—In the Middle of Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), pp. 71-76.

<sup>15</sup> D. Senior, 'The Struggle to be Universal: Mission as Vantage Point for New Testament Investigation', *CBQ* 46(1984), pp. 63-81. Cf. T. J. Weeden, *Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); W. Kelber, *The Kingdom of Mark; idem, The Passion in Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. E. E. Lemcio, 'The Intention of the Evangelist, Mark', *NTS* 32(1986), pp. 187-206.

<sup>17</sup> H. Koester, 'History and Development of Mark's Gospel (From Mark to Secret Mark to Canonical Mark)', in *Colloquy on New Testament Studies*, ed. B. Corley (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ., 1983), pp. 35-57. On the discussion of the purported 'secret Mark', see M. Smith, 'Clement of Alexandria and Secret Mark: The Score at the End of the First Decade', *HTR* 75(1982), pp. 449-461.

<sup>18</sup> F. Kermodé, *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ., 1979), made Mark the classic narrative of 'secrecy', but his discussion is often abstruse and his interpretations sometimes seem to be flights of fancy. See also J. Drury's (sometimes idiosyncratic) discussion of Mark in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, eds. R. Alter, F. Kermodé (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> J. G. Williams, *Gospel Against Parable* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985).

<sup>20</sup> D. Rhoads, 'Narrative Criticism and the Gospel of Mark', *JAAR* 50(1982), pp. 411-434. See also N. R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

<sup>21</sup> D. Rhoads and D. Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982). See also E. Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (see above, n. 10).

<sup>22</sup> Contra E. Trocmé, *The Formation of the Gospel According to Mark* (London: SPCK, 1975), and J. C. Meagher, *Clumsy Construction in Mark's Gospel: A Critique of Form-and-Redaktionsgeschichte* (Toronto/New York: Edwin Mellen, 1979).

<sup>23</sup> See R. M. Fowler, 'Who is "the Reader" in Reader Response Criticism?', *Semeia* 31(1985), pp. 5-26. This whole issue of *Semeia* is devoted to 'reader-response criticism'.

<sup>24</sup> R. M. Fowler, *Loaves and Fishes: The Function of the Feeding Stories in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS 54; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>25</sup> M. A. Beavis, 'The Trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53-65): Reader Response and the Greco-Roman Readers', *CBQ* 49(1987), pp. 581-596.

<sup>26</sup> The most obvious clue in Mark that the text was intended to be 'performed' by public readers is the little comment in 13:14, 'let the reader [*ho anaginoskon*] understand'.

<sup>27</sup> Cf., however, C. W. Votaw, *The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies in the Greco-Roman World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970; reprinted from *AJT* 19[1915], pp. 45-73, 217-249).

<sup>28</sup> See now D. E. Aune, *The New Testament and Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), which should be required reading for NT students. See also J. P. Pritchard, *A Literary Approach to the New Testament* (Norman, OK: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1972); and G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill/London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1984), for introductions to the relevance of ancient rhetorical conventions and values for the study of the NT.

<sup>29</sup> C. H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). Cf. D. E. Aune, 'The Problem of the Genre of the Gospels: A Critique of C. H. Talbert's *What is a Gospel?*' in *Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, Vol. 2, ed. R. T. France, D. Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), pp. 9-60. See also C. H. Talbert, 'Biographies of Philosophers and Rulers as Instruments of Religious Propaganda in Mediterranean Antiquity', *ANRW* 2. 16/2: 1619-1657.

<sup>30</sup> H. Cancik, 'Die Gattung Evangelium: Das Evangelium des Markus im Rahmen der antiken Historiographie', in *Markus-Philologie. Historische, literargeschichtliche und stilistische Untersuchungen zum zweiten Evangelium*, ed. H. Cancik (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1984). See also Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, e.g. p. 139 n. 8.

<sup>31</sup> V. K. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 187-191, and M. Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). On pagan evaluations of Christianity, see R. L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1984).

<sup>33</sup> G. G. Bilezikian, *The Liberated Gospel: A Comparison of the Gospel of Mark and Greek Tragedy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977); F. G. Lang, 'Kompositionsanalyse des Markusevangeliums', *ZTK* 74(1977), pp. 1-24; B. H. M. G. M. Standaert, *L'évangile selon Marc*. The works of Bilezikian and Standaert are summarized in A. Stock, *Call to Discipleship: A Literary Study of Mark's Gospel* (Dublin: Veritas; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1982). This is not really a new position, but these scholars defend it more thoroughly than anyone before.

<sup>34</sup> M. A. Beavis, 'Literary and Sociological Aspects of the Function of Mark 4:11-12', (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge Univ., 1987). This work is forthcoming in the *JSNT Supplement Series* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

<sup>35</sup> See also the collection of studies on Mark by Hengel, G. Zuntz, H. P. Rüger, H. Cancik, M. Reiser, G. Lüderitz, and Zutz, in *Markus-Philologie*, ed. H. Cancik.

<sup>36</sup> W. Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). The problems involved in this book really require a more thorough discussion, especially in view of the wide readership the book has acquired. See T. E. Boomershine, 'Peter's Denial as Polemic or Confession: The Implications of Media Criticism for Biblical Hermeneutics', *Semeia* 39(1987), pp. 47-68. This whole issue of *Semeia* is devoted to Kelber's book.

<sup>37</sup> See now D. Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

<sup>38</sup> For introductions to the surviving literary remains, see e.g. M. E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Assen: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); and R. A. Kraft, G. W. E. Nickelsburg (eds.), *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

<sup>39</sup> E.g., see my analysis of scribal tendencies in the Marcan textual tradition: L. W. Hurtado, *Text-Critical Methodology and the Pre-Caesarean Text: Codex W in the Gospel of Mark* (SD 43; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981).

<sup>40</sup> E. J. Pryke, *Redactional Style in the Marcan Gospel* (SNTSMS 33; Cambridge: CUP, 1978).

<sup>41</sup> P. Dschulnigg, *Sprache, Redaktion und Intention des Markusevangeliums: Eigentümlichkeiten der Sprache der Markusevangeliums und ihre Bedeutung für die Redaktionskritik* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984). See the review by J. K. Elliott in *NovT* 28(1986), pp. 280-281.

<sup>42</sup> D. B. Peabody, *Mark as Composer* (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ., 1987).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>44</sup> E. C. Maloney, *Semitic Interference in Marcan Syntax* (SBLDS 51; Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>45</sup> M. Reiser, *Syntax und Stil des Markusevangeliums im Licht der hellenistischen Volksliteratur* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1984).

<sup>46</sup> Maloney, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

<sup>47</sup> See also the essay by Rüger in *Markus-Philologie*, ed. H. Cancik.

<sup>48</sup> The most recent attempt to defend the originality of the 'long ending' (16:9-20) was by W. R. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (SNTSMS 25; Cambridge: CUP, 1974). Cf. e.g. B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London/New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. 122-126. See also the review of research in J. Magness' book mentioned below (n. 55).

<sup>49</sup> T. E. Boomershine, G. L. Bartholomew, 'The Narrative Technique of Mark 16:8', *JBL* 100 (1981), pp. 213-223.

<sup>50</sup> T. E. Boomershine, 'Mark 16:8 and the Apostolic Commission', *JBL* 100(1981), pp. 225-239.

<sup>51</sup> W. Kelber (ed.), *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14-16* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

<sup>52</sup> J. D. Crossan, 'A Form for Absence: The Marcan Creation of Gospel', *Semeia* 12 (1978), pp. 41-55.

<sup>53</sup> E.g. Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*.

<sup>54</sup> T. J. Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971). Cf. N. R. Petersen, 'When is the End not the End? Literary Reflections on the Ending of Mark's Narrative', *Int* 34(1980), pp. 151-166; and *idem.*, 'Point of View' in Mark's Narrative', *Semeia* 12 (1978), pp. 97-121.

<sup>55</sup> J. L. Magness, *Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of Mark's Gospel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986). Cf. the review by R. M. Fowler in *JBL* 49(1987), pp. 501-511.

<sup>56</sup> J. Hug, *La Finale de l'évangile de Marc (Marc 16. 9-20)* (Paris: Gabalda, 1978). However, cf. e.g. Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, pp. 167-169 n. 47.

<sup>57</sup> P. A. Mirecki, 'Mark 16:9-20: Composition, Tradition and Redaction', (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard Univ., 1986).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. M. R. Mansfield's unpersuasive case that Mark was not primarily concerned with christology but with the Holy Spirit (*Spirit and Gospel in Mark* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987]).

<sup>59</sup> See e.g. R. C. Tannehill, 'The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology', *Semeia* 16 (1980), pp. 57-95; and M. E. Boring, 'The Christology of Mark: Hermeneutical Issues for Systematic Theology', *Semeia* 30 (1984), pp. 125-153.

<sup>60</sup> J. D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). See e.g. reviews in *Int* 38(1983), pp. 299-302; and *JBL* 104(1985), pp. 732-735. C. R. Kazmierski, *Jesus, the Son of God: A Study of the Marcan Tradition and its Redaction by the Evangelist* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1979), is devoted to the redaction-critical quest to distinguish Mark from his sources, an objective that has become more dubious within the last decade.

<sup>61</sup> P. G. Davis, 'Truly this Man was the Son of God': The Christological focus of the Marcan Redaction', (Ph.D. thesis, McMaster Univ., 1979).

<sup>62</sup> See also P. G. Davis, 'Mark's Christological Paradox', *JSNT*, forthcoming at the time of this writing.

<sup>63</sup> C. Tuckett (ed.), *The Messianic Secret* (London: SPCK; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). See also J. L. Blevins, *The Messianic Secret in Marcan Research 1901-1976* (Washington, DC: Univ. Press of America, 1981).

<sup>64</sup> F. Watson, 'The Social Function of Mark's Secrecy Theme', *JSNT* 24(1985), pp. 49-69.

<sup>65</sup> Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel*, pp. 1-23.

<sup>66</sup> J. Marcus, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (SBLDS 90; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

<sup>67</sup> R. E. Tannehill, 'The Disciples in Mark: the Function of a Narrative Role', *JR* 57(1977), pp. 386-405.

<sup>68</sup> E. Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1981); *idem.*, *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in the Gospel According to Mark* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986).

<sup>69</sup> J. R. Donahue, *The Theology and Setting of Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Milwaukee: Marquette Univ., 1983).

<sup>70</sup> See W. Munro, 'Women Disciples in Mark?', *CBQ* 44(1982), pp. 225-241; E. S. Malbon, 'Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark', *Semeia* 23 (1983), pp. 29-81; *idem.*, 'Disciples - Crowds - Whoever: Marcan Characters and Readers', *NovT* 28(1986), pp. 104-130; J. Klopas, 'Jews and Women in Mark's Gospel', *Review for Religious* 44(1985), pp. 912-920; M. A. Beavis, 'Women as Models of Faith in Mark', *BTB* 18(1988), pp. 3-9; and relevant sections of E. S. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroad, 1983).

<sup>71</sup> D. O. Via, Jr., *op. cit.* (see above, n. 14).

## The present state of Lucan studies

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*Professor Marshall of Aberdeen University is author of numerous articles and books on Lukan studies, including the newly revised Luke Historian and Theologian, the New International Greek Testament Commentary and the Tyndale commentary on Acts. His commentaries (which he forbears to mention in his article) rank among the most important and valuable works available on Luke and Acts.*

Although Luke's two-part work amounts to just over 25% of the whole NT and makes him its major contributor, it is only in recent years that his work has begun to receive the amount of attention which it deserves. Since it is virtually impossible to discuss his gospel in isolation from Acts, there is a vast

amount of material to be surveyed, and our discussion of it is necessarily selective.<sup>1</sup>

### Introductions and surveys

Both N. Richardson and D. Juel offer panoramic views of Luke-Acts which can be strongly commended as typical middle-of-the-road introductions to the modern approach.<sup>2</sup> Richardson offers an introduction to Luke-Acts rather than to Lucan scholarship, and his work is thus better for the beginner. Juel is more concerned to command a particular line of understanding of Luke's theology of Israel and the Gentiles. Probably the best short introduction to the problems of Luke-Acts is the section on 'The Current State

of Lucan Studies' in J. A. Fitzmyer's commentary.<sup>3</sup> At greater length R. J. Maddox's book on the purpose of Luke-Acts is valuable among other things for providing a first-rate introduction to the problems currently at issue.<sup>4</sup>

For the scholar the indispensable guide to Lucan scholarship is the survey by F. Bovon who summarizes under appropriate thematic headings research between 1950 and 1983.<sup>5</sup> This work is of great value because Bovon offers a *critical* survey of scholarship. Yet its usefulness is to some extent limited by the fact that Bovon deliberately restricts his attention to Luke as a theologian and does not consider literary and historical questions. This is a justifiable limitation because the discovery of Luke as a theologian is the most outstanding feature of contemporary scholarship.<sup>6</sup>

### Commentaries on Luke

Our period has been marked by the production of numerous commentaries on Luke and Acts. So far as Luke is concerned, the major work is the two-volume contribution by J. A. Fitzmyer to *The Anchor Bible*. Extending to 1640 pages, it is a detailed and comprehensive, but readable and lucid, work, and the student who can cope with it will not need to spend much time on other aids to study. Fitzmyer's own position is a moderately critical one; he gives good coverage to the variety of views on every topic, and his judgments are generally well-founded.<sup>7</sup>

But not all readers will wish for so detailed a work. The new trend in Lucan studies was introduced to English readers by E. E. Ellis.<sup>8</sup> His work assumes some basic knowledge on the part of readers and concentrates on the theology and literary structure. Originally written for the Tyndale series, it proved to be somewhat too up-market in character, but it is the best middle-length work in English.

At a more basic level help is available from G. B. Caird's excellent and stimulating *multum in parvo*<sup>9</sup> and from L. Morris who gives a useful verse-by-verse explanation but has very little to say on the structure and theological significance of the whole.<sup>10</sup> That aspect is taken up by C. H. Talbert who draws out the structure and theology of Luke in broad lines and demonstrates abundantly the importance of structure for understanding the whole.<sup>11</sup> The same approach is adopted by D. Gooding in his recent exposition; this is an interesting work which combines a traditional type of evangelical application of the text with a carefully wrought rhetorical analysis that searches for parallels between different incidents and pieces of teaching and shows how Luke develops the impression which he wishes to give of Jesus.<sup>12</sup>

It may be interesting to refer to Talbert's review of Fitzmyer in which he argues that 1974 constituted a watershed in Lucan studies and that Fitzmyer is a throwback to the past: (1) His approach is atomistic, looking at short pericopes rather than larger thought-units; (2) He studies the text by comparing it with its sources instead of reading the text as a finished product using 'rhetorical criticism or modern narrative criticism'; (3) He looks for a history of the tradition used in the gospel instead of looking for the message of the text in its canonical form; (4) He dialogues with H. Conzelmann and his colleagues and has the better of the debate, but he works within the same frame of reference instead of dialoguing with Greco-Roman literature and modern literary criticism. Talbert thus sees Fitzmyer as

gathering up the scholarship of a previous generation and himself as representing a 'new approach'.<sup>13</sup> It can surely be argued that both approaches will continue to be necessary.

E. Schweizer's work is part of the author's trilogy on the synoptic gospels and suffers somewhat from paying less attention to the passages with parallels in Matthew and Mark.<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere (in his commentary on Colossians) the author explains that he has written 'theologically' in that 'no section was written up without being preached on previously'; and certainly in this commentary he is at pains to bring out the theological significance of the text for today. Nevertheless, I must confess that I find some of his other works more exciting than this one.<sup>15</sup> I have a considerable affection for Fred Danker's exposition which brings out, as no other work does, the radical call to discipleship in the gospel.<sup>16</sup>

The position with regard to Acts is less satisfactory. The major work at present is the English translation of E. Haenchen's commentary, the work which pioneered the (perfectly proper) approach of asking at each point 'What was Luke trying to say?' but which couples this with a historical scepticism about the text which out-Bultmanns Bultmann.<sup>17</sup> The great merit of Haenchen is that he continually provokes conservative readers with his sharp criticisms of Luke and forces them to come up with better answers.

Much more satisfying are the two complementary volumes by F. F. Bruce. Originally produced in the 1950s, both volumes have now been revised and updated.<sup>18</sup> The one is on the Greek text and is much concerned with textual, syntactical and historical matters, while the other is on the English text and offers more of a theological and practical exposition. Bruce emerges as the most outstanding defender of Luke as a competent historian.

On a smaller scale R. P. C. Hanson offers a moderate post-Haenchen approach characterized by sound common sense.<sup>19</sup> Most recently D. J. Williams gives a very full, detailed exposition presented at a simple level.<sup>20</sup> Like his fellow-Australian, Leon Morris, Williams is not so good on looking at the 'larger thought-units'.<sup>21</sup>

### Sources

The question of Luke's sources for the gospel remains controversial. The majority of scholars accept the two-document hypothesis (use of Mark and Q supplemented by other traditions and possible written materials), and a few would elaborate on this with some form of the Proto-Luke hypothesis (according to which material from Q and L was first joined together, possibly to form a 'gospel', and possibly forming the framework into which Marcan material was subsequently inserted rather than vice versa).<sup>22</sup> But M. D. Goulder and J. Drury argue that Q never existed and that Luke was dependent upon the previously composed Matthew which he rearranged for his own purposes; Goulder originally developed this theory in relation to the hypothesis that Luke (like other biblical writers) structured the gospel to fit in with a Jewish lectionary, and he promises a detailed defence of his theory of dependence on Matthew.<sup>23</sup>

The sources of Acts are also a puzzle. While Haenchen pressed scepticism about the use of written sources to the

limit, more recent writers have been more open to their use; this is especially true of G. Lüdemann whose discussion of the historicity of Acts depends on a careful separation of tradition from redaction.<sup>24</sup>

### Authorship

The authorship of the two-part work is still a matter of controversy. The majority of scholars deny that Luke 'the beloved physician' was the author, mainly on the grounds that he commits historical errors which a companion of Paul could not have committed; but an important new exception to this consensus is J. A. Fitzmyer. I will stick my neck out and say that in this controversy one thing is certain: whoever wrote Luke-Acts was not the author of any other books on the NT, whether the Pastoral Epistles<sup>25</sup> or Ephesians.<sup>26</sup>

### Historicity

The prior question, therefore, is the one of historicity. M. Hengel has put forward a strong case on general grounds that 'Luke is no less trustworthy than other historians of antiquity'.<sup>27</sup> G. Lüdemann has criticized the general lack of interest in the question and has written a detailed historical commentary on Acts. He claims to find a remarkable amount of reliable tradition in Acts, but he takes it for granted that the speeches ascribed to the various actors are one and all Lucan compositions; he dismisses accounts of the miraculous with such statements as 'People lame from childhood onwards are (regrettably) incurable'; and he advocates a chronology of the early church which is seriously at odds with that of Luke. In a series of essays C. J. Hemer has produced archaeological backing for the historicity of small details in the narrative, and at the time of his much-lamented early death (June 1987) had all but completed a full-scale study of the topic, which is being prepared for publication by Conrad Gempf.

### Redaction and theology

But the major interest of scholarship is in Luke the theologian. Monographs have been produced on virtually every aspect of this topic. Luke-Acts is a particularly promising field for the redactional analysis necessary for investigating this subject because we can compare the gospel with the other synoptics and also with Acts. Over-all treatments of Luke's theology include a full-length discussion with thematic bibliography by J. A. Fitzmyer<sup>28</sup> and a very readable account by R. F. O'Toole.<sup>29</sup> O'Toole rightly identifies the central theme of Luke-Acts as the way in which God continues to bring salvation to his people, and he expounds this topic simply and clearly.

### Purpose and Sitz im Leben

An important basic question is the general character and aim of Luke-Acts. But it has proved virtually impossible for scholars to identify a specific setting for the gospel or for its sequel. 'All attempts to tie Luke-Acts to one community and to its concerns have failed' writes R. F. O'Toole.<sup>30</sup> Therefore the work must be placed in a more general situation. The prologue to Luke has been particularly studied, since it is obvious that a writer's own statement of his purpose should be the starting-point for enquiry. The view expressed there that Luke wrote to provide confirmation for Christians like Theophilus of the truth of the Christian message which they

had heard or read should be accepted as the basis for more detailed elaboration. Luke writes to tell again the story of Jesus, based on the accounts of 'eyewitnesses and ministers of the word', to substantiate what was taught about Jesus in the preaching and teaching heard by Theophilus; he narrates the story of the foundational period of the early church to show how the mission took place in accordance with prophecy and at the direction of the Lord, and to confirm that the establishment of the church of believers, both Jewish and Gentile, was part of the divine plan; thus he demonstrates that the gospel really does bring salvation. The story is obviously incomplete in that it is concerned with the church's mission and says next to nothing about the kind of inner-church problems reflected in the Pauline correspondence and other NT writings.<sup>31</sup>

### Eschatology

What, then, are its characteristics? First, there is the question of Luke's eschatology. H. Conzelmann, who has the credit for being the first to direct attention to Luke as a theologian, argued that Luke was coming to terms with the delay of the parousia which was calling in question the early Christian belief that the coming of Jesus had inaugurated the last days and that the end of the age was imminent. Luke reacted to this changed situation by replacing the scheme of 'age of promise' and 'era of fulfilment' with the three-stage scheme of 'age of promise', 'the middle of time (Jesus and the early church)' and the 'final age'.<sup>32</sup> Despite the support given to this scheme by (e.g.) Fitzmyer, it has become evident that the idea of salvation-history is older than Luke, and that he shares the two-stage scheme: the coming of Jesus is still the inauguration of the last times. Nevertheless, Conzelmann is right to establish that, for Luke, the coming of Jesus and the establishment of the church belong together as the foundation of Christianity. Conzelmann further argues that for Luke the parousia is shunted off into the distant future and the role of the imminent expectation of the end is, so to speak, replaced by the presence of the Spirit who takes the place of the awaited Lord. But here too Conzelmann seems to have pushed his point too far, and more recent writers have insisted that the expectation of the end is by no means dead in his writings.<sup>33</sup>

### Christology

Within this framework the question of Luke's understanding of Jesus arises. The current tendency is to stress the prophetic character of Jesus.<sup>34</sup> E. Franklin has drawn attention to the central importance of the ascension and the character of Jesus as Servant and Lord.<sup>35</sup> The importance of the OT for Luke's christology is the theme of a dissertation by D. L. Bock in which he argues that Luke presents a unified portrait of Jesus as 'Messiah-Servant' who is seen, as the story progresses, to be a 'more than Messiah' figure in that he is the Lord. This offers a corrective to an over-stress on the prophetic elements in Luke's picture.<sup>36</sup> What emerges is that Luke's christology is complex and is not to be reduced to one single, simple category.

### The death of Jesus

Clearly Jesus is the Saviour, but how does he save? The lack of reference in Acts to the death of Jesus as a means of atonement or as a sacrifice for sins has led to the suggestion that

Luke does not see it as a saving event in the manner of, say, Paul.<sup>37</sup> The discussion of this topic has been conducted mainly in German.<sup>38</sup> But, whatever be the final verdict on this point, C. K. Barrett has rightly shown how Luke has a clear *theologia crucis* as his own practical equivalent to Paul's doctrine of dying with Christ.<sup>39</sup>

### The Holy Spirit

Luke's understanding of the Spirit was taken up by J. D. G. Dunn<sup>40</sup> who stressed the enthusiastic, charismatic nature of the church's beginnings, as presented somewhat one-sidedly by Luke, and who argued that the Spirit functions as the sign of the new age in Jesus whose experience is paradigmatic for the church. Various aspects of this thesis have been challenged by M. M. B. Turner who interprets the Spirit in Jesus as the Spirit of prophecy rather than the sign of the new age.<sup>41</sup> Discussion continues on whether Luke understands the Spirit in Acts as the gift of salvation (as in Paul) or as the prophetic equipping of the church for its mission.

### Israel, the Gentiles and the law

One of the major areas of discussion is the place of the Gentiles in Luke's theology. Nobody doubts now that this topic is of central importance in Luke's thought. J. Dupont has demonstrated very effectively that it is a conscious aim of Luke to show how the conversion of the Gentiles and their incorporation into the people of God is in line with OT prophecy.<sup>42</sup> But the question of whether Luke essentially sees the Gentiles as being brought into an existing Israel which for its part keeps the law or whether he regards the church as the new Israel composed of believing Jews and Gentiles remains a question of debate. J. Jervell strongly denies that Luke thought of a new Israel.<sup>43</sup> S. G. Wilson denies that Luke had a carefully thought-out theology of the Gentiles and holds that he took a pragmatic approach to this (and other) problems.<sup>44</sup> In a later work Wilson argues that Luke's position on the law is not completely clear or consistent; basically he seems to say that it is natural enough for Jewish Christians to continue to keep the law, but Gentiles do not need to do so although they are in some way bound by Mosaic principles.<sup>45</sup> These conclusions are convincingly challenged by C. L. Blomberg and M. M. B. Turner, who see in Acts the slowly developing recognition of the implications of the new covenant.<sup>46</sup>

At the opposite pole from Jervell stands J. T. Sanders, who in a thoroughly researched and meticulously detailed book argues that Luke is guilty of a sustained and bitter polemic against the unbelieving Jews and against Christian Jews for their opposition to the inclusion of Gentiles in the church: 'In Luke's opinion, the world will be much better off when "the Jews" get what they deserve and the world is rid of them.' Sanders makes some interesting points, but he spoils them by exaggeration and harsh language, and his work can be convincingly challenged at many points.<sup>47</sup>

### Social and political issues

Older writers drew attention to Luke's concern for the outcasts of society. The current trend is to explore his attitudes to the problems of the poor and politics. J. D. Yoder is responsible for popularizing the hypothesis that in Luke 4:16-30 Jesus was proclaiming a 'Year of Jubilee' with social

and economic as well as spiritual consequences.<sup>48</sup> An exegetical foundation for this hypothesis is offered by R. B. Sloan who stresses that the Jubilee concept is *primarily* religious; but while the presence of the motif cannot be doubted, my feeling is that it is much less prominent and decisive in Luke than Sloan suggests.<sup>49</sup> The view that Jesus adopted a revolutionary political stance is developed on a popular level by R. J. Cassidy, but again, while the social concern of Jesus is rightly expounded, it is a far cry from concern to social and political activism aimed at some kind of political revolution.<sup>50</sup> From Luke's emphasis on loving and forgiving one's enemies J. M. Ford draws out implications for non-violence today, although her argument that Jesus acted contrary to the expectations expressed in Luke 1-2 and in the preaching of the Baptist is unconvincing.<sup>51</sup> It is more likely that Luke intended the Magnificat and Benedictus to be interpreted in the light of the story that he goes on to narrate.

The specific question of Luke's teaching on poverty and riches has attracted numerous studies. We may mention the work of L. T. Johnson who argues that possessions have a symbolical function in Luke, of W. E. Pilgrim, who offers a well-balanced and readable exposition of the Lucan material and stresses how Luke is warning the wealthy Christians of his day of the danger in which they find themselves, and of D. P. Seccombe who offers a scholarly dissertation on the topic in which he refutes ideas that Luke sees poverty as an ideal or encourages asceticism for its own sake.<sup>52</sup>

### Conclusion

We have by no means considered all the themes of current Lucan scholarship. In particular, we have not looked at detailed monographs on specific passages.<sup>53</sup> The interested reader will, however, find plenty of indications in the works cited above for further study. Nor have we attempted to indicate whether any kind of consensus is emerging from current Lucan study. While the general lines of Luke's thought may seem clear enough, there is still plenty of scope for discussion on matters both major and minor.

<sup>1</sup> In this essay I shall try to avoid going over the ground already covered in my earlier surveys: 'Recent Study of the Gospel of Luke', *Exp.T* 80 (1968-9), pp. 4-8; 'Recent Study of the Acts of the Apostles', *Exp.T* 80 (1968-9), pp. 292-296.

<sup>2</sup> N. Richardson, *The Panorama of Luke* (London, 1982); D. Juel, *Luke-Acts* (London, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX and The Gospel according to Luke X-XXIV (The Anchor Bible, New York, 1981; 1985)* (I, pp. 3-34).

<sup>4</sup> R. J. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> F. Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Thirty-three years of research (1950-1983)* (Allison Park, 1987). An updated and not wholly idiomatic translation of *Luc le théologien. Vingt-cinq ans de recherches (1950-1975)* (Paris, 1978), and 'Chroniques du côté de chez Luc', *RTP* 115 (1983), pp. 175-189.

<sup>6</sup> See also W. Gasque, *A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* (Tübingen/Grand Rapids, 1975); C. H. Talbert, 'Shifting Sands: the Recent Study of the Gospel of Luke', *Int.* 30 (1976), pp. 381-395; M. Rese, 'Neuere Lukas-Arbeiten', *TLZ* 106 (1981), pp. 225-236; E. Grässer, 'Die Apostelgeschichte in der Forschung der Gegenwart', *TR* *nf* 26 (1960), pp. 93-167; 'Acta-Forschung seit 1960', *TR* *nf* 41 (1976), pp. 141-194, 259-290; 42 (1977), pp. 1-68; E. Plümacher, 'Acta-Forschung 1974-1982', *TR* *nf* 48 (1983), pp. 1-56; 49 (1984), pp. 105-169.

<sup>7</sup> On an even larger scale R. E. Brown offers what is in effect a commentary on Lk. 1-2 in *The Birth of the Messiah* (London, 1977).

- <sup>8</sup> E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (New Century Bible, London, 1966, 2<sup>nd</sup> 1974).
- <sup>9</sup> G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Pelican Gospel Commentaries, Harmondsworth, 1963).
- <sup>10</sup> L. Morris, *The Gospel according to St. Luke* (Tyndale NT Commentaries, London, 1974).
- <sup>11</sup> C. H. Talbert, *Reading Luke* (New York, 1982).
- <sup>12</sup> D. Gooding, *According to Luke* (Leicester, 1987).
- <sup>13</sup> C. H. Talbert, review in *CBQ* 48 (1986), pp. 336-338. For Talbert's own work in this direction see his *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (Missoula, 1974). The approach of 'narrative study' is found in R. C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts. A Literary Interpretation. Volume 1: The Gospel according to Luke* (Philadelphia, 1986); I find it difficult to discover just exactly what the merits and new insights of this approach are.
- <sup>14</sup> E. Schweizer, *The Good News according to Luke* (London, 1984).
- <sup>15</sup> The limits of this essay prevent me from doing any more than mention some works in other languages. Commentaries in German include the first volume of the definitive work by H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium (Herders theologischer Kommentar zum NT, Freiburg, 1969)*, a work of unparalleled detail and insight; the readable exposition by J. Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas (Regensburger Neues Testament, Regensburg, 1977)*, probably the best and fullest commentary that requires no knowledge of Greek; the radical work of W. Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas (Zürcher Bibelkommentare, Zürich, 1980)*; the two-volume commentary by G. Schneider, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas (Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum NT, Gütersloh/Würzburg, 1977)*, somehow fails to inspire.
- <sup>16</sup> F. W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age* (St Louis, 1972).
- <sup>17</sup> E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford, 1971).
- <sup>18</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1951; revised edition, Leicester, forthcoming; *Commentary on the Book of the Acts (New London Commentary, London, 1954; revised edition in the New International Commentary, Grand Rapids, forthcoming 1988)*.
- <sup>19</sup> R. P. C. Hanson, *The Acts (New Clarendon Bible, Oxford, 1967)*.
- <sup>20</sup> D. J. Williams, *Acts (Good News Commentaries, San Francisco, 1985)*. (This is not to be confused with the earlier work by C. S. C. Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles (Black's NT Commentaries, London, 1964)*, which belongs to the Bruce era and stands to some extent in the shade of its more distinguished contemporary.)
- <sup>21</sup> In German alongside Haenchen we have H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, Tübingen, 1963* — now available in English in the *Hermeneia* series, London, 1987), which is compact and incredibly dull and really adds very little to Haenchen. G. Schneider offers a massive two-volume work, *Die Apostelgeschichte (Herders theologischer Kommentar zum NT, Freiburg, 1980; 1982)*, which is extremely valuable as a reference work but fails to bring out the message of Acts. The shorter (but still lengthy) work by A. Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte (Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar, Gütersloh/Würzburg, 1981; 1985)*, offers a sharply critical study of the book. J. Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte (Das NT Deutsch, Göttingen, 1981)*, gives an incisive and stimulating commentary; he is much the most positive of contemporary German commentators apart from the evangelical scholar H.-W. Neudorfer (*Apostelgeschichte* I. Teil (EDITION C-Bibel-Commentar, Neuhäuser-Stuttgart, 1986)), who does for German readers what D. J. Williams does for English.
- <sup>22</sup> See G. B. Caird, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-27.
- <sup>23</sup> M. D. Goulder, *The Evangelists' Calendar: A Lectionary Explanation of the Development of Scripture* (London, 1978); *Luke: A New Paradigm* (Sheffield, forthcoming); J. Drury, *Tradition and Design in Luke's Gospel: A Study in Early Christian Historiography* (London, 1976).
- <sup>24</sup> G. Lüdemann, *Das frühe Christentum nach den Traditionen der Apostelgeschichte: ein Kommentar* (Göttingen, 1987). An English translation (*Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*) is promised for 1989.
- <sup>25</sup> S. G. Wilson, *Luke and the Pastorals* (London, 1979).
- <sup>26</sup> R. P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations* (Grand Rapids, 1975; 1978), II, pp. 223-238.
- <sup>27</sup> M. Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (London, 1979), p. 60. See further his *Between Jesus and Paul* (London, 1983).
- <sup>28</sup> Fitzmyer, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 143-270.
- <sup>29</sup> R. F. O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology: An Analysis of Luke-Acts* (Wilmington, Delaware, 1984).
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- <sup>31</sup> I. H. Marshall, 'Luke and His "Gospel"', in P. Stuhmacker (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (Tübingen, 1983), pp. 289-308.
- <sup>32</sup> H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St Luke* (London, 1960).
- <sup>33</sup> R. J. Maddox, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-157.
- <sup>34</sup> See for example P. S. Minear, *To Heal and to Reveal: The Prophetic Vocation according to Luke* (New York, 1976). (It is this book which, according to C. H. Talbert, signalled the beginning of the new approach to Luke-Acts.)
- <sup>35</sup> E. Franklin, *Christ the Lord: A Study in the Purpose and Theology of Luke-Acts* (London, 1975).
- <sup>36</sup> D. L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern* (Sheffield, 1987). There is not room here to discuss Bock's conclusions on how Luke uses the OT.
- <sup>37</sup> W. Pilgrim, *The Death of Christ in Lukan Soteriology* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton, 1971).
- <sup>38</sup> A. Büchele, *Der Tod Jesu in Lukasevangelium: eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Lk. 23* (Frankfurt, 1978), concludes that Luke presents Jesus as the suffering Righteous One and Prophet, his death shows his closeness to the Father and his forgiving love, and under its impact people like the dying thief come to penitence and conversion. R. Glöckner, *Die Verkündigung des Heils beim Evangelisten Lukas* (Mainz, 1975), sees Jesus more as a martyr and example but also as the one in whom the Spirit is active and who acts as the agent of God.
- <sup>39</sup> C. K. Barrett, 'Theologia Crucis — in Acts?', in C. Andresen and G. Klein, *Theologia Crucis — Signum Crucis: Festschrift für Erich Dinkler* (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 73-84.
- <sup>40</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London, 1975); see also his *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London, 1970).
- <sup>41</sup> M. M. B. Turner, *Luke and the Spirit: Studies in the Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cambridge, 1980); 'Jesus and the Spirit in Lucan Perspective', *Tyn.B* 32 (1981), pp. 3-42.
- <sup>42</sup> J. Dupont, *The Salvation of the Gentiles: Essays on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York, 1979).
- <sup>43</sup> J. Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis, 1972).
- <sup>44</sup> S. G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge, 1973). See also G. Lohfink, *Die Sammlung Israels* (München, 1975).
- <sup>45</sup> S. G. Wilson, *Luke and the Law* (Cambridge, 1983).
- <sup>46</sup> C. L. Blomberg, 'The Law in Luke-Acts', *JSNT* 22 (1984), pp. 53-80 (on which see F. G. Downing, 'Freedom from the Law in Luke-Acts', *JSNT* 26 (1986), pp. 49-52); M. M. B. Turner, 'The Sabbath, Sunday and the Law in Luke-Acts', in D. A. Carson (ed.), *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, 1982), pp. 99-157.
- <sup>47</sup> J. T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (London, 1987), p. 317. See the forthcoming critical essay by J. Weatherly in *Tyn.B*.
- <sup>48</sup> J. D. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, 1972).
- <sup>49</sup> R. B. Sloan, Jr., *The Favorable Year of the Lord: A Study of Jubiliary Theology in the Gospel of Luke* (Austin, Texas, 1977).
- <sup>50</sup> R. J. Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics and Society: A Study of Luke's Gospel* (Maryknoll, New York, 1978). For the continuing discussion see R. J. Cassidy and P. J. Scharper (eds.), *Political Issues in Luke-Acts* (Maryknoll, New York, 1983).
- <sup>51</sup> J. M. Ford, *My Enemy is my Guest: Jesus and Violence in Luke* (Maryknoll, New York, 1984).
- <sup>52</sup> L. T. Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (Missoula, 1977); W. E. Pilgrim, *Good News to the Poor* (Minneapolis, 1981); D. P. Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts* (Linz, 1983).
- <sup>53</sup> Mention should, however, be made of J. Neyrey, *The Passion according to Luke: a Redaction Study of Luke's Soteriology* (New York, 1985), who explores in an imaginative way the redactional elements in the passion story.

## Abbreviations used

CBQ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*  
 Exp.T *Expository Times*  
 Int. *Interpretation*  
 JSNT *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*

RTP *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*  
 TLZ *Theologische Literaturzeitung*  
 TR *neuf* *Theologische Rundschau (neue Folge)*  
 Tyn.B *Tyndale Bulletin*

## Selected recent studies of the fourth gospel

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A bare five years ago I prepared for this journal a rather lengthy article reviewing recent literature on the Gospel of John.<sup>1</sup> Doubtless it was characterized rather more by breadth than depth: it surveyed about one hundred books and articles. The invitation to update my evaluation of recent scholarship on the fourth gospel therefore evoked a rather plaintive cry: I am happy to oblige, but in order both to avoid 'vain repetition' and to adopt a fresh approach, it seems best to mention but a few works, and to subject most of these to more sustained assessment. The editor kindly agreed. Readers who want a more comprehensive survey of (reasonably) recent work on John should therefore refer to the earlier article.

### Commentaries

No major NT book has been better served by commentaries in the last twenty-five or thirty years than the Gospel of John. That means the latest commentaries are inevitably weighed by higher (or at least more plentiful) standards than can usefully be applied to commentaries on some other books. Five commentaries deserve mention.

At the light end, Robert Kysar<sup>2</sup> has contributed a fairly brief (330 pp.) commentary in a series 'written for laypeople, students, and pastors'. Those familiar with his earlier, major work surveying Johannine scholarship<sup>3</sup> will anticipate the easy grace of his style, the considerable erudition masked by self-imposed restrictions on the amount of literature to which he refers, the balance of many of his judgments. That turns out to be both the strength and weakness of the volume. For those who want an easy survey of the mainstream of current scholarly thought on John, unencumbered by notes and details, this is the book to buy. On only two major points does he part company with the mainstream. (1) He thinks the community's conflict with the synagogue occurred in the 70s, and the gospel itself was published around AD 80. (2) He adopts a rather minimalist stance in his interpretation of the so-called eucharist passage (Jn. 6). On both of these points I

am rather inclined to agree with him, though partly for different reasons. But if on a score of other points one thinks that mainstream Johannine scholarship has gone seriously astray, this book proves rather predictable and insufficiently detailed to challenge those whose evaluation of the evidence takes them outside the common herd. The six Johannine themes that Kysar emphasizes (who Jesus is, Spirit, eschatology, faith, the cross, and dualism) are handled competently, and distinctively literary concerns, such as irony and symbolism, receive their due. But Kysar is far too easily convinced of the ease with which the Johannine community can be reconstructed from the text of this gospel.

Also at the light end of the scale is the *Good News Commentary* by J. Ramsey Michaels<sup>4</sup> (i.e. it belongs to the series of commentaries on the *Good News Bible*). The commentary is aimed at the mythical 'general reader'; judging by the most miserable binding I have had the misfortune to use in the past decade, the publishers do not think anybody will actually read the book. In form this is a running commentary with occasional pauses for 'additional notes' that pick up a few more technical points. Michaels has written in a flowing style that is easy to read and understand. He is considerably more conservative in his judgments than Kysar. He suggests that the author is John the apostle, inasmuch as he 'put together the Gospel pretty much as we have it', and largely wrote himself out of it; but his associates in Ephesus, or wherever it might have been written, although they respected their mentor's desire for anonymity, nevertheless added not only the last couple of verses to attest to the author's identity and reliability, but also some brief snippets about the 'beloved disciple'. The date of composition is 'any time in the latter half of the first century', though 21:22f. suggests that the time of writing 'was probably nearer the end of that period than the beginning'. Most of Michaels's comments seek to explain the text. Although he focuses little attention on speculations regarding the nature of the Johannine community, informed readers will observe numerous asides that attest his wide reading. Sometimes one might wish the commentary were more theological, more openly committed to nurturing its reader.

At the other end of the scale stand two technical works, both significant but both of limited value to many readers of

this journal. The first is a fourth volume, available only in German, of Rudolf Schnackenburg's justly famous commentary.<sup>5</sup> The three principal volumes, available in both English and German, have been published long enough for most students of John to become familiar with them. This fourth volume is slimmer (236 pp.), and is made up of four parts. The first surveys the course of Johannine scholarship since 1955, as reflected in a rather selective list of monographs and commentaries; articles are virtually ignored. The second is made up of five excursuses: 'The Johannine Community and its Experience of the Spirit [or Spiritual Experience: *Geisterfahrung*]'; 'The Mission Outlook of John's Gospel in Contemporary Perspective'; 'Tradition and Interpretation in the Aphoristic Material of John's Gospel'; 'On the Redaction Criticism of John's Gospel'; and 'Pauline and Johannine Christology: A Comparison'. The third offers longer, more detailed exegeses and expositions of six passages than the normal constraints of the commentary allow (*viz.* Jn. 6; 10:1-18; 12:39-41; 15; 17:22-24; 19:37). The final section offers four lengthy 'postscripts' made up of several hundred notes to be added to the appropriate spots in the other three volumes.

The second technical work is the English translation of the German commentary by Ernst Haenchen.<sup>6</sup> The German original was briefly described in the earlier review article. Despite the best editorial efforts of Ulrich Busse, Haenchen's student who put the German work together from Haenchen's notes and manuscripts, and of Robert Funk, the translator and English editor who has added a certain amount of bibliography, the two volumes of the English translation (and why two, when the German original managed to fit into one, unless it is to make more money?) constitute a major disappointment. The scholarship is terribly dated, not only in sources consulted but also in outlook. Haenchen not only stands within the trailing edge of the history-of-religions school, but his approach to source and redaction criticism, though frequently interesting because it is so independent in its judgments, has learned nothing from the massive critiques and cautions levelled against arbitrary practitioners of these disciplines.

The only comparable treatment of John is the commentary by Bultmann. Unlike Bultmann, however, whose source criticism seeks to delineate sources right down to the half-verse, Haenchen argues that even the existence of a signs source is not all that clear: probably the understanding of signs as convincing miracles was common enough at the time, and stories about them circulated widely. Thus Haenchen appeals to unspecified 'traditions' on which the evangelist draws, rather than to concrete 'sources'. Bultmann's 'ecclesiastical redactor' has disappeared. But suddenly he reappears as a 'supplementor' who composed a much larger portion of the fourth gospel than Bultmann assumed; and at this point the source criticism becomes surgically precise once again (*e.g.* in Jn. 9, everything except vv. 4-5, 39-41 is from an earlier tradition). Thus Haenchen is interested in the development of various Johannine traditions. His understanding of 'Johannine theology' takes its shape from the contours of the trajectory or school that he reconstructs — quite unlike Bultmann's work, which (especially in his *Theology of the New Testament*) limits Johannine theology to that of the 'evangelist'.

Haenchen insists that Qumran has virtually nothing to do with John. The closest parallels are drawn between John and three Gnostic works, *The Gospel of Truth*, *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Gospel of Philip*. Mercifully, the trove from Nag Hammadi appeared too late for him to generate anachronistic parallels there.

Worse yet, although there are useful insights in the first third or so of the work, the commentary becomes thinner and thinner as one progresses through the gospel. In the latter half, entire pericopae are summed up in a few lines of comment. The kindest thing to say about these two volumes is that they are an interesting insight into Haenchen's mind and scholarship in the closing years of his life, and a remarkable testimony to the devotion of Busse and Funk. But to make this the *Hermeneia* commentary on John depreciates the prestige of the series almost as badly as allotting Bultmann's thin and idiosyncratic commentary on the Johannine Epistles to the series,<sup>7</sup> especially when far more significant work has yet to be translated.<sup>8</sup> In short, Haenchen's work is not useful as a commentary. It is a dated and unfinished manuscript whose admirers would have been wiser and finally kinder to their mentor had they published his work in a monograph series.

The last commentary that deserves mention in these notes stands midway along the spectrum, perhaps tilting somewhat to the technical side. The *Word* format is now well known, and Beasley-Murray's commentary on John<sup>9</sup> conforms to it. Compared with one or two volumes in this series that have become the definitive works on the parts of Scripture they treat, this relatively short commentary (441 pp. of comments, about 60 pp. of introduction) might be viewed as a disappointment. However, in an engaging Preface, Beasley-Murray himself draws attention to the plethora of commentaries on John, and asks what possible justification there might be for his. He testifies that he 'knows well that average ministers are far too busily engaged in their diverse responsibilities to attempt to cope with Hoskyns and Bultmann, with Barrett and Dodd, with Schnackenburg and Haenchen, *etc.* — still less to examine the endless stream of articles and monographs on varied aspects of the Fourth Gospel. It seemed that there was room for an attempt to pass on some of the treasures of modern study of this Gospel and with them to combine one's own findings and convictions.'

That is the standard, then, by which the author wants us to judge his book. I fear that if ministers find themselves unable to read Hoskyns and Barrett, they will have no more time for Beasley-Murray. They will miss a lot of succinct exposition. Here there is neat encapsulation and evaluation of many positions, wonderful clarity of style, a certain independence of judgment, and numerous useful insights.

If hesitations must also be voiced, they must not detract from the solid accomplishments in the volume. First, although at certain critical junctions Beasley-Murray's discussion is satisfyingly full, the relative brevity of the volume means that some parts are skipped over rather quickly. Second, the 'Explanation' sections are often disappointingly thin. That is where much more could be done to build *theology*, to link John's themes to broader biblical themes in a way that is both historically responsible and reflective of a unitary vision. Third, owing perhaps to the

compression of the 'Comment' sections (most of which are really quite excellent), some may find the commentary a trifle drier than it needs to be. Finally, on almost every conceivable issue Beasley-Murray adopts what might be considered a fairly conservative version of the mainstream of critical thought. At first this projects a certain sweet reasonableness. There is a good deal of 'on the one hand' and 'on the other hand' argumentation. Closer inspection prompts the reader to wonder if the stance is radical enough, in the etymological sense of going to the *radix* ('root') of some questions.

### Introductory matters

Of course, the commentaries mentioned above adopt a variety of views on critical matters. In addition, however, a number of recent publications treat these subjects without offering full commentary. D. Moody Smith has put us in his debt by publishing in book form a collection of ten of the essays he has written on John over the years.<sup>10</sup> The first surveys the status of Johannine scholarship a dozen years ago. The next three focus on source-critical matters (a reflection, no doubt, of Smith's continuing interest in such questions, pressing on from the days when his doctoral dissertation offered a perceptive critique of Bultmann's source theories).<sup>11</sup> The ensuing four essays study various aspects of the relation between John and the synoptics, while the last two are theological treatments of 'The Presentation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel' and 'Theology and Ministry in John' respectively. The essays span twenty-five years, and they have not been brought up to date. This helps the reader to discern just what changes have taken place, and they are striking. Smith himself has become more open, for instance, to the possibility that John knew one or more of the synoptic gospels, a view he would not have considered viable twenty years ago. As a moderate guide and contributor to the drift of the discussion, Smith is really quite excellent. Along the way he interacts with some positions not shared by many people (e.g. Neiryck's view that John knew all three synoptics), and betrays a wide reading of the technical sources (though he refers very little or not at all to Becker, Richter, de Jonge, Thyen and some others). But not much new ground is broken.

Quite a different approach is found in the recent work by Craig Blomberg.<sup>12</sup> There is only one lengthy essay (36 pp.) on John, but it is well worth reading by students who are being exposed to nothing but the mainstream of critical thought and who want to read a contemporary evaluation of these developments prepared by someone who self-consciously stands under the authority of the Word but who has not abandoned critical thought. The essay does not claim to chart a new course, and it is not as fresh or as comprehensive as some sections of the book which deal, for instance, with Luke, to which Blomberg has devoted most of his scholarly energy. But the essay should be read by all students, the more so since the old standby, Morris's *Studies*,<sup>13</sup> is not only desperately dated but also out of print. What we need, of course, is a new, more comprehensive 'Morris'.

Much more idiosyncratic are two recent works that offer exceedingly independent interpretations of the authorship or the purpose of the fourth gospel. Minear's<sup>14</sup> book argues that John was written before the war with Rome (AD 66-70), when tensions were high between, on the one hand, the churches in

Judea and Jerusalem, and on the other, the Jewish and Roman officials. The evangelist writes as a Christian prophet to the charismatic leaders of the Christian churches and their congregations, exhorting them to faithfulness and a proper experience of the presence of God in the midst of dangers that included martyrdom. That Minear can make any sort of plausible case for this hypothesis shows how fragile is the edifice upon which the more standard synthesis is built. On the other hand, the easy assumption that Christian prophets were prepared not only to speak in Jesus' name but to project back onto the historical Jesus whatever messages they brought has received telling criticism in recent years. In John's case, the possibility of such anachronistic projection is even less plausible when one remembers how often the evangelist very carefully distinguishes between what was understood in Jesus' day and what was understood only much later.<sup>15</sup> Minear has not been given a very sympathetic reading by reviewers. The one area where they are unlikely to fault him — the view that the fourth gospel was written for Christians — I have increasingly come to doubt.

The second book is idiosyncratic not only in its conclusions, but also in its approach. Eller<sup>16</sup> sets out to identify the 'beloved disciple', but presents the problem more or less as a 'whodunnit', complete with references to Sherlock Holmes and a chatty style (e.g. 'Goodness gracious, the Beloved Disciple turns out to be not as original a thinker as we had thought'; 'chomping the flesh' [Does *τρῶγυ* really mean that?]). In the last third of the book (pp. 75-124), the author outlines 'the beloved disciple's thought', which turns out to be quite insistent on the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and not at all interested in sacramentarianism. The book is great fun to read, wonderfully dogmatic where it shouldn't be, and cheeky enough that one wonders occasionally if Eller is having us on. It is very hard to decide whether it would be kosher to tell you Eller's conclusion about the identity of the beloved disciple. Aren't reviewers of whodunnits supposed to keep that a secret? If you don't want to know, don't look at the next footnote!<sup>17</sup> From my perspective, his solution is bizarre, and I had almost as much pleasure identifying all the flaws I found in Eller's arguments, all the evidence not presented or presented in strikingly slanted ways, as I did watching Eller poke holes in other theories.

In a class by itself, idiosyncratic but immensely erudite, is the posthumously published work by John A. T. Robinson, *The Priority of John*.<sup>18</sup> Prepared as a 'heavy' version of the Bampton Lectures, the work was touched up by Prof. C. F. D. Moule and lightly edited by J. F. Coakley. Whether one agrees with all of his conclusions or not, we are immensely indebted to Robinson for his massive marshalling of information, his great clarity of style, and for the forcefulness of his presentation that nonetheless keeps clear of cheap polemics.

By the 'priority' of John, Robinson does not mean that the fourth gospel was necessarily written first, but that we must begin 'with what he has to tell us on its own merits and ask how the others fit, historically and theologically, into that, are illumined by it, and in turn illumine it'. He wants to correct the view that sees John as a derivative gospel, a corrective gospel. John, he claims, is theologically closest to the source, while betraying the deepest reflection on the part of the evangelist. The second chapter surveys the primary sources

of our knowledge of the setting and authorship of the fourth gospel. Geniuses, he warns, are not to be multiplied beyond what is necessary: the apostle John wrote the book, and probably he was a first cousin of Jesus. Whatever one makes of such points, Robinson is superb in handling alleged anachronisms (not least *ἀποσυνάγωγος* in 9:22). Chapter 3 is devoted to the chronology of Jesus' ministry, which then sets out the agenda for chapters 4–6. Robinson argues for a two-year ministry, and seeks to fit the synoptic gospels into this structure. Not a little of the argumentation is parallel to Morris's *Studies*, to which reference has already been made, though Robinson rarely mentions the book. Robinson argues, frequently convincingly, that many details in the synoptic gospels make more sense when information from John's gospel is kept in mind. Picking up on a suggestion made by Ernst Bammel, he argues that the *real* trial of Jesus took place forty days or more before passion week, and is reflected in John 11. The alleged illegalities of Mark 14 and John 18–19 then all fall away, because there was no *legal* trial at that point. The seventh chapter is devoted to the teaching of Jesus. Here Robinson stresses the points of similarity between John and the synoptists, and insists that the discourses themselves, however stamped by Johannine style, are not so much discourses as dialogues with real interlocutors, dialogues that have the ring of truth.

With much of this many evangelicals will be quite happy, even if some of us might demur on a number of details. The present reviewer, for instance, remains quite unrepentant in his view that the fourth gospel was written after AD 70. But the blockbuster comes in chapter 8. If you ever wanted to know how the former Bishop of Woolwich could simultaneously be the author of *Honest to God* and *Redating the New Testament*, here is your opportunity to find out. Robinson powerfully argues that dating techniques that depend on plugging a document into a predetermined trajectory of christology are deeply flawed; 'high' christology developed remarkably early, so the high christology of the fourth gospel is no impediment to either a pre-70 date or to apostolic authorship. But it turns out that Robinson's 'high' christology is a repetition of his book *The Human Face of God*,<sup>19</sup> in which all of theology is constructed 'from below'. Jesus in John's gospel, Robinson argues, often calls himself the Son, but only once does he refer to himself as the Son of God. Jesus is above all else the prophet, the man of God. In 1:18, the reading *μονογενής θεός* is probably original, but was a slip for *μονογενής υἱός* that John himself would have gladly corrected. As for 1:1,14, although the *λόγος* becomes flesh/person, before this 'incarnation' the *λόγος* was not personal. In briefly commenting on 20:28, Robinson acknowledges that Thomas applies 'my God' to Jesus, but he writes: 'For in this human friend and companion . . . [Thomas] recognizes the one in whom the lordship of God meets him and claims him, though not as a heavenly being but as a wounded yet transfigured man of flesh and blood, whose glorification lay in making himself nothing so that in him God might be everything.' In short, if Dunn<sup>20</sup> argues that the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ did not arise until the fourth gospel, Robinson argues that it cannot be found even there. In my judgment, sober exegesis insists they are both wrong.

It would take a very long chapter to evaluate this book fairly. Much of it is very refreshing, partly because it dares to

attack the theological and especially the historical shibboleths of the day. Robinson brings to light all kinds of arguments that were commonplace in an earlier generation of scholars, and casts them in a new and modern light at the very time when they were almost lost from view, buried under a consensus built up of increasingly speculative redaction-critical reconstructions. But I fear that few scholars will adopt Robinson's critical positions. Ironically, this will be primarily because they do not accept his reading of John's christology. Once genuinely 'high' christology is acknowledged to lie thick on the ground in the fourth gospel, the effect of Robinson's *historical* argumentation is to drive the reader to a rather conservative *historical and theological* construct (which of course Robinson would disavow).

### The new criticism

Under this heading fall a number of recent books that make use of some aspect of rhetorical criticism. The commonality in this highly diverse group of methods is the primacy of a rigidly synchronic approach to the text. Of course, older studies that focused on, say, the Greek idioms of the fourth gospel, could adopt the same stance. Halfway between this older approach and more recent concerns is the technical monograph by van Belle,<sup>21</sup> who seeks to identify all the 'parentheses' in the Gospel of John. Focusing on one literary technique, Duke<sup>22</sup> examines every passage where one might argue that John is using irony. This work is neither highly technical nor very long, and, because it is well written, it should be inviting to students. One of its strengths is that it carefully distinguishes irony, double meaning, misunderstanding and metaphor. Its weakness is that it adopts without thoughtful interaction many kinds of historical and theological stances that are incidental to the thesis. In other words, it gives the impression of being so narrowly focused that the author never took the time to come to grips with John and with much of the secondary literature. But despite the caveat, this is a good book.

Lona<sup>23</sup> adopts a quite different approach. He runs through his chosen passage, John 8:33–56, twice. The first time though he deploys more or less standard redaction-critical techniques, while the second time through he follows the models of 'literary semiotics'. By this he means that he approaches the text synchronically, using communication models and structuralist theory, to establish a convergence of interpretations regarding the significance of Abraham.

But by far the most important work in this category is that of Culpepper.<sup>24</sup> This is the first book to apply the insights and methods of the new 'rhetorical criticism' in a full-length monograph to the Gospel of John. Culpepper's primary indebtedness is perhaps to Seymour Chatman<sup>25</sup> and Gérard Genett,<sup>26</sup> but he has read widely in the area of literary criticism, especially the literary criticism of the novel. His aim is to analyse the fourth gospel as a whole, as a complete literary work, using the categories of such criticism. Committing himself not only to a synchronic approach but to the interplay between text and reader, Culpepper avows that meaning 'is produced in the mental moves the text calls for its reader to make, quite apart from questions concerning its sources and origin'. In successive chapters, then, Culpepper takes us through considerations of 'Narrator and Point of View', 'Narrative Time', 'Plot', 'Characters', 'Implicit Commentary', and 'The Implied Reader'. These elements are

tied together in a comprehensive diagram (a slight revision of Chatman's work).

How these topics are developed by Culpepper can best be conveyed by a couple of examples. In the second chapter, 'Narrator and Point of View', he begins by distinguishing three terms. The *real author* refers to the person or persons who actually wrote the fourth gospel. The *implied author* 'is always distinct from the real author and is always evoked by a narrative. The Gospel of John, therefore, has an implied author simply by virtue of its being a narrative'. The *implied author* is an ideal or literary figure who may be inferred from the sum of the choices that constitute the narrative. He or she is a created version of the real author, and sometimes a subset of the real. The *narrator* is a rhetorical device, the voice that actually tells the story. The narrator *may* be dramatized as a character in the story; alternatively, the narrator may be undramatized, in which case the line between the narrator and the implied author becomes thin, though never entirely obliterated. The narrator actually tells the story, addresses the reader and resorts to explanatory asides — in short, the narrator is *intrusive* in the narrative.

The narrator of the fourth gospel, Culpepper argues, adopts omniscience as his psychological point of view. In literary criticism, this does not mean that the narrator is, like God, literally omniscient, but that he adopts a stance that enables him to provide inside information and views on what the characters are thinking, feeling, intending, believing, and so forth. Culpepper finds evidence for this in passages like this: 'But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it . . .' (6:61); 'No one at the table knew why he said this to him' (13:28); 'When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid' (19:8); and much more of the same. Similarly, there is a kind of 'omnipresence' to the narrator; he is 'present' in some sense as an unseen observer at the interview between the Samaritan woman and Jesus, because he is able to record what went on, to tell 'what no historical person could know'. Moreover, this narrator clearly writes retrospectively (e.g. 2:20-21; 7:39).

Based on this analysis, Culpepper proceeds to examine relationships between the narrator and Jesus (e.g. he finds both 'omniscient', and notes how the narrator so determines the language and idiom that both persons speak with exactly the same voice), and between the narrator and the implied author (here Culpepper embarks on a rather important study of 21:24-25).

Subsequent chapters are no less significant, and cumulatively prove interesting and thought-provoking. But careful reading of the work raises a number of questions and reservations.

The first concerns the unqualified transfer of categories developed in the poetics of the *novel* to gospel literature. Culpepper is not entirely insensitive to the problem, of course; but his defence of his methods is not very convincing. The heart of his answer is essentially twofold. First, although he concedes that '[the] danger of distortion must be faced constantly when techniques developed for the study of one genre are applied to another', nevertheless he insists that 'in principle the question of whether there can be a separate set of hermeneutical principles for the study of Scripture should have been settled as long ago as Schleiermacher'.<sup>27</sup> In one sense, this is entirely correct; but in no sense is it relevant to

the problem posed. The question at stake is not whether or not we may examine the literary conventions of Scripture in the light of the literary conventions of other literature, but whether the modern novel is the best parallel to first-century gospels. True, as Culpepper points out, there are indeed parallels between the Gospel of John and 'novelistic, realistic narrative', but Culpepper makes no attempt whatever to isolate the *discontinuities*. To take one easy example, Culpepper subsumes discussion of the eyewitness themes in John under the narrative categories of *narrator* and *implied author*, without seriously considering that if the witness themes are given force within some narrative framework other than the novel, the shape of the discussion *inevitably* swings to *some* consideration of the kind and quality of the *history* purportedly being told, and therefore to truth claims — and not just to the shape of the *story* being narrated.

Culpepper's second line of defence is the argument of Hans Frei in his important work, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*.<sup>28</sup> Frei argues that the Enlightenment drove western thought to assess the truthfulness of narratives in exclusively *historical* terms. This 'crisis of historical narrative', Frei argues, led the Germans to develop higher criticism and thus to question the *truthfulness* of the gospel narratives; but it led the English to invent the novel, which conveys its own kind of 'truth' — not truth *qua* historical facts or chronicle, but some deep insight into reality, constructed in historically more or less specific contexts. Therefore the way forward, Culpepper argues, in an age when many thoughtful people 'cannot accept as historically plausible (the gospel's) characterization of Jesus as a miracle worker with full recollection of his pre-existence and knowledge of his life after death',<sup>29</sup> is not to restrict truth to *historical* truth and therefore the truth claims of the gospel, but to recognize the peculiar nature of *narrative* truth. Culpepper is not saying that the fourth gospel's narratives convey *nothing* of history; rather, he wants to preserve some sort of blend: 'The future of the gospel in the life of the church will depend on the church's ability to relate both story and history to truth in such a way that neither has an exclusive claim to truth and one is not incompatible with the other'.<sup>30</sup> Yet not only does his example of miracles in the life of Jesus fail to inspire confidence (Could the resurrection be thrown into the list of negotiables? If not, why not?), but he gives no criteria to guide us, as if the division were immaterial.

His favourite analogy is more uncontrolled yet. He does not want the Gospel of John to be thought of as a window on the ministry of Jesus, enabling us to see *through* the text to that life and ministry, but as a mirror in which we see not only ourselves but also the meaning of the text that lies somewhere *between* the text and ourselves, 'and belief in the gospel can mean openness to the ways it calls readers to interact with it, with life, and with their own world. It can mean believing that the narrative is not only reliable but right and that Jesus' life and our response mean for us what the story has led us to believe they mean'.<sup>31</sup> But 'reliable' and 'right' in what sense? If in *some* historical sense, we have been returned to our window — *i.e.* the narrator 'reliably' tells us some things about Jesus' ministry; but if purely in the sense of the 'reliability' of the novelist, we have sacrificed the gospel's claims to certain historical specificity, and set sail on the shoreless sea of existential subjectivity, all on the grounds that we may legitimately treat John as a novel — the very point

that remains to be proved. In that case the meaning may be in the story, the story that *we* perceive, the story that stands on *our* side of the text; but it tells us nothing of the ministry of Jesus on the *other* side.

This is not of course to argue for the view of history associated with von Ranke ('wie es eigentlich gewesen ist'); but it is certainly to argue that 'the eclipse of biblical narrative' cannot be overcome by appealing to the novel. In any case, not a few historians are persuaded Frei's analysis of the rise of biblical criticism is *historically* mistaken.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, if his view prevailed in its strongest form, what would be communicated to the reader would not be the gospel at all, for the gospel is irretrievably bound up with God's self-disclosure and redemptive sacrifice in the person of his Son within the space-time continuum that constitutes history. The 'narrative truth' that a novel conveys is judged in terms of its universality (e.g. the depiction of *universal* human foibles, tensions, fears, loves, hates, relationships, etc., found in every age and society). The historically specific contexts of such literature establish frameworks of more or less verisimilitude but do not constitute the 'universal' element for which the writing is praised. By contrast, the gospels are universally applicable to human beings, *not* because they portray a central figure who is just like the rest of us, but precisely the reverse: they depict a unique figure who alone can save us, and who scandalously invades humanity's existence at a specific point in the space-time continuum. Doubtless he is continuous with us in many ways, but to say only this is to say too little. To have faith in the gospel message is not the same thing as responding positively to the story of Superman, who is also said to invade our turf from beyond. Although biblical faith has a major 'subjective' or 'personal' or 'existential' component, it depends also on its object — on the other side of the 'window'. Biblical Christianity cannot outlive the 'scandal of historical particularity'. By contrast, the novel thrives on the universals of human existence.

The dominant influence of the poetics of the novel on Culpepper's thinking and the consequent clouding of his exegetical judgment can be traced at scores of points. For instance, the treatment of the so-called 'omniscience' of the writer is slanted to fit the patterns generated by fiction writers; but on the face of it, any responsible observer could draw reasonable conclusions about what Jesus knew, or his disciples did not, or what Pilate feared, from the actions they took and/or the words they said. To cite another modern literary genre, many modern biographies do not hesitate, on responsible grounds, to tell us what their subjects feared, thought, loved, supposed. And if the narrator of the fourth gospel was not historically privy to the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, this scarcely means he should be classed as an 'omnipresent' narrator in a fiction story; for after all, there are other ways of learning about a conversation between two people besides being there — the more so in this case where we are specifically told how freely the woman talked about the entire episode (4:29,39,42). Certainly the fourth evangelist is far more reserved in these matters than, say, a nineteenth-century Victorian *novelist*, most of whom were given to the most minute probing of their subject's psyche. Or again, although Culpepper says some very insightful things about John 21:24-25, some of his judgments spring from his adoption of fiction poetics as a Procrustean bed in which every scrap of evidence must be

forced to lie. Maintaining the distinction between the real author (the evangelist) and the implied author (who is the 'superior version' of the real author), Culpepper takes 21:24 to mean that the evangelist (the real author) also identifies this superior self (the implied author) with the beloved disciple. 'When the narrator dramatically pulls the curtain on the implied author in the closing verses of the gospel, the reader recognizes that the Beloved Disciple fits the image the gospel projects of the implied author as one who knows Jesus intimately . . .'<sup>33</sup> Note how this sort of analysis forgets that distinctions among 'real author', 'implied author' and 'narrator' are to some extent artifices to enable us to perform certain types of closer analysis, within the analysis of the poetics of the novel. Now, however, the three are almost hypostatized. More important, if the Gospel of John is not *a priori* condemned to the poetics of fiction, the same evidence and arguments might be used to forge the conclusion that the evangelist *actually* was the beloved disciple.

All this is a further painful reminder of the epistemological impasse into which a substantial proportion of modern critical biblical scholarship has got itself. There is everywhere a deep desire to preserve some sort of genuinely pious attachment to Christianity, while working on historical-critical levels with such powerful post-Enlightenment impulses that no epistemologically responsible grounding for the piety is possible. The result is two-tier thinking — epistemological bankruptcy.

But there is an unforeseen benefit that flows from Culpepper's work. Any approach, like his, that treats the text as a *finished literary product* and analyses it on that basis calls in question the legitimacy of the claim that layers of tradition can be peeled off the gospel in order to lay bare the history of the community. If aporias, say, can be integrated into the source-critical approach of R. T. Fortna, they can also be integrated into the literary unity of R. A. Culpepper. If aporias may be literary devices they are not *necessary* evidence of seams. In other words, Fortna and Culpepper in one sense represent divergent streams of contemporary biblical scholarship — so divergent, in fact, that a debate has begun about which approach to the text should take precedence. Culpepper has no doubts: 'Once the effort has been made to understand the narrative character of the gospels, some rapprochement with the traditional, historical issues will be necessary.'<sup>34</sup> But the problem is deeper than mere precedence. If the material can be responsibly integrated into the unity Culpepper envisages, or something like it, what right do we have to say the same evidence testifies to *disunity*, seams, disparate sources and the like? Conversely, if the latter are justified, should we not conclude Culpepper's discovery of unity *must* be artificially imposed? The unforeseen benefit from this debate, then, is that it may free up the rather rigid critical orthodoxy of the day and open up possibilities that have illegitimately been ruled out of court.

In short, this is an important book, not because it has all the answers, but because it is the most comprehensive treatment of the fourth gospel from the perspective of the new criticism, and will set much of the agenda for years to come.

#### Other studies

Space forbids detailed discussion of the many works that treat some Johannine theme of restricted passage in some depth.

Many of these are doctoral dissertations, re-worked for the press or otherwise; most of them utilize a variety of exegetical and redactional techniques, and focus rather more attention on the delineation of the Johannine community than on wrestling with the person, teaching and works of the historical Jesus. But these generalizations must not mask the considerable diversity of opinion that can be found on most critical matters.

A few sample works may be noted. In the published form of his dissertation at Vanderbilt, Nicholson<sup>35</sup> examines all the passages that deal with Jesus ascending or descending, and relates them to the theme of Jesus' 'going away' through death. Nicholson attempts to delineate the entire plot in terms of this motif, and argues that because Jesus is identified to the readers at the beginning of the gospel, the descent-ascend motif functions as a literary device to create or reinforce proper community belief as to who Jesus is.

More technical and detailed than Nicholson's work is the University of Notre Dame dissertation by Segovia.<sup>36</sup> Segovia undertakes to examine all the passages in 1 John where *ἀγάπη/ἀγαπᾶν* appear, and compare them with John 13:34-35; 15:1-17; 15:18-16:15 to test the thesis of Jürgen Becker — to the effect that the author of 1 John, or someone else from the same *Sitz im Leben*, was amongst the final redactors of the fourth gospel, and decisively shaped the three passages just listed. Segovia concludes that Becker's thesis is correct in the case of the first two, but not the last, of these three passages, and in consequence offers his own reconstruction of the history of the Johannine community. Although his work abounds in insightful comments, it is characterized by so many instances of the rawest form of disjunctive thought, and by so many speculations piled on speculations, that the book, though admired by many, will prove convincing to few.

The major study by Kremer<sup>37</sup> on the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn. 11) is structurally very different from the two studies just mentioned. The first part of the book (pp. 11-109) is given over to a synchronic and diachronic study of the text. At first, more or less traditional conclusions are drawn: John sees this as the greatest of the signs he records, and as the one that points most decisively to the resurrection of Jesus. At the end of this section, Kremer argues that the historical Jesus must stand at the origin of the narrative in some respect, but he cannot decide whether Jesus performed some work of healing which has been narrated as a resurrection and thus taken over by the evangelist, or a work by Jesus which his contemporaries actually saw as a resurrection. A more obvious possibility is not even discussed. To his credit, Kremer thinks it unlikely this account is a historicizing of the parable in Luke 16.

The next section of the book, and by far the largest (pp. 111-328), traces the way this account has influenced Western culture from Christian antiquity through the Middle Ages, the Reformation and the Enlightenment to modern times. Kremer acknowledges that the historicity of the narrative was not questioned until the Enlightenment. Interpretative variations turned on theological, allegorical and symbolic approaches to the narrative. Since the Enlightenment, however, almost all attention has been devoted to the question of historicity, whether affirming or denying, apart from a small body of nihilist and existentialist literature that

uses Lazarus as a tragic symbol of the futility and meaninglessness of life and of the annihilation that takes place at death.

In the final section of his book (pp. 329-375), Kremer attempts to lay out the way this text should be appropriated today. What he advocates is a form of faith completely uninterested in the question of historicity. The Word of God is not to be confused with the events described, nor with the text describing them, but with the self-revelation of God communicated through the evangelist's literary skill. Kremer wants us to preach the power of Jesus over sin and death in what he judges to be an existential sense. It is not 'existential' merely in the sense that it has an impact on our existence; it turns out to be 'existential' in the way that Bultmann's faith in the resurrection of Jesus is existential: the event is entirely swallowed up in the proclamation, leaving no real object of faith at all. The best thing that can be said about this is that theologians who follow Kremer's advice will probably not be understood by most of their flock, who will therefore understand the message in more traditional ways.

I shall pass by the treatment of the Paraclete by Franck,<sup>38</sup> since I recently reviewed it elsewhere,<sup>39</sup> and turn to another book on the Spirit. The published form of Burge's Aberdeen dissertation<sup>40</sup> examines the passages in John, and to some extent in the Johannine Epistles, that deal with the Holy Spirit. The scholarly net is cast fairly widely over the secondary literature, and the book is therefore a mine of useful information. Its principal weakness is that much of its exposition turns rather more on the balancing of secondary opinions than on the cut and thrust of detailed exegesis of the text itself. In common with other studies of this type, Burge devotes considerable attention to hypothesizing about the community circumstances that called forth the peculiar emphases he detects in this gospel. Most of these are sensible enough, even when other reconstructions are equally possible.

### Concluding reflections

It may be a bit of a cheek to offer any concluding reflections as to the state of Johannine studies when this review has focused on so few of them. But at the risk of distorting the picture, a few judgments may not be entirely misplaced.

(1) In common with much of the field of NT scholarship, contemporary studies on John betray considerable diversity. This diversity goes beyond the diversity of individual judgments made upon an agreed base of method. As modern scholarship has stretched out to embrace more and more 'tools' for the study of the text, some of them mutually incompatible, the disarray has deepened.

(2) Contributing to the sense of disarray, though rather different from it, is the tendency in all of us to see our particular focus of inquiry as the 'key' to resolving the Johannine 'enigma'. It is argued, or assumed, that a particular method is or ought to be primary; that one particular motif controls the plot of the narrative; that one chapter, interpreted in a new way, offers the grid that makes sense of the whole. Part of this, of course, is nothing more than the spin-off of proving that one's doctoral dissertation is 'original'. Experts in the field take such claims in their stride —

that is to say, they largely discount them. But students must read quite a number of such studies before the relative weight of any particular study in the entire field can be properly assessed.

(3) If there is any point of growing consensus, it is that John the Evangelist was writing at two levels, one dealing with the historical Jesus, the other with his own community. This consensus is more diverse than first meets the eye. Some interpreters use the two-level drama of Martyn; others prefer the symbolism of Léon-Dufour; still others depend heavily on traditional source- and redaction-critical distinctions; and others have opted for the new literary criticism. It is often far too little appreciated, however, how much of the reconstruction of the Johannine community depends on rather doubtful speculation. The question is not whether a particular reconstruction makes sense, but whether there may not be several others that make equal or better sense. Once a particular reconstruction becomes encrusted with the footnotes of critical orthodoxy, however, it is exceedingly difficult to dislodge, however fragile its real supports may be. To betray for a moment my own quirks, increasingly I find myself unpersuaded by many features in the dominant trajectories of the Johannine community. In any case, the devotion of so much energy to the relatively speculative has contributed to a feeling of unreality amongst many students when they examine these studies. The reconstructions are far removed from what the text actually *says*. Such connections as exist are largely inferential, often extended over a rather lengthy chain. To the busy pastor, or to the theological student deeply committed to preaching the Word of God, the law of diminishing returns sets in rather early in the study of some of these works. In short, there is a considerable lacuna in first-class exegetical and theological studies of the text as it stands.

(4) The relation of the fourth gospel to the synoptics is ripe for a fresh examination, based especially on contributions by Barrett and Neiryck. Since so many reconstructions have depended on the assumption of a Johannine tradition hermetically sealed off from the rest of the church, the potential for reshaping Johannine scholarship is considerable.

(5) Although the focus on books in this review article precluded discussion of a number of important essays, it is worth mentioning that there is once again amongst the latter a rising interest in the OT background to many Johannine themes, verbal expressions, and even structures of thought.

(6) Finally, it would surely be a wonderful thing if more of us who write on this book from time to time would discipline ourselves to write *coram Deo*. The modern mood tends to set such a devotional stance over against genuine scholarship. From the perspective of Christian discipleship, from the perspective of the Gospel of John itself, that antithesis increasingly calls out to be rejected, at least in some technical writing, as a pagan superstition.

<sup>1</sup> D. A. Carson, 'Recent literature on the fourth gospel: some reflections', *Themelios* 9/1 (September, 1983), pp. 8-18.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Kysar, *John* (Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel: An examination of contemporary scholarship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *John* (GNC; San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium: Ergänzende Auslegungen und Exkurse* (HKNT IV.4; Freiburg: Herder, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Ernst Haenchen, *John*, 2 vols. (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Johannine Epistles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, ET 1973).

<sup>8</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Die Johannesbriefe* (HKNT XIII.3; Freiburg: Herder, 1975).

<sup>9</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Waco: Word, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> D. Moody Smith, *Johannine Christianity: Essays on Its Setting, Sources, and Theology* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1984).

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

<sup>12</sup> Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Leicester: IVP, 1987).

<sup>13</sup> Leon Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969).

<sup>14</sup> Paul S. Minear, *John: The Martyr's Gospel* (New York: Pilgrim, 1984).

<sup>15</sup> D. A. Carson, 'Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel', *Tyndale Bulletin* 33 (1982), pp. 59-91.

<sup>16</sup> Vernard Eller, *The Beloved Disciple: His Name, His Story, His Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

<sup>17</sup> Lazarus.

<sup>18</sup> London: SCM, 1985/Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone, 1987.

<sup>19</sup> London: SCM, 1973.

<sup>20</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980).

<sup>21</sup> Gilbert van Belle, *Les parenthèses dans l'évangile de Jean: Aperçu historique et classification; texte grec de Jean* (Leuven: University Press, 1985).

<sup>22</sup> Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985).

<sup>23</sup> H. E. Lona, *Abraham in Johannes 8: Ein Beitrag zur Methodenfrage* (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1976).

<sup>24</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). Much of what I now say about this book first appeared in a review in *Trinity Journal* 4 (1983), pp. 122-126.

<sup>25</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Story and discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978).

<sup>26</sup> Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (tr. Jane E. Lewin; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> Culpepper, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>28</sup> New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

<sup>29</sup> Culpepper, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. especially John D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982). For a compelling study of the relationship between truth and genres found in the Bible, cf. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 'The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture's Diverse Literary Forms', in D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), pp. 51-104, 374-383.

<sup>33</sup> Culpepper, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>35</sup> Godfrey C. Nicholson, *Death as Departure: The Johannine Descent-Ascent Schema* (SBLDS 63; Chico: SP, 1983).

<sup>36</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition* (SBLDS 58; Chico: SP, 1982).

<sup>37</sup> Jacob Kremer, *Lazarus: Die Geschichte einer Auferstehung. Text, Wirkungs- und Botschaft von Joh 11.1-46* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1985).

<sup>38</sup> Eskil Franck, *Revelation Taught: The Paraclete in the Gospel of John* (ConBNT 14; Lund: Gleerup, 1985).

<sup>39</sup> *JBL* 106 (1987), pp. 549-551.

<sup>40</sup> Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

# Book Reviews

Martin Noth, *The Chronicler's History*, trans. H. G. M. Williamson (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), £15 hb, £5.50 pb.

This book is a translation of the second part of Martin Noth's highly influential *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, which first appeared over 40 years ago. The first part of the same work was Noth's more celebrated treatise on the Deuteronomistic history, which also appeared in translation in JSOT's supplement series in 1981. The appearance now of *The Chronicler's History* fills an important gap in the range of material available to the English reader on the books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. Anyone interested in tracing the history of study of Chronicles (Ch.) in the present century has to pay attention to Noth.

The influence of Noth is well charted by H. G. M. Williamson, the translator, in an introductory essay written specially as a preface to the book. Essentially it consists in Noth's insistence on seeing Ch. in its own terms and the Chronicler as having theological concerns, related to conditions in his own day, which have influenced the shape of the books he produced. The revolution which this portended was that the books could be viewed as having a message of their own rather than as being merely a set of curious appendices to the other account of the history of Israel and Judah in Samuel-Kings (which was in any case generally regarded as more reliable). The task of reading Ch. became less a matter of using it in the reconstruction of Israel's history than of observing how the author used his sources (chiefly Samuel-Kings), and what he intended to say by his adjustments, additions and omissions. Nearly half the material in Ch. is peculiar to those books. Yet on Noth's view omissions become equally important. Is it an accident that Ch. has omitted virtually everything from the portrayals of David and Solomon which might reflect badly on them, such as David's affair with Bathsheba? Or does he thus pursue a project of holding these first kings of Israel up as a kind of ideal? It is possible in fact to give an account of the central theological ideas of the Chronicler: the election of David and the exclusive legitimacy of the Jerusalem temple, the special roles of priests and Levites, a close connection between acts and their consequences and (for Noth) an openness to a possible better future for the covenant people beyond its present (in the period of restoration) condition of vassaldom. Most recent commentaries on Ch. have taken their cue from Noth and explained the peculiarities of Ch. in terms of theological concerns.

The view thus established implies that the overwhelming interest of the Chronicler is not in the events themselves which he records, for all the lengthiness of his account of them, but rather in constructing an understanding of the restoration community in his own day. Figures from the past, and the way in which they experienced the hand of God, for good or ill, thus become models, and foci of hope, for the author's contemporaries. Part of the force of this is the close connection between Ch. and Ezra-Nehemiah, which deals precisely with conditions after the restoration from Babylon. (Noth, and many before and since, have regarded these books as being from the same hand as Ch.) It seems to the present reviewer that this general point has been firmly established. The interests evinced by the Chronicler are just those which a Jew of the Persian period might be expected to have. The question is thus raised with some force, of course, whether the Chronicler can be regarded as a historian at all. His claim to be such would seem to become the more precarious if in fact he has falsified or invented material in order to compose a picture which suited his purposes. Noth thought that he did freely compose parts of his work. He attempted to defend the Chronicler from charges of dishonesty which might ensue, on the grounds that he simply could not have imagined that conditions that prevailed in his own day, with respect to the cult, would not also have prevailed in the time of David and Solomon. The Chronicler did indeed set out to portray Israel's history in a certain way, but

accusations of unfair bias, Noth argues, are anachronistic. Within his own world of ideas he did set out to convey information about Israel's past. This, however, would not be everyone's idea of a defence of the Chronicler's reputation as a historian.

Some of the study of Ch. that has been done in the years since Noth has given grounds for thinking that the Chronicler was not as cavalier in his use of historical material as Noth thought. The Dead Sea Scrolls show that not all of Ch's deviations from Samuel-Kings can be attributed to his ideology, since they witness to a Hebrew text of Samuel-Kings which more closely resembles in parts the parallel passages of Ch. than it does the Masoretic text of Samuel-Kings. Other studies have been more positive about the Chronicler's use of independent historical sources than Noth was (again Williamson helpfully documents the developments).

Unfortunately evidence about the Chronicler's reliability remains patchy. However, the question as to a correct view of the Chronicler is not simply one of accuracy, but raises more elusive questions about the nature of historiography, and biblical narrative in particular. Whatever view is taken of Ch. must reckon with its carefully executed portrayal of Israel's history as a means of laying certain theological propositions before Persian-period Judah.

The importance of Noth's work is that by its nature it raises these fundamental questions. In doing so it is both comprehensive and compact. The present volume is also supplied with appendices to the German original, which pertain directly to the Deuteronomistic history rather than to the Chronicler.

Gordon McConville, Trinity College, Bristol.

J. Alberto Soggin, *The Prophet Amos. A translation and commentary* (London: SCM, 1987), 150 pp., £9.50. Translation from the Italian *Il profeta Amos* (Paideia Editrice, Brescia, 1982), with additional material supplied by the author.

For those who have come to know the works of J. A. Soggin, every new book from his hand is something special. His earlier commentaries on the books of Joshua and Judges have made him one of the most well-known writers of commentaries today. Therefore this new one on the book of Amos is worth noticing.

This commentary originated as material for lectures, and this background has left its mark on the final work. It is published as a 'parallel' to J. L. May's commentary in the OT Library.

The structure of the commentary is fairly ordinary. It has an introduction covering the traditional questions, and Soggin does a very good work dealing with the standard introductory questions.

The text of the book of Amos is divided into smaller units, and for each unit the commentary has three sections. First a translation, which is Soggin's own. Then comes what Soggin calls a philological-critical commentary, which deals with the problems in the translation. This part of Soggin's book is especially good. He not only gives his opinion but also refers to standard works on Hebrew grammar, which is very useful for those who work on the text of Amos. Then comes the 'historical and exegetical commentary', which Soggin assures can be used without any knowledge of Hebrew.

Before the translation of every small unit comes a bibliography. This is another strength of Soggin. He masters the literature in an exemplary manner, and this too is useful for those who study Amos. At the beginning of the book there is also a general bibliography. Actually, the bibliographical material alone might justify the cost of the book!

For those who know Soggin's earlier works it comes as no surprise that he easily divides the text into 'authentic' and 'non-authentic', and the latter is attributed to various redactors. He uses the

traditional literary-critical method together with the form-critical one. The sad thing is that when these methods have been used by Soggin the text seems to have been emptied of its content, and this is the weak point in all of Soggin's commentaries. The message of the text becomes something secondary, and sometimes it is not even dealt with by the author.

One of the more unfortunate presuppositions behind Soggin's commentary is that 'we are dealing with a very fragmentary and often corrupt text, it is not always easy to interpret them and the authenticity of each individual passage needs to be examined according to its merits' (p. 17). That means that much of Soggin's labour is spent on finding out whether one particular text was in fact Amos' own words, or for example some deuteronomistic redactor. For those who find this methodology irrelevant mainly because of lack of evidence, the commentary becomes rather disappointing at the end.

An unfortunate consequence of this approach is the irrelevance of the overall structure. There is no point for Soggin to ask why the different chapters are where they are as parts of a whole, since they have different origins and different aims. This is my strongest criticism of this commentary. Soggin could have gone further and asked if there is a message in the construction of the book as a whole, whether or not it all has the same origin, but he does not.

The text is said to have gone through a long redactional process, and it is the exegete's task to dig through these layers to the bottom. One example will suffice (pp. 50-51). The last oracle among the 'oracles against the nations' in 2:6-16 is directed against Israel. According to Soggin the oracle uttered by Amos consisted originally of vv. 6 and 13. It was successively enlarged through various additions. Vv. 10-12 are probably deuteronomistic and vv. 14-16 a later amplification or perhaps even two from the exilic period. The only reason why for example vv. 14-16 should not be by Amos is, according to Soggin, that they contain the formula *neum jhwh*, and not *'amar jhwh*, which is the proper one for Amos. Personally I find it very hard to take this kind of analysis seriously.

This commentary has certain strengths, for example its philological comments and its bibliographical information. Also its integration of the book of Amos with the history of Israel is very helpful, especially since Soggin has recently written his own History of Israel. Soggin is also fair in his presentation of other views besides his own. But on the negative side we have the overly critical methodology that produces a mass of different layers and redactors but not overall understanding of the book. And, as we have seen, it is only a consequence of Soggin's views on how the book came into existence.

The commentary does not contribute anything essentially new to the study of Amos. But for those who would like to have a commentary that exhibits all the different forms of literary criticism applied to Amos, and also discusses the various views among scholars, this commentary would be most suitable, at a reasonable cost. But this only shows the urgent need for an evangelical commentary on the book of Amos, interacting with views like Soggin's. Such a commentary is long overdue.

Å. Viberg, Östersund, Sweden.

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**Celia Deutsch, Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11.25-30** (JSNT Supp. 18, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 205 pp., £18.00/\$27.00 hb, £8.95/\$13.50 pb.

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Since 1970, when the works of Suggs and of F. Christ were published, increasing attention has been devoted to tracing a 'Wisdom Christology' in Matthew. Three passages have been central to this discussion (11:2-19; 11:25-30; 23:34-39), and of these 11:25-30 has been recognized as by far the clearest example, with its extensive echo of the language of Ben Sira 51:23-27. So perhaps the time was ripe for a full monograph on this striking passage, the Christological implications of which were recognized even before these came to be understood primarily in terms of the Wisdom tradition.

It is a meticulous and heavily documented study, in classical PhD style, offering an apparently exhaustive and systematic survey of relevant literature, but not very much by way of synthesis or of integration of the results of the study with the wider field of Matthean Christology.

The first main part attempts a phrase by phrase discussion of the chosen verses in relation to their wider context in Matthew, which the author identifies as 11:2-13:58 (the 'Third Book' of Bacon's classic 'pentateuchal' analysis of the Gospel). In this section she observes two related themes, that of rejection/opposition/unbelief, and that of revelation/concealment/disclosure. She has no difficulty in showing how these themes are focused in 11:25-30.

The second and longer main part combs through the literature of Second Temple Judaism (but not the OT, surprisingly) for parallels to what she isolates (apparently arbitrarily) as the central themes of 11:25-27 and 11:28-30 (treated as separate pericopes). The method of treatment is tedious, as she looks separately for each of three themes selected for each of the two pericopes, and traces them in turn through each of five groups of literature, discussed separately. The result is a great deal of repetition, and it is not easy for the reader to get an overview of where the argument is going, despite summaries at the end of each sub-section. And the remarkable lack of an index of the non-biblical literature discussed makes it still less accessible.

A great deal of interesting material is assembled, and quite sensibly applied to the study of Matthew. But it is not the sort of book anybody could be expected to read (as opposed to 'look up'), and therefore I fear that it will not be widely appreciated. Perhaps the author will feel confident, now that she has set out her rough work in the approved manner, to attempt a more integrated and much shorter study which will enable the reader to see her chosen passage as a whole in its wider context, and thus to appreciate just what Matthew is up to.

By the end, I could not help wondering what Matthew would have made of this mass of detailed investigation devoted to just six verses of his Gospel; would he have recognized this as a help to hearing what he was trying to say? At any rate, I am sure he would have said it more interestingly!

Dick France, London Bible College.

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**Paul J. Achtermeier, Mark (Proclamation Commentaries: Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, second and revised edition), 138 pp., \$6.95.**

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This is not a commentary in the traditional sense, but a series of studies on Mark, including discussion of Mark's intention, literary method, structure, Christology, teaching about the disciples and the parousia. The author accepts wholeheartedly the view that Mark is a theological reworking of received traditions rather than in any significant sense a history of Jesus, and he works accordingly with form, redaction, and literary critical approaches. He discusses most of the important features of Mark, and interacts usefully with other modern scholarly discussion. His own opinions are sometimes illuminating, as for example in his emphasis on the importance of Jesus' powerful teaching and his recognition of the significance of the passion in Mark, but sometimes unpersuasive, as for example in his view that the Markan Jesus rejects the designation 'Son of David' and in his denial that 8:27-30 is a turning point in Mark's gospel. Whether because of his failure to reckon with Mark as history or for some other reason, Achtermeier's book felt to this reviewer more like the reflection of a scholar feeling his way forward than an analysis that really captures and makes available to us the essence of Mark. The book has some similarities to E. Best's *Mark as Story* (T. & T. Clark, 1986): neither book is exciting interpretation of Mark, but Best has a lot of useful and sensible discussion and is probably the better guide to Mark and to scholarly study of the gospel.

David Wenham

José Cárdenas Pallares, **A Poor Man Called Jesus. Reflections on the Gospel of Mark** (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), viii + 136 pp. Translated from the Spanish by Robert R. Barr.

This book is based on different Bible meditations, mainly given to Christian base communities in Mexico in 1978-80. They give the reflections of the author, a Roman Catholic parish priest and professor of biblical studies, on different texts from the Gospel of Mark. The headings of the seven chapters indicate the main concern of the author in applying the texts to the needs of Christians in the social and political situation in Latin America: 1. Jesus' conflicts (Mk. 2:1-3:6). 2. Jesus' power and strength (Miracles, Mk. 1:40-45; 3:20-30). 3. Jesus and the oppressed (Jesus and woman, Mk. 10:12; 12:41-44). 4. Confrontation with the powers (Jesus and wealth, Mk. 10:17-31; Jesus and power, Mk. 12:13-17). 5. The way of the cross (Mk. 14:26-15:20). 6. And they crucified him (Mk. 15:20-47). 7. The resurrection (Mk. 16:1-8).

The Bible expositions were given in a situation of strong tension between rich and poor, oppressors and oppressed. The picture of Jesus is painted in a corresponding way: Jesus is the great liberator, a poor man who identifies fully with the struggle of the oppressed against the established order. The book is an interesting example of the use of the Bible in liberation theology. Mark's good news is summarized in the following way:

This poor one called Jesus, hungering for bread and justice, passionately devoted to the oppressed, opposed to every sort of domination, free of all partisan interests, rejected by the great ones of the earth and their retainers to the point of being reduced to offal and malediction, is the very one who reveals the God of liberation to us (p. 113).

The bibliography and many references to the scholarly debate on historical and exegetical issues give convincing proof of the author's knowledge of biblical research. At the same time this book is a challenge to the tendency of biblical scholars in the West to study the Bible in their academic ivory towers without contact with the real problems of poor people in their struggle to survive and to retain human dignity. This challenge from liberation theology has to be taken seriously. The study of the Bible has not reached its ultimate goal until it has changed the life of the student and his neighbours. And the Bible is not neutral or irrelevant in situations where individuals or groups are exploited or deprived of their basic human rights.

But Pallares' integration of exegesis and application to a Latin American situation seems to me to result in a biased and oversimplified picture of Jesus and his time. Many of his main theses are unclear or doubtful. In what sense is Jesus a poor person? He is never called poor in the gospels, and it is misleading to use this word to link him to a modern concept of class struggle. It is an oversimplification to say that the first Christians 'fell under cruel attack from the imperial might' (p. 2). That is a later development. Their first antagonists were the synagogue leaders, later on parts of the local populations, but until Mark's time scarcely the imperial might. Pallares offers an exposition of the meaning of the cross which at best is imbalanced. In Mark the death of Jesus is not primarily an act of divine identification with the poor and suppressed. It is a 'ransom for many' (10:45), to relieve from sin rather than from oppression.

The over-simple painting of Jesus in the frame of a class struggle has also the effect of giving a very negative picture of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries. I'm not convinced that, e.g., the Pharisees were that kind of selfish opportunists in opposition to the suffering poor with whom Jesus identified.

But even if much of the material Pallares interprets has to be applied differently by an exegesis committed to the historical meaning of the texts, the Bible has a lot of texts representing a direct and serious challenge to our contemporary situation of world-wide inequality, injustice and indifference.

Hans Kvalbein, Oslo.

Jack T. Sanders, **The Jews in Luke-Acts** (London: SCM, 1987), 410 pp., £15.00.

The Gospel of Luke was once described (sarcastically) as 'the most beautiful book in the world', and many have found it to be marked by a strong humane concern for the poor and the outcast. There was, however, we are told, a kindly side to Hitler that co-existed with his bitter hatred of the Jews. J. T. Sanders argues powerfully — and at times vehemently — in this book that Luke too had 'a fundamental and systematic hostility' (the word is not too strong!) towards the Jews in general because they crucified Jesus and opposed the church, and that he must be regarded as a virulent anti-Semite. He makes his case in a detailed scholarly argument that shows him to be thoroughly *au fait* with modern study of Luke and bold enough to challenge and disagree with many received opinions. Some readers may well be put off from reading it to the end because of its iconoclastic stance and may react sharply against an author who shows no reverence or respect for Luke. Although Sanders is in my opinion liable to occasional excesses of language against Luke, his book must be evaluated in terms of its arguments.

Briefly, the book falls into three parts. First of all, Sanders looks at Luke's treatment of various groups of people in Luke-Acts. He claims that Luke has sharpened the picture of the hostility of the Jewish leaders to Jesus which he found in his sources; in particular, Luke gives the impression that the Jews themselves crucify Jesus and not the Romans — Pilate hands Jesus over to them . . . and they lead him away . . . Similarly, in Acts, nearly all hostility to the church comes from the Jews. Jerusalem is uniformly hostile to Jesus, and so God's judgment is declared against it. As for the Jewish people, Sanders makes an interesting distinction between the picture of them in the speeches and in the narrative. In the discourse material there is a blanket rejection of 'the Jews' (here Sanders sides with Hanechen against Jervell), but in the narrative there is a development in their attitude to Jesus and the Christians from initial favour to total rejection. Correspondingly, the emphasis is increasingly on the way in which the offer of the gospel is withdrawn from them; it is presented to them only in order that their rejection of it may be registered, until eventually the final rejection of the Jews and the end of any mission to them is signalled in Acts 28. Within this picture the Pharisees occupy a remarkable role. Luke presents them as more friendly to Jesus and the church than do other writers. Yet they are guilty of legalism and hypocrisy. He uses them in the Gospel as a 'type' of the Jewish Christians of his own day in the church who were similarly hypocritical in insisting that Gentile Christians should keep the ritual of the law. Luke himself argued that Gentiles should not keep the whole Jewish law but rather only those specific enactments laid down by God for them in Lev. 17-18. Between the Jews and the Gentiles lies a peripheral zone inhabited by outcasts, Samaritans, proselytes and God-fearers whom Luke sees as a kind of transitional group through whom salvation passes from the Jews to the Gentiles.

Second, Sanders gives a running commentary on significant passages in Luke and Acts to show how the story develops and to pick up points not covered in the thematic analysis. There is new material here to support his thesis but inevitably also some repetition of points previously made.

Finally, Sanders asks questions concerning Luke's motives in presenting the story of the Jews and Christianity in such an admittedly tendentious fashion, making full use of what has been called his 'gift of invention' ('Luke dislikes the Pharisees enough to slander them'). He denies that there was sufficient actual persecution of Christians by Jews to justify Luke's attacks, and finds the solution in Jewish opposition to Christianity from outside and Jewish-Christian opposition to Gentiles within the church; here he comes close to positions espoused much more temperately by E. Trocmé and R. Maddox.

Although Sanders professes to be carrying out an historical enquiry, he does not consider sufficiently how far the attitudes of which he accuses Luke were already prevalent at an earlier date. He agrees that the Temple leadership was behind the execution of Jesus, but he does not ask how far Luke is simply emphasizing a point already in his sources. For example, he cites various Q sayings in Lk. as evidence of the Evangelist's position, without taking sufficiently

into account that the attitudes he castigates were present in Q and, as I would claim, in Jesus. He is all too ready to regard the picture of the growth of Jewish hostility to Christians as Luke's literary scheme and to ignore the question whether it is not in fact a reliable historical reflection of the situation. (It is high time that more scholars questioned this assumption that Luke exercised uncontrolled freedom in inventing his material. An important step in the right direction has been taken by G. Lüdemann in *Das frühe Christentum nach den Traditionen der Apostelgeschichte* [Göttingen, 1987]. For all his critical attitude towards certain elements and features of the story in Acts, he shows that a remarkable amount of the story is based on reliable tradition.) Insufficient consideration is given to the development of strongly nationalist and hence anti-Gentile attitudes during the run-up to the Jewish war. In short, Sanders does not take sufficiently seriously the fact that Luke may well be describing the kind of situation that actually existed in the pre-AD 70 period when there was Jewish hostility to the church and Christians lived in fear of it.

Strong language is not of course unknown among other first-century Christians; Paul can say sharp words against the people he regarded as his opponents — and with specific reference to the Jews in 1 Thes. 2:14-16! The question then becomes one (as Sanders would doubtless agree) of the general Christian attitude in the first century. Were Christians justified in lumping together 'the Jews' or 'the Jewish leaders' or 'the Pharisees' and making blanket statements of condemnation against them? Part of the situation is certainly that Christians did believe that rejection of Jesus as the Messiah cut off the Jews from belonging to the people of God (and prevented Gentiles from entry). They, therefore, saw no future for 'the Jews' as God's people and claimed that they themselves constituted the new Israel. But, as Sanders must agree, the door was never closed to individual Jews to accept the Messiah. Paul, who foresaw the judgment that would come upon the Jews for unbelief, longed passionately for their salvation. Would Luke have shared that feeling or is Sanders correct when he attributes to Luke the opinion that 'the world will be much better off when "the Jews" get what they deserve and the world is rid of them'? But while Sanders does find a note of sadness in Lk. 13:34, he entirely fails to find any such note in Lk. 19:41-44. One must ask, then, whether Sanders confuses the theological judgment that 'the Jews' are no longer the Israel of God with anti-Semitism. If Luke says that Jews who reject the gospel thereby side with the members of the Sanhedrin who condemned Jesus to death, is that 'hostility' to the Jews? Is the problems perhaps that Sanders thinks that to affirm that certain people who have rejected Christ stand under divine judgment is to show hostility to them and that Christians should never offer such a verdict? To say that any NT writer is opposed to the Jews as such is unjustified. It is another thing to say that Jews who reject Christ and the church and the admission of Gentiles to the church stand under judgment and to recognize that the majority of the Jews to whom the gospel was presented did reject it. That is not hatred of the Jews. No doubt too, one should take into account the ways in which the Jewish opposition to Christians was expressed; what we may loosely call 'anti-Gentilism' existed, and in that context some kind of Christian response was inevitable, possibly expressed more sharply than would be considered appropriate in the twentieth century.

There are, of course, many exegetical points where different judgments are possible and even probable. Sanders has great difficulty with the centurion at the cross (who is clearly a Roman) when he argues that the execution squad consisted of Jewish soldiers. He does not give adequate weight to the way in which Jesus does go to Jewish outcasts and the church does preach the gospel to Jews with considerable positive response. When he accuses Luke of slandering the Pharisees as greedy people, he pays insufficient attention to the evidence that the accusation was justified. Several of his arguments seem to me to be rather artificial and Procrustean, but space does not permit discussion of them.

Although, then, Sanders writes with much learning and ingenuity, so that one cannot read his book without gaining fresh insights, in the end I find this thesis improbable. What is to be commended, however, is his exposé of the nature of anti-Semitism. Even if we reject his verdict that Luke is guilty of it, his work implicitly summons us to examine our own attitudes lest we be unconsciously guilty of it.

**I. Howard Marshall**, University of Aberdeen.

John Ashton (ed.), *The Interpretation of John*, Issues in Religion and Theology No. 9 (SPCK/Fortress Press, 1986), 182 pp., £3.95/\$7.95.

As with other books in this series, here are reprints of articles by a variety of scholars which suggest answers to the problems of (in this case) John's Gospel. John Ashton has listed three areas of discussion that derive from Bultmann's agenda: History (where does John's Gospel fit into first-century Christianity?); Theology (what is the central insight of the Gospel?); Composition (what was the process that produced the Gospel in its present form?). This limitation of the agenda means that the book completely ignores the issue of the historicity of the Gospel account. The chief value of the book to many will be the translation of important articles from German and French and the gathering into one book of articles from a variety of journals. No contribution is later than 1972 and English-speaking Johannine scholars like C. H. Dodd, C. K. Barrett, R. E. Brown and J. A. T. Robinson are not represented.

The book opens with a chapter by Ashton in which he expands on the agenda set by Bultmann and explains various ways in which this has been met both by scholars represented in the book and others. The first contributor is of course Bultmann. Strangely, Ashton has not translated the article of 1925 to which he refers in his introduction, but one from 1923 which discusses the Prologue. He traces the concept of the Logos from the Wisdom literature of the OT and the intertestamental period. Ashton leaves out Bultmann's transitional argument for these ideas to be found also in Manichean and Mandæan sources but does give the beginning to Bultmann's search for non-Jewish origins of the wisdom image. Bultmann's skill as an expositor of Scripture is clear in the early part of the article, but when he enters on his search for non-Jewish sources, the speculative nature of his arguments becomes clear. He regarded references to John the Baptist in the Prologue as inauthentic, but Lamarche, in the following article, shows how the structure of the prologue forms a chiasmic whole which is related to conflicts between Jews and Gentiles in the church which are also shown in the parallel structure of Ephesians 1. He argues that the Johannine *Λόγος* is equivalent to the Pauline *μυστήριον*.

I. de la Potterie in an essay on Truth establishes that the word is central to Johannine theology and that the usage is consistent with the Wisdom tradition of Israel. To import a gnostic dualistic background increases rather than solves problems of interpretation. Bultmann's positing of Gnostic background for the ideas of the Fourth Gospel is again under attack in Borgen's article on God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel. He finds links not only with the OT and Philo, but also with Merkabah mysticism. The Johannine writings are thus an indication of the Jewish background to gnostic/Mandean mythology.

Bornkamm's review of Käsemann's *Testament of Jesus*, whilst questioning his one-sided account of the Gospel as a Gnostic work, yet is still convinced that 'John presupposes gnosticism'. He rightly criticizes Käsemann for failing to use the material in the Farewell discourse. There are some debatable assertions in this article, for instance that not only the word, but also the concept of, ecclesia is completely absent from the Gospel. This depends on a very narrow definition of ecclesia. Burge's recent book *The Anointed Community* presents a different view of the Johannine ecclesia as a Spirit-led community.

J. L. Martyn contributes an essay which suggests that Käsemann's description of the Fourth Gospel would be better applied to the supposed Signs Source of the Gospel. Nils Dahl in a most useful article takes up a question that Bultmann ignored — the Johannine attitude to the OT and the history of salvation in the old covenant. Dahl argues that OT characters are among the witnesses to Jesus. The coming of the Christ transcends the contrast between Jews and non-Jews. The Jews however 'take the law and Moses, the Scriptures and the fathers, even God himself, as a religious possession of their own . . . they use their religious possessions as means of self-defence when they are confronted with the true God, revealed in Christ' (p. 131). Thus they 'represent the world in its opposition to God'. 'Thus they end up representing the world even in putting Caesar at the place

of God, whereas they deny the fundamentals of their own faith and forfeit the history of Israel.' The Gentile believers are the 'other sheep' who are joined to the prototypical Israelite disciples, like Nathanael, who came, saw and confessed the Christ. Dahl suggests that in this John comes close to Pauline assertions in passages like Rom. 11:16-22 and Eph. 2:11-22. This is a heart-warming article which has probably not been sufficiently regarded by subsequent scholars.

The final article by Wayne Meeks, entitled 'The man from heaven in Johannine sectarianism', has been influential in subsequent scholarship. In this article he expounds the theme of the descent/ascent motif in the Gospel.

There is much useful material in this book. Ashton has done well in putting together a collection of essays which demonstrate the variety of Johannine interpretations being made and the lack of any scholarly consensus.

**Ray Porter, Oxford.**

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**Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community. The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 269 pp., £16.35.**

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As the extensive footnoting in this book bears witness, it began life as Dr Burge's doctoral thesis (Aberdeen University). It is, in fact, a thorough investigation of Johannine pneumatology. Unlike some other major studies in this area, this latest offering is not restricted to a study of the Paraclete. It ranges more widely, examining the concept of the Holy Spirit in all its breadth. Although there is some reference to the Johannine epistles, Burge concentrates mainly on the Gospel of John. Since matters of general introduction do not impinge upon the main discussion they are not treated as such in this book. One significant stance is taken, however, based on the trend of recent research in this area: the existence of a Johannine community is assumed. Moreover, this community, it is maintained, furnishes the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospel. Hence the title *The Anointed Community*. It is fair to say that the position adopted does not substantially influence the work as a whole, since it remains primarily a study of pneumatology in John; it avoids elaborate speculation concerning the practices of the community. For the most part, the author is careful to exegete the text first, and only then to consider how it might have applied to the life of the community. He thereby avoids the excesses into which others who have reversed the process have fallen. The constant—and in my view correct—emphasis on Christ as the pneumatic precursor, the spirit-anointed one *par excellence*, who both paves the way and provides the model for the community's own experience, helps to ensure that speculation does not become the master of interpretation.

Any major study on John must face the awesome task of getting to grips with the mass of secondary literature on John's Gospel. Burge displays an impressive grasp of that literature, and he interacts well with it. Nowhere is this more evident than in his opening section. This constitutes a concise survey of previous studies on Johannine pneumatology. It usefully sets the agenda for what follows, as well as familiarizing the reader with the main issues of debate within this field. In line with the current tendency to lay stress on the Jewish background of this Gospel, Burge shows that the OT and inter-testamental Judaism offer by far the most 'persuasive' parallels for the Johannine Spirit Paraclete (*contra* Bauer, Bultmann). Yet, he claims, this traditional image has undergone a process of adaptation in the Fourth Gospel, revolving around two foci: Christology/eschatology and revelation. Furthermore, the latter merges into the former such that Johannine pneumatology has for Burge a thoroughly christocentric basis. This he affirms repeatedly.

The main body of the book is a study of the Holy Spirit in John in relation to a number of other major themes. Thus there are successive chapters on Christology, eschatology, the sacraments, and witness (mission and anamnesis). The relevant data is well covered, and the material is helpfully set out with good use of headings and the inclusion of a number of tables and charts.

*The Anointed Community* is a solid piece of work, based on careful exegesis of the relevant texts. As a thorough examination of the role of the Spirit in John, both in relation to Christ and to his followers (the Johannine community, according to Burge), it will surely take its place as a major contribution in its field. At the same time, the preface informs us that the impetus for this study came from the author's own questions concerning the place of the Spirit in Christian experience and the extent to which the NT provides a model for that experience. He believes that John provides a balanced view of the Spirit, and a number of interesting observations in this vein are offered in the course of the book. This is a book that contains useful and original insights, whilst touching on many issues that lie beyond the scope of Johannine pneumatology. It is far from being light reading, but any effort expended is certain to bring its rewards.

It is but rarely that one finds a book with which one wholly agrees, and this is not, for me, such a book. Detailed interaction is not possible here, but, to give just one example, I am not convinced by the relevant discussion that John 20:22 is not intended to be symbolic. Burge dismisses the view that it is symbolic rather than producing cogent arguments against it. Notwithstanding such disagreements, largely on points of detail, I have nevertheless found the book both stimulating and illuminating. Dr Burge has provided us with a most capable and worthwhile guide to Johannine pneumatology, one which deals both with the issues and with their implications for the church today.

**Chris Jack, Cambridge.**

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**G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Exeter: Paternoster, 1986), x + 446 pp., £19.95 (hb).**

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In the present book the author (=A) has set himself the ambitious task of attempting to tackle what are admittedly the two most central themes in Jesus' teaching: the kingdom of God (=KG) and the Son of Man (SM). This procedure is unusual nowadays because the two themes have been divorced from each other: in Germany by radical criticism, which regards the combination of these two themes as secondary, and holds that Jesus used SM of someone else; and in Britain by those who try to resolve the title SM into a mere circumlocutional idiom of Aramaic. Another unusual element in this book is that whereas books on the KG concentrated on the scholarly discussion (e.g. N. Perrin's, G. Lundström's), or on a thematic presentation of the issues involved (e.g. Ladd's, Ridderbos's, Schnackenburg's), the present book is really an exegetical study on the KG and the SM texts. For these two reasons, bespeaking its fresh approach, the book is a welcome contribution to the debate. One more merit of this work is that unlike past discussions of these subjects, which minimize the OT relevance, it offers a much needed treatment of OT conceptions relating to the KG, and thus places the teaching of Jesus in proper perspective.

In particular the book consists of three parts. In Part I, 'The Coming of God in the OT' (pp. 3-35), the KG is considered in the light of the theophany and the Day of the Lord. The theophany is traced to the Sinai traditions rather than to Near Eastern mythology, while the Day of the Lord is said to have had as its ultimate purpose the establishment of God's kingdom. The Day of the Lord is an event rather than a date and is very similar to the theophany. In Israel's traditions the theophany was probably primary while the Day of the Lord was a specialized application of it (pp. 15f.). The Day of the Lord involved God acting in the historical sphere, it entailed judgment for those for whom it came, and it occurred at a time determined by him. The idea of kingdom is considered to be very early in view of the enthronement Psalms, and it is rightly developed in connection with Daniel. However, the A concedes too much to M. Noth's arguments for the angelic interpretation of Daniel's 'one like a son of man', as when he acquiesces that 'in the Qumran literature it (the "saints") is the title *par excellence* given to angels' (p. 30, cf. p. 32). The correct statistics would seem to be that there are 11 references to angels, 9 to men and 6 are uncertain! On p. 32 Dn. 7:27 is misprinted as 7:37, while on p. 35 line 8 'god' should be read as 'man'.

In Part II, 'The Coming of God in the Writings of Early Judaism' (pp. 39-68), the concepts of the previous section are traced in apocalyptic writings. The juxtaposition of the present with the future is not foreign to Jewish eschatology, as thought previously (p. 50). The A wrongly, in my view, identifies 'the kings and the mighty' of the Parables of I Enoch with the Romans and dates that work in mid-first century AD (pp. 67f.). This has serious consequences for the understanding of the gospel SM. However, he rightly sees Danielic influence on the SM concept running through the Parables to IV Ezra.

Part III, 'The Coming of God in the Teaching of Jesus' (pp. 71-344), constitutes the bulk of the work, offering a detailed exegesis of KG, SM and Parousia sayings. (The footnotes are appended (pp. 345-416). Bibliography (pp. 417-431) and Indices (pp. 433-446) follow.) The sayings and the parables of Jesus on the KG are discussed according to whether they relate to the present or future. Here the persevering reader will get reward for his toil, but the atomistic treatment, the inevitably disconnected and somewhat vague discussions and the lack of connecting links, e.g. by way of summaries, often tend to leave the reader uncertain as to where he is being led, while not infrequently the impression is created that things are more complicated than they really are. In spite of the A's sound scholarship, fairness to opponents, mature handling of the subject and commonsense exegesis, the discussions are sometimes not as deep or penetrating as they could have been, and occasionally matters are made a little too easy. For example, the debate on *eggiken-ephthasen* is solved rather superficially in favour of realized eschatology by having recourse to the Lexica and the apparent meaning of the Aorist *ephthasen* (pp. 71-80). This is, however, no guarantee that *ephthasen eph' hymas* . . . refers to an accomplished event if the Greek idiom is properly understood. But the Aramaic is a complicating factor. The conclusion here is, however, clear: the kingdom of God comes with Jesus, and Jesus is the Messiah for the kingdom.

In the chapter on the SM, a virtual monograph of some 117 pages, the A enters the debate without any presentation of the problem and the state of the present discussion. As is usual he makes Lk. 12:8-9 par. the point of departure, but uses half the space in this section to make up for the lack of introduction, which ought reasonably to have had a section of its own. In view of the kind of positions that are propagated in Britain just now, this is a welcome discussion. It is, however, to be regretted that the two major studies referred to (p. 220) are Tödt's (1959, ET 1965) and Higgin's first study (1964), but no knowledge is shown of the monographs of Casey (1979), Higgins (1980) and Lindars (1983). The discussion is thus in important respects dated. In general the A sees Danielic influence on the gospel SM as well as on the SM of the Parables and IV Ezra. He is also of the opinion that the KG and the SM belong together. Herein lies the thrust of the book. Hardly anyone would welcome more warmly or agree more heartily with these two conclusions than the reviewer. At the same time the reviewer wishes that more attention had been paid to the total impact of the Danielic 'SM' on Jesus' teaching. For then the treatment would have looked appreciably different. For example, the statement 'There is no precedent in the OT or in Judaism of the Son of Man exercising the prerogative of forgiveness' (p. 230) would, in the light of the powers given to the 'SM' in Dn. 7:14, and the explicit statements to that effect of the Daniel-influenced I Enoch, have been impossible. Nor can the A be said to have adequately answered his own question: 'How can the Son of Man of Daniel's vision be viewed in the first century as a humble and humiliated man, the subject of prophecies of rejection and death?' (p. 247). The answer 'the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13 must be understood in light of the righteous sufferer of the Psalms' (*ibid.*) is, to my mind, not sufficiently motivated. The correct answer would rather seem to be found within the data of Dn. 7 itself.

These were just a few of the points of disagreement. But despite this criticism, the reviewer welcomes this sturdy book for all its positive elements as a solid contribution to the themes treated and a counterbalance to much ill-guided thinking about the KG and especially the SM. Students of these two subjects should not fail to consult it.

Chrys C. Caragounis, Lund.

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David Wenham and Craig Blomberg (eds), **Gospel Perspectives VI: The Miracles of Jesus** (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 456 pp., £25.00 hb, £10.95 pb (available to RTSF/IFES members ordering direct from publisher at 30% discount).

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A warm welcome to this sixth and final volume in the *Gospel Perspectives* series. As readers of *Themelios* will know, this series has sought to provide a detailed evangelical apologia for the historicity of the Gospels. In this particular volume attention is given to the controversial area of miracle – controversial in the sense that though 'the historical evidence for such miracles may be no weaker than for Jesus' parables . . . they seem improbable because they are unparalleled in our experience and because they are difficult to square with the secular world view that is dominant at least in the West today' (from the Preface).

This apologia consists of a miscellany of articles of varying lengths looking at individual miracle stories, particular types of miracle, and miracles in general. All in all there are thirteen essays, including the brief 'Concluding Reflections on Miracles and Gospel Perspectives' by Craig Blomberg. The lengthiest essay – 96 pages and almost a quarter of the book – is a detailed investigation by Edwin Yamauchi on 'Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Demons and Exorcisms'. Three other substantial essays are by William Lane Craig on 'The Problem of Miracles: a historical and philosophical perspective'; Gerhard Maier, 'Zur neutestamentlichen Wunderexegese im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert' (this is the only foreign language contribution) and Graham H. Twelftree, 'Ei de . . . ego ekballo ta daimonia'. In a review of this kind it is impossible to enter into any detailed argument with the various contributors. Suffice it to say, these essays form a notable evangelical contribution to the debate on miracle. My one negative comment is that the book lacks an index.

Paul Beasley-Murray, Spurgeon's College.

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R. H. Stein, **The Synoptic Problem. An Introduction** (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 292 pp.

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The title is somewhat misleading, since it is designed as 'an introduction that would help students work their way, step by step, through the Gospels disciplines' (p. 11); hence serving a much wider purpose than merely exploring the Synoptic Problem itself. The second half is roughly equally divided between form and redaction criticism.

A compressed introduction to the writing of synopses is concluded by a valuable discussion of some currently available; it is a strong point of Stein's approach that he both presupposes that the student will be working at the text with a synopsis and provides examples to be worked through, producing something like Farmer's *Synopticon* (a work to which remarkably no reference is ever made). The various issues to which a solution of the Problem must address itself are thereby well illustrated before they are discussed, and any student who takes the effort to use the book as intended will end up with a broad grasp of the problems raised by the text itself to which answers must be found.

Stein's own answer is the traditional four-source theory, a position which is maintained with some vehemence, and not always even-handed assessment of the rival options. The position is stated and defended clearly enough (though occasionally as on p. 52f. by arguments which are simply wrong); but proponents of the new Griesbach position are dismissed without even a reference (p. 49) on the basis of just two points which both begin 'it is difficult to understand why . . .'. Those to whom it is not so difficult are left in a limbo of unanswered questions.

The section on Form Criticism bases itself on the 1939 introduction by Redlich. Stein draws from it eight 'presuppositions', and discusses these in order to explain the discipline. Worked examples are not

used here, and I wonder if the reader will really understand the issues or the tool from this approach. Indeed, Stein's own understanding of literary 'form' becomes broadened to include, for instance, *parallelismus membrorum*, which moves far beyond the concerns of the form critics whom the section ostensibly studies. And his natural concern to defend the historicity of the accounts leads perhaps to an ignoring or downplaying of other significant factors.

On Redaction Criticism the book is adequate, if not particularly penetrating; but worked examples make a welcome re-entry and ensure the student a good grasp of the basic issues. Nothing is said about more recent approaches to the Gospels, and indeed the whole book has a slightly old-fashioned air about it. It lacks an adequate bibliography. Because of these and other criticisms, I would hesitate to recommend this as the only guide to the area, but it will usefully stand beside others as an introduction to a crucial and complex field of study.

D. R. de Lacey, Tyndale House, Cambridge.

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**Robert Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety*, Foundations and Facets (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), xv + 240 pp., £16.60.**

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Robert Jewett, whose previous books include *Paul's Anthropological Terms* (1971) and *A Chronology of Paul's Life* (1979), here offers a clearly and for the most part accessibly written addition to the handsomely produced 'Foundations and Facets' series edited by R. W. Funk.

The author's basic thesis is, in his own words, 'that Paul was faced with a situation of millenarian radicalism in Thessalonica, presenting a unique profile not matched elsewhere in early Christianity' (p. xiii). His new contribution is the correlation of rhetorical analysis with historical and literary information about the setting at Thessalonica, to produce a hypothesis which explains the two letters as Paul's response to a serious misinterpretation of his eschatology in the Thessalonian church. An important corollary of Jewett's argument is his uncommonly integrated and coherent case for the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians. Methodological and stylistic clarity, especially in discussions of authenticity and the setting of the Thessalonian church, is complemented by a full and fully up-to-date bibliography.

Chapter One treats the problem of authenticity from the perspective of the history of research. Wrede and Trilling are shown to be the strongest exponents of a fully developed forgery hypothesis for 2 Thessalonians. Crucial arguments against the former's proposed date of c. AD 100 include the fact that (a) there is scarcely enough time between Paul's death and c. 100 for a forgery to gain credence' (p. 6), and (b) the lack of late first-century evidence for the kind of eschatological confusion which 2 Thes. is countering. Trilling is criticized for relying on a statistically erroneous, cumulative argument of piling up marginally probable pieces of evidence. While admitting that critical opinion has largely swung towards the Wrede-Trilling line, Jewett believes the evidence to be 'equivocal, with the likelihood remaining fairly strongly on the side of Pauline authorship' (pp. 16f.).

Chapter Two discusses theories of a reversed sequence and of different recipients of the two letters, but concludes in favour of a single audience and the canonical sequence; arguments for the latter include references to a previous letter in 2 Thes. 2:2, 15; 3:17, as well as the logical sequence of references in the two letters to persecution and to the founding mission.

Chapter Three deals with 'The Question of Literary Integrity'. Jewett addresses Schmithals's reconstruction of four separate letters, the proposal of an interpolation of 1 Thes. 2:13-16; 5:1-11 (e.g. by B. A. Pearson, G. Friedrich), as well as more complex theories of redaction and interpolation. However, persuasive evidence is found to be wanting: 'The problems addressed in most of these hypotheses are real, but they are simply compounded by additional, irresolvable contradictions posed by the untenable redactional and interpolational theories themselves' (p. 46).

After discussing the problems of correlating chronological evidence in Paul's letters with that in Acts, Chapter Four explains the advantages (and problems) of John Knox's approach of treating the letters alone as primary evidence. Using the mediating argument demonstrated in his *A Chronology of Paul's Life*, Jewett arrives at the spring of AD 50 as the date of both letters.

The pivotal Chapter Five offers some methodological remarks on the study of epistolary rhetoric. This is followed by a discussion of the weaknesses of non-rhetorical analyses: no controlling criteria exist which could establish the superiority of one thematic outline over another. Using classical rhetorical terminology (*exordium*, *narratio*, *probatio*, etc.), Jewett then presents highly detailed, tabular 'rhetorical analyses' for both letters; the genre of 1 Thes. is established as 'demonstrative/deictic' (p. 71), that of 2 Thes. as mixing 'denial' and 'reproval' (p. 81).

The theoretical and perhaps gratuitously detailed discussion of Chapter Five begins to bear fruit in Chapter Six, which argues on the grounds of ancient rhetorical practice that the long *narratio* section in 1 Thes. (1:6-3:13) reflects Paul's definite concern with certain problems in the church. Jewett adduces e.g. the apparent Thessalonian concern over experienced persecution (2:14; 3:1-5) and the death of church members (4:13-18), the apparent unconcern to remain prepared for the parousia (5:3, 6-8), the problem of the *ataktoi* ('obstinate resisters of authority', p. 105), etc.

Chapter Seven deals with what is known of the setting in Thessalonica. Jewett infers from the report in Acts that the charge of Acts 17:7 must have arisen from actual seditious behaviour by Jason and his church. He supposes the Thessalonian church to have consisted of mostly Gentile, relatively poor artisans and small traders (pp. 120f.) plagued by high taxation, unfavourable economic conditions and virtual political disfranchisement. Religiously, the atmosphere was determined by the civic imperial cult which had incorporated the redeemer mystery cult of Cabirus - thus leaving a religious vacuum which, according to Jewett, was an ideal setting for a millenarian movement of Pauline Christianity among the working class.

Chapter Eight surveys previous models of the Thessalonian congregation, pointing out their weaknesses. Traditional models are found to reflect cultural and denominational biases, and to be insufficiently critical and specific. The 'enthusiastic model' lacks an appropriate social theory to account for a variety of phenomena. Gnosticism is unlikely because of the absence of a number of essential Gnostic features in Thessalonica. The 'divine man model' fails to explain some of the clearly apocalyptic characteristics and introduces other features which are not at all reflected; nevertheless it may help to understand the profile of the *ataktoi*.

Chapter Nine brings anthropological and sociological analyses of modern millenarian movements to bear upon the Thessalonian situation, concluding that the formative circumstances of such movements are also distinctly present in Thessalonica. Phenomena such as the tendency on the part of some Thessalonian Christians to neglect work and civil obligations is taken as illustrative of a 'millenarian radicalism' which Paul's letters try to correct. 'Paul's proclamation of the apocalyptic Christ was understood by these radicals along the lines of the discredited Cabiric cult, in which the benefactor was expected to return in defense of laborers to establish a realm of freedom and bliss' (p. 176).

Chapter Ten completes Jewett's argument: essentially, the reason for the writing of 2 Thes. is understood to be a misunderstanding of the first letter (esp. of 2:18; 5:1-5; 2:16) resulting in an intensification of the millenarian tendencies at Thessalonica. Jewett takes the occurrence of such a misunderstanding to be most plausibly confirmed by Paul's suspicion of possible forgery in 2 Thes. 2:2; 3:17.

Jewett's integrative approach to the Thessalonian correspondence is at once the great strength and the potential nemesis of his model; 'grand unifying theories' have traditionally not fared well in the world of critical scholarship. Jewett's claims for his argument, however, are on the whole neither presumptuous nor exclusive of previous work (but cf. his curious criticism of previous rhetorical studies for not presenting 'the total communication process implicit in a Pauline letter': p. 64, ital. added). This reviewer, while doubtful of the author's occasional accommodation of seemingly tenuous and far-fetched evidence, found himself favourably impressed by the

uncommon coherence and flexibility of the overall argument. In the end one must also give full credit to a circumspect interpretation which, without having an apologetic or a sceptical axe to grind, plausibly fits the *prima facie* appearance of Pauline authorship of both Thessalonian letters.

**Markus Bockmuehl**, Vancouver, Canada.

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**Howard Clark Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times* (SNTS Monograph Series 55; Cambridge: University Press, 1986), 170 pp., £19.50.**

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In 1983 Howard Clark Kee published *Miracle in the Early Christian World* (New Haven: Yale University Press). In this latest book he follows up his interest in the phenomenon of healing in the NT by investigating the interrelationship of medicine, miracle and magic. Thus, after an introductory chapter on definitions and contexts for healing, in four successive chapters he examines in detail healing in the OT and post-biblical traditions; medicine in the Greek and Roman traditions; miracles; and magic. This leads him to the following observations:

First, the phenomenon of healing in the gospels and elsewhere in the NT is a central factor in primitive Christianity; secondly, that the role of Jesus as healer was by no means an accommodation of an itinerant preacher-prophet to Hellenistic culture, but was in direct continuity with the OT prophetic understanding of what God was going to do in the New Age; thirdly, the healing works of Jesus are means to spiritual transformation rather than ends in themselves; fourthly, the portrayal of healing in the NT stands on the whole in contrast to analysis.

For the evangelical scholar, this contribution to NT studies is a real tonic to the soul. In a clear and decisive manner Howard Clark Kee deals with the arguments of more radical scholars and establishes the basic trustworthiness of the gospel record. Although, no doubt, there will be differences of interpretation on a number of minor points, we warmly welcome this detailed investigation of NT healings within the context of their day.

**Paul Beasley-Murray**, Spurgeon's College.

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**Frank McConnell (ed.), *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), vi + 152 pp., £15.00.**

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A collection of essays presents opportunity for great reward and great disappointment. This anthology offers both. To read the essays on their own, the volume would lack some coherence, but the editor weaves a thread of continuity through the selections by focusing upon the Bible as an assembly of 'little books' (p. 4) which has 'transfigured itself into an intellectual tradition which is, simply, the basis of all Western commentary on literature and the use of literature' (p. 5).

Harold Bloom, Yale deconstructionist, provides what the editor calls 'a demonstration of what an adverting mind can make of the Text of texts' (p. 17). Bloom lives up to his billing. Assuming J (of JEDP) dates to Solomon's age (an arguable assumption), Bloom sees J as exemplifying a set of generally favourable views of Yahweh, reflected in the 'theomorphic' characters he creates: Joseph and especially Jacob are Davidic characters (which is good); Moses is not. This essay is a theology of J (in literary garb) which disavows being theology, written in the image of Bloom, who admits that interpretation relies solely upon the 'ear' of the interpreter. His method is open to serious debate.

The longest essay is by Hans Frei, Yale theologian. Recognizing the *sensus literalis* is 'the closest one can come to a consensus reading of the Bible as the sacred text in the Christian church' (p. 37). Frei first explores significant issues about literal interpretation, noting

especially the centrality of the Jesus story. He then states two provocative consequences: the OT is treated typologically, and the literal reading (as opposed to a 'spiritual' or other reading) is identified with the plain sense. In section two Frei explores the destructive effect of deconstruction criticism upon 'unitary and systematic' (p. 43) 19th-century hermeneutics. The going is roughest here, since the section – like his *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* – is written in very dense English. First Frei subjects the (so-called) New Criticism to vigorous analysis, which illustrates its self-centred, subjective interpretative stance, the very thing the method seeks to avoid. These criticisms constitute some worthy limitations of the formalist method. In section three, Frei revivifies the literal sense by suggesting a proposal which affirms determining 'meaning' without necessarily answering the 'truth' question (p. 63). This leads him to acknowledge the role of faith-assertions in dictating terms of interpretation within a given sociolinguistic community. Many will welcome the intellectual challenge that this essay poses, especially regarding the origins and consequences of interpretative strategies, although contemporary literary/theological jargon makes the going tough.

The third essay, by Frank Kermode, dialogues with James Barr (historical) and Brevard Childs (canonical) over canonicity, paralleling debate in the secular literary community. Kermode sets the debate in its historical context, illustrating that some of Barr's rhetoric about his 'common sensical' approach finds echoes in previous ages, and showing that inevitably each side makes assumptions. This essay is helpful, as far as it goes.

James Robinson's essay seems misplaced, being an exercise in traditional higher criticism. Several interesting redaction-critical comments tied to his reconstructed trajectories of earliest Christianity (O is alive and well) are made, but their relations to the narrative issues are few.

Donald Foster is commended for providing a sustained textual analysis. But his assumption that John's Gospel is allegory leads to readings which equal Augustine's. He assumes that at the Cana wedding feast (Jn. 3) the old wine is the word of the prophets, the water is John the Baptist's ministry, and the filling of the stone jars is John the Baptist's completing of the dispensation of the law. (Foster also has difficulty with Greek vocabulary [see pp. 116 and 130 n. 1, cf. 129, on *anōthen*].) An interesting insight, however, is his citing temporal references which point to Jesus' 'late' arrival at several events (e.g. Pool of Bethesda on the last day of the week), although his contention that these point to John's 'late arrival to the evangelistic field' (p. 113) is mere speculation.

Finally, Herbert Schneidau attempts to re-establish differences between Semitic and non-Semitic mindsets, on the basis of recent work in psycholinguistic and narrative theory. The result is several howlers, such as 'before the first millennium BC [men] did not "think out" their reactions to situations, but rather reacted to superegoistic voices from the right hemisphere of their brains' (p. 139). Schneidau recognizes the weakness of this characterization, but suggests that 'our kind of consciousness is a peculiar Western adaptation of narrative for situations that ancient forms of thinking, whatever they were, dealt with differently' (p. 140). The result is predictable, a contrast of the Western cyclical view of history with the dynamic Yahweh-motivated Hebraic view. His confident result is that objective history-writing is self-defeating. The conclusions he states about reproducing 'what really happened' (historicism) are all too true, but his route to this conclusion is unnecessary.

Several general observations about the book as a whole may put it in perspective. First, this book is challenging, requiring sufficient background in a number of contemporary theological and literary debates. Second, the writing styles do not always enhance access. Third, one may very well disagree with the assumptions and conclusions of several essays, especially regarding critical questions. Fourth, and perhaps most disappointing for *Themelios* readers, few essays include profitable literary analyses of the biblical text. This is not to say that there is not much to be gained from this book, but it should not serve as one's introduction to recent debate of these issues.

**Stanley E. Porter**, Biola University, USA.

James D. G. Dunn, *The Living Word* (London: SCM, 1987), 196 pp., £6.95.

The Professor of Divinity at Durham here collects six pieces of diverse origins that are held together by a cluster of common concerns, centring on the relationship between the authority of Scripture and the character of the scriptural writings as interpreted tradition. Together they may be regarded as an endeavour to reformulate an evangelical understanding of biblical authority in terms of 'living tradition' and a dialogue between historical exegesis and Spirit-led discernment of 'word of God' in the present. Part of their interest lies in the attempt to make theological bricks out of hermeneutical straw ('I see New Testament theology as primarily a hermeneutical task').

According to the oft-invoked distinction between deductive and inductive methods in fixing the authority of the Bible, Dunn is clearly closer to the latter, although he might well wish to pronounce a plague on both houses and claim to be pursuing some *via media*. For he seeks to establish a *functional* notion of scriptural authority, from the way Scripture is used in the Bible. This involves him not only in analysing the NT's appeals to the OT, but also in drawing out the significance of later reinterpretation and reapplication of earlier tradition within each Testament. Thus he identifies a 'dialogue between the *historical concern of the Evangelists in preserving the tradition of Jesus and their concern also to use and so also interpret that tradition for their own times*'. In this same chapter, which is for me the most attractive in the book, he also suggests that Paul, far from being uninterested in what Jesus said and did, used the tradition of Jesus in somewhat the same way, as 'a living voice which was heard again and again speaking with ever new force and effect in a variety of fresh situations'.

The final chapter, originally published in 1982, takes its cue from the 'canon criticism' of Brevard Childs and others, but argues for four different 'levels of canonical authority' – those of tradition-history, the final author or composition stage, the canon proper, and ecclesiastical tradition. The argument depends on a confusing use of 'canon' and its derivatives. If it is defined as 'any formulation(s) or writing(s) which a community of faith treats as its rule of faith, as constitutive or normative for its self-understanding', one has departed from the distinctively Christian canonical standpoint, in so far as 'canon' has been sundered from the context of church theology that alone gives it meaning. This becomes evident in the curious notion of an 'ecclesiastical level' of canonical authority, exemplified in Catholicism's elaboration of Marian traditions beyond any explicit grounding in Scripture. This is not far from the very antithesis of the canon of Scripture! What Professor Dunn in effect does in this chapter is conscript the concept of canon into the service of the *descriptive* task that he pursues throughout the book – that of surveying the different ways in which the constituent traditions and components of the Bible have functioned as norms. This is very different from advancing a richer or more suggestive understanding of the Bible as itself canon in the theology and church. It is not surprising that he is very taken with the idea of 'a canon within the canon'.

The book sustains a sharp critique of the Warfield/inerrantist interpretation of biblical authority. Not everything ascribed to this position would, it seems to me, be accepted by all its exponents (e.g. 'Scripture must always say precisely the same thing in every historical context'), and for my part nothing is gained, other than a higher level of acidity, by the hoary allegations of bibliolatry and Pharisaic legalism. Dunn does not believe that Scripture teaches its own inerrancy (he examines four key texts), and also engages in some aprioristic discussion about what might or might not result from the recording, under divine inspiration, of God's Word by human authors. What is lacking here is some *theological* control, and I could not help sensing the relevance of the Christological analogy.

Dunn is keen to promote internal evangelical discussion, and reprints here his reply to Roger Nicole's criticisms of his main essay, 'The Authority of Scripture According to Scripture' (which earlier appeared in *Churchman*). If evangelicals are agreed that in the incarnation the divine Word entered as fully as possible into human life ('even unto death'), without being subject to the sin and error that afflict all other human existences, we may have a paradigm for

determining what it is proper to hold of the inspired Word of God in scriptural form. 'Like any other book' would be no more at risk than 'in every respect . . . as we are'; one would be asking if there is a proper scriptural analogue to 'yet without sinning'. This would in my view afford some possibility of approaching the question without theologically uncontrolled aprioristic reasoning. It would be akin to tackling the subject *per notum ad ignotum* or perhaps better, *per creditum ad dubitatum*.

Professor Dunn operates with a disjunction between the Word of God in its original context and the permanent written record of it. He allows that 'what Scripture [when correctly understood] says, God said', but not 'what Scripture says, God says'. What was once rightly received as Word of God is so no longer because of historical relativism, which may be covenantal or cultural. This recognition sets Scripture free to become the medium through which the *quondam* Word of God may, when reappropriated and reapplied in new situations, but not necessarily in accordance with its original, author-intended meaning, give vent to a new Word of God today. There is dialectic between historical exegesis (discovering 'the historical word of God') and 'prophetic openness to the Spirit now'. Although the Spirit may speak 'through or apart from the Bible', the NT retains a normative authority for Christianity.

There is much here that invites critical engagement. First, the concept of 'Word of God' requires further investigation. According to Dunn, those large tracts of the OT often referred to as the ceremonial law ceased to be 'the word of God' with the coming of Christ and were 'abandoned' by Christianity. The category of 'fulfilment' is simply a form of discontinuity. It is not clear what justifies this restricted sense of 'Word of God' (Dunn's interest in the use of Scripture by Scripture does not encompass an analysis of this and related phrases), but it appears to be neither existentialist-Barthian nor anabaptist-(neo) pentecostal in inspiration, but a theological print-out of Dunn's strictly traditio-historical input. It is a critical issue, for it has the effect of denying the Word-of-God character of much, if not all, of Scripture almost by definition.

Secondly, it is not clear to me that Dunn has worked out consistently the implications of his position, for on his premises none of the Bible is 'Word of God' today apart from some special disclosure by the Spirit, since all of the NT (even, say, Mt. 25:31-46, which has become so peculiarly the gospel of late 20th-century Christianity) suffers from historical relativism. How are we to know when Lk. 18:22 ('Sell all that you have . . .') becomes the Word of God for us as it did, we are told, for Francis of Assisi? Dunn seems aware of the problem, but to have no answer to it beyond an appeal to 'the directive authority of the Spirit revealing the mind of God here and now'. This is a recipe for subjectivism on the individual level and for that essentially Roman identification of the 'mind of the church' with the Spirit that has made such inroads into churches of the Reformation in the latter days.

This book's advocacy of a 'radical' evangelical viewpoint is undeniably challenging and stimulating. ('Radical' would, I think, be a truer characterization of Jesus than Dunn's 'liberal'. I find Jesus as much if not more 'exclusive' than 'inclusive'.) Gauntlets are meant to be picked up, and this review is a brief initial response. I discern here a hermeneutical captivity of the doctrine of Scripture, symptomatic of the legal separation our generation has countenanced between critical biblical study and systematic theology.

D. F. Wright, New College, Edinburgh.

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Nigel M. de S. Cameron (ed.), *The Challenge of Evangelical Theology: Essays in Approach and Method* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, distributed by Paternoster Press, 1987), viii + 153 pp., £9.90.

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This volume is a collection of seven essays by evangelical scholars, all but one of which were originally given as papers at the First Edinburgh Conference in Christian Dogmatics held at Rutherford House in the summer of 1985. They are truly international in scope with contributors from Holland, France and the United States as well, of course, as England and Scotland.

The essays are rather diverse and cover a wide range of issues. All deal in one way or another with theological method.

In the first, 'The Logic of Biblical Authority', the author, Dr N. Cameron, drawing upon insights gained from Kirsopp Lake (a prominent 19th-century liberal) and the Oxford philosopher H. L. Mansel's 1858 Bampton Lectures, rejects the view that the evangelical doctrine of Scripture is a novelty which arose in the fundamentalist controversy. He argues that orthodox theology and the orthodox view of Scripture are so interrelated that the one must stand or fall with the other. This is the 'logic' of biblical authority which shows us the 'illogicality' of the modern eclectic approach which accepts some elements of biblical revelation but rejects others and which is prevalent in evangelical circles as well as liberal.

The second contribution is that of Prof. Henri Blocher, entitled 'The "Analogy of Faith" in the Study of Scripture'. Prof. Blocher calls evangelicals to reappropriate this significant aspect of their hermeneutical heritage. He goes on to survey the meaning of the analogy of faith in its scriptural and historical uses. He argues that the principle is fully consistent with an evangelical view of Scripture only when understood in the sense of the analogy of the whole of Scripture (*analogia totius Scripturae*). Other understandings must be subordinate to this. After giving a broader theological justification for this, Prof. Blocher ends by offering us guidelines as to how we should apply the principle today. Though the essay as a whole was illuminating, I found this last section rather sketchy and therefore disappointing.

In the third essay, 'Unity and Diversity in Old Testament Theology', Dr J. G. McConville argues that the OT is marked by unity and diversity. Whichever one of these a scholar lays most emphasis on will determine the results of his interpretation. Whilst one who holds to a traditional view of the canon must start by postulating the unity of the OT, he must not ignore its diversity. Building on this argument Dr McConville closes by suggesting three elements which must characterize an adequate OT theology.

The theme of 'unity and diversity' is continued in Dr G. Bray's contribution, 'Unity and Diversity in Christian Theology'. Dr Bray argues that theology today must respond to two competing pressures: the synchronic (contemporary) and the diachronic (historical). The historical character of revelation forces us to prefer the diachronic option. Though our theology must respond to the needs of the time it must always be firmly rooted in Scripture and tradition. This is where so much modern theology has gone wrong; contemporary pressures are made the basis of the theological agenda and we know with what results! In order to fulfil their theological task, Dr Bray argues, evangelicals must develop a new understanding of tradition as 'person-to-person contact through the ages' and Scripture as 'the living voice of the Spirit'. Though there are some over-generalizations (e.g. on p. 78, 'charismatics show a theological indifference which makes the World Council of Churches look almost sectarian' — this is by no means true of *all* charismatics), this is a highly stimulating and provocative essay. Dr Bray offers many interesting insights into the contemporary scene and the development of the Christian tradition.

The fifth contribution, by Professor R. L. Reymond of Covenant Theological Seminary, is somewhat patchy. Entitled 'The Justification of Theology', one wonders at the end of the day whether the author has done more than simply explain why he as an evangelical 'does' theology. Nevertheless on the way we are given a biblical basis for engaging in theology and offered some interesting observations on Bultmann's 'Christology from below' and Käsemann's 'Christology from above'.

Jan Veenhof (Prof. of Systematic Theology in the Free University of Amsterdam) provides a weighty contribution entitled 'The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics'. Whilst rejecting the older Orthodox distinction between sacred and profane hermeneutics, so affirming that there is no specific biblical hermeneutics, he accepts the idea that there is another 'dimension' of 'living understanding' beyond the purely historical one. It is in the theological approach to the Bible that a distinct hermeneutics is needed. Theology comes to the text expecting to encounter God in Christ there. The secret of this event is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit works within us, but in such a way as not to suppress our humanity. This means that he will not lead us to abandon the 'scientific' dimension of interpretation, though he will influence the way in which we use such methods.

The final contribution, 'Calvin's Approach to Theology', comes from Professor R. S. Wallace who is well known for his writings on Calvin. In this essay Prof. Wallace offers us some valuable insights into Calvin's theological method. As well as being scriptural and systematic in form, Calvin's theology is also marked by a mystical strand. Yet, with his lack of confidence in man as a source of the knowledge of God, Calvin's theology never becomes merely subjective. God always takes us out of ourselves. The theologian must begin not from a position of doubt, but from faith. Theology for Calvin, as for Anselm, is always 'faith seeking understanding'. Moreover, Calvin's theology is carried out in a believing community — the church. It thus always has piety as its goal and is pastoral in its orientation. Because the theologian is concerned with the truth he must inevitably be engaged in conflict with all false theologies. This essay provides a good introduction to Calvin as a theologian, though personally I remain unconvinced that there is a strong mystical element in Calvin's theology.

On a general level, it is perhaps relevant to observe that one or two errors have crept into the footnotes.

On the whole I found this a worthwhile collection of essays which well lives up to the expectations created by the word 'challenge' in its title. The authors are not ashamed of their evangelicalism and tackle some crucial and difficult issues head-on from a robust evangelical perspective.

Tony Baxter, Sheffield.

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David Jenkins, *God, Miracle and the Church of England* (London: SCM, 1987), xi + 112 pp., £4.95.

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This is a collection of one short lecture series and four occasional items (two sermons, a lecture, a speech in Synod) by the Bishop of Durham. Its miscellaneous nature makes it a little hard to review; so does the Bishop's frequent lack of clarity. When he speaks of 'encountering a structured space' or describes his own views as 'relativized positivism', it is hard to understand him. (Not, admittedly, when he is trying to be offensive, which he quite often is.) In so far as there is a connecting theme, it is that of miracle; but his views on this topic are not easy to pin down. At one point he declares that anyone who believes God intervenes in the world is worshipping a 'cultic idol', or the devil. This is because God did not intervene to prevent, say, Auschwitz or Hiroshima. This is indeed a notorious problem for theism; but whereas traditional theists believe God may have had good reasons (e.g. his gift of freedom to mankind), Dr Jenkins seems to believe in a God who has simply determined to do nothing, and is this really more admirable morally? In any case, elsewhere Dr Jenkins is less sweeping. 'God is at work in the world', he says, and 'I am quite clear that miracles occur'. The point evidently is — and here he is correct and biblical — that mere displays of power are of no spiritual value; miracles do not compel faith, they can only in fact be identified by faith. But he writes as if this truth somehow entailed that God's work in the world was limited to work upon human minds and souls (though he does not stick rigidly to this). It does not, of course, follow; and if it were true it would be open to the same objection that he raises to traditional views. Auschwitz and Hiroshima were after all the work of human beings with whom God might have interacted, to persuade even if not to compel.

The second part (lectures at Oxford in 1987) is more coherent, though still marred by the note of contempt (here chiefly for his colleagues on General Synod). Evangelicals may even find themselves agreeing with parts. For in it Dr Jenkins is dealing with the appeal to history made by those to whom 'tradition' is an authority for doctrine and church life. Although the 'moral' argument against divine intervention is repeated, Jenkins is willing to allow some such 'quasi-unique events' (those involved in the Incarnation, in which, let it be remembered, Jenkins does believe). But we cannot use these to infer constant divine guidance of the church, which has in fact been riven by disagreements and stained with crimes. 'Church history', including his own version of it, is normally propaganda, and predicting history is impossible (though he ventures one or two forecasts himself); so that appeal to holy tradition is ruled out. As for the Bible,

Jenkins seems a little unsure; he does acknowledge it as an 'essential reference point' which directs us to God, but does not go into detail.

This is really rather a saddening book. Here and there a real note of faith in God and in his Christ is heard; but the note of vituperation is more obvious, and there is no attempt to consider what might be said on the other side of the debate. (Perhaps limitations of time and space prohibited.) A publishers' advertisement says the book will 'delight his admirers and surprise his critics'; I fear it is more likely to dismay the former and alienate the latter.

**Richard Sturch**, Islip, Oxford.

**Rowan Williams, Arius: Heresy and Tradition** (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1987), xi + 348 pp., £19.95

This is an important, though also a difficult book. Students not already fairly familiar with at least textbook accounts of the development of trinitarian theology up to and including the fourth century are likely to be baffled by much of it. More advanced students will certainly not find it an easy read, but they will recognize a major contribution to the understanding of a figure who has been almost as controversial in recent patristic scholarship as he was in the church of his own time. Reconstructing what Arius really meant to teach and why is a formidable task, both because little of his own work survives except in quotations selected for polemical purposes by his opponents, and also because there is no certainty about what theological and philosophical traditions formed his thought. Yet he played a pivotal role in the formation of the classical Christian doctrine of God, so that any serious attempt to appreciate it must also try to understand Arius. We must, as Williams does, attempt to go behind the categories imposed on Arius by his opponents and try to reconstruct his thinking in its own terms.

In doing so, Williams draws together many of the more solid results of the recent spate of scholarly interest in Arius, but also makes his own original contributions. In so debatable a field, the result is unlikely to be received as entirely definitive, but it will certainly remain a large step forward in Arius research. Its demonstration that Arius' central concern was with the doctrine of God and his relation to the world is unlikely to be easily refuted. The alternative proposal – made by R. Gregg and D. Groh in *Early Arianism* (1981) and in part responsible for stimulating recent interest in Arius – that Arius' central concern was soteriological now looks very implausible. Readers of *Themelios* will also be interested to find that Williams' attempt to rescue Arius from the polemical distortion of his views by Athanasius and to present him as a serious and genuinely Christian thinker does not prevent him from recognizing, in a theological postscript, that Athanasius was importantly right.

The book is in three sections on history, theology and philosophy. Part I works expertly through the debated obscurities of dates and documents, providing, as accurately as possible, the meagre biographical framework for the theological issues. It also contains a suggestive sketch of the relation of Arius' career to changing forms of authority and power in the Constantinian church. Arius emerges as a school-theologian, an anachronism in a church acquiring a new sense of institutional definition, in which theological controversies became a matter of episcopal and imperial politics.

In Part II Williams, correctly I am sure, places Arius firmly within the Alexandrian tradition of theology – in the sense that he was both indebted to it and engaged in a radical critique of the way it had developed in the circle of his bishop Alexander. His concerns were very much those of the problematic of the doctrine of God and God's relation to the world as it had existed in Alexandrian theology since Origen (and, in some sense, even since Philo). Even his most radical departures from previous Alexandrian understanding of the Logos Williams shows to have important continuity with earlier criticism and rejection of Origen's cosmology and Christology. As for Arius' famous claim to be a 'Lucianist', Williams convincingly denies that it is likely to indicate any real theological influence on Arius by Lucian of Antioch, while the ghost of Arius the 'adoptionist', following in the footsteps of Paul of Samosata, is, one hopes, finally laid.

I find Williams' detailed account of Arius' relation to earlier theology almost entirely convincing. But in describing Arius' theology as a synthesis of points which had been made before but not brought together in quite this way, he perhaps risks underplaying the novelty of Arius' achievement, which was to break completely with the hitherto all-pervasive notion of hierarchical divinity. Whereas for all Arius' predecessors the Son was, in however subordinate or ambiguous a sense, divine, for Arius he was unambiguously created rather than divine. Out of an old familiar hat Arius pulled a new rabbit. (Had he not done so, there would not have emerged – at least not at that time – that other new rabbit: Nicene orthodoxy.) As Williams several times puts it, Arius was both conservative and radical – conservative in his theological concerns, radical in pursuing consistently one of those concerns (for the freedom and transcendence of God) in such a way as to challenge others.

Part III is more speculative, but makes an interesting case for Arius' indebtedness to recent developments in Platonic philosophy which had not yet affected Christian theology in general. Not that Arius was primarily a philosopher: he was primarily an exegete and theologian. But like all Alexandrian theologians he adopted current philosophical concepts to elucidate his theology. His fundamental concern for the unconditional freedom of God he drew not from philosophy, but from the theological tradition, but to support it he adopted, Williams suggests, elements of the increasing apophaticism of the Neoplatonic philosophers.

Arius cannot be condemned for deviation from an orthodoxy which only emerged from the controversy over his views. But with hindsight we can call his theological enterprise a failure. If we ask whether this book enables us to identify how Arius failed (and therefore, how Nicene theology proved more adequate), then it seems to me, at the risk of oversimplifying a complex book, that the nub of the matter is this: Arius attempted to secure God's freedom in relation to the world, but did so in a way which denied his freedom really to relate to the world.

**Richard Bauckham**, University of Manchester.

**Bernard Lohse, Martin Luther. An Introduction to his life and work** (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1986), 288 pp., £14.95.

This is an excellent book written by one of our most competent and reputable Luther scholars, and further, a scholar committed to his church. Nevertheless, in a review written for *Themelios*, it should be stated at the outset that this book is not a simple guide into Luther's life and thought written with the average hard-pressed student in mind, nor is it an introduction to Luther studies which the average student could read. (Students seeking to gain a working knowledge of Luther would be advised to turn to the works of such as H. H. Kramm or Paul Altaus, to Roland Bainton, Gordon Rupp and Philip Watson, seeking guidance from their tutors.)

What then is this book which describes itself as an introduction to Luther's life and work? It is a modern, critical evaluation of what the last 60 years of international and inter-denominational scholarship have made of the life and work of Luther. It is written for the well-informed student who is seeking to pursue study and research into Luther. The average student would do well to reflect that were he to devote eight hours a day to reading nothing else but Luther's works, it would take him about 25 years to read through the whole corpus once, assuming a reasonable competence in Latin and 16th-century German. Not only are Luther's writings a national monument, but his impact on theology has been enormous, and still is: he continues to reverberate down the centuries. It is not only that this book demands of the reader a very good working knowledge of Luther, but that the book can only be fully appreciated in relation to the theological movements of the last 100 years, the last 60 in particular, since Karl Holl's rediscovery of Luther about 1926.

This definition of the readership should not be interpreted as to detract in any way from the value of this study. Lohse begins with an

examination of the world into which Luther was born, and moves into a summary of Luther's life. At the outset he indicates the nature of his enquiry. It is a 'corrective' book, and a 'cautionary' book, in that it raises and discusses all the questions modern liberal scholarship directs at Luther, and in so doing corrects many misunderstandings, and cautions against simplistic solutions. On some pages he raises as many as five questions for the reader to consider, not unlike a conscientious professor questioning his research student on the results of his research. Some of these questions are on themes as central to Luther as the Church and Ministry, and the (so-called) doctrine of the Two Kingdoms (or Two Governments) which most people tend to assume they already understand. Almost the entire range of Luther's writings is scrutinized, their relative importance, genre, and historical context examined. Lohse displays confident expertise on the real issues of Luther's theology, and a masterly grasp of all modern interpreters, as well, of course, as familiarity with the Luther corpus itself. He also examines the whole history of Luther interpretation, the tasks, perspectives and problems. This field in itself is a lifetime's study.

The book gives excellent guidance on the contemporary aids to Luther research (translations, dictionaries, guides), and provides a useful bibliography for the student who wishes to pursue his studies. It is for such a student Lohse is here writing, and for such a student it is the best book available. The book should be in every theological library.

The text is well translated for English students by Robert C. Schultz into clear and short sentences. The presentation and publication of the book is of high quality, and the reviewer appreciated keenly the virtually unknown 16th-century sketch on the dust cover of the real, rugged Luther. It is a fitting design for Lohse's book, which also presents the real and rugged true Luther for those who take him seriously, and for those prepared to undertake a few years' hard labour, or even their life's work, to understand him and his significance for Christianity, and for history, for that matter.

**James Atkinson, Sheffield.**

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**Richard Bauckham, *Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1987), x + 175 pp., £9.95.**

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In recent years Moltmann has emerged as probably the most widely read German theologian in the Anglo-Saxon world. However, until the publication of this book there was no easily accessible introduction to his work. This omission may be due in part to the strong reactions which his writings engender in his readers. One gets the impression that Moltmann's fall naturally into two classes: enthusiasts and the antipathetic. In such a situation the balance necessary for a good introduction is hard to come by.

For the purposes of this introduction, Dr Bauckham has restricted his attention to that part of Moltmann's career delimited by *Theology of Hope* (1964), *The Crucified God* (1972), and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975). This has the dual advantage of reducing the work to manageable proportions, and creating a natural framework on which to hang his study. Thus there are chapters on each of the volumes of Moltmann's trilogy. An introductory chapter on the origins and context of the theology of hope, and one which traces the development of Moltmann's trinitarian thinking through this period, complete the introduction.

The introductory chapter shows very briefly how Moltmann's interest in eschatology and mission can be traced back to his days as a student in Göttingen. Bauckham then turns to his dialogue with Ernst Bloch: he draws out a number of parallels between the theology of hope and the work of Bloch to show how Moltmann has been able to use categories from the Marxist philosopher to articulate his own approach to Christian eschatology. However he is at pains to point out that this was no uncritical assimilation of Marxist thought: Bloch's philosophy was an apt vehicle for expressing the revolutionary potential of the gospel and no more.

Having thus set the scene, chapter 2 deals with *Theology of Hope* itself. Each of the chapters dealing with the elements of the trilogy

follows the same pattern: an examination of the structure and method of the work is followed by a more detailed examination of its major themes. In the case of *Theology of Hope* Bauckham singles out for closer examination Moltmann's understanding of revelation as promise, his insistence on the reality and significance of the resurrection, and his suggestion that history be understood as mission. Chapter 2 concludes with brief sections which trace Moltmann's development in the years immediately following the publication of *Theology of Hope*.

The longest chapter in the book is understandably devoted to Moltmann's most influential work, *The Crucified God*. In discussing its methodology, Bauckham points out the way in which Moltmann's greater stress on the cross has radicalized rather than changed his earlier approach. He suggests that this theology of the cross may be regarded as a Christian parallel to the Frankfurt School's critical theory. Bauckham develops this suggestion as he examines in turn the dialectic of the cross; the iconoclasm of the cross; Moltmann's response to protest atheism; and the problem of suffering.

Chapter 4, 'The Trinitarian History of God', of necessity follows quite a different pattern from its neighbours. It takes the form of a synoptic view of the developments in Moltmann's concept of God between 1964 and 1979. While not straying beyond the self-imposed limits of Bauckham's task, this chapter does provide a useful background for examining Moltmann's more recent work on the doctrine of the Trinity.

The final chapter is a useful exposition of Moltmann's ecclesiology – an aspect of his work which has been somewhat overshadowed by the debates surrounding the earlier volumes of the trilogy.

Although Bauckham numbers himself amongst the enthusiasts for Moltmann he has achieved a very fair account of this period in Moltmann's career. It is primarily concerned to present an overview rather than a critique of Moltmann's work, but Bauckham does not shrink from reporting and commenting on some of the more serious criticisms. As an overview, and a lucidly written one at that, it will prove indispensable for students who are grappling with Moltmann's thought for the first time. But I believe it will also be of value to people who are already familiar with Moltmann's theology as an aid to achieving an overall picture of his work free from the false emphases of particular enthusiasms and criticisms. Indeed it appears that even those whose knowledge of Moltmann's work is most intimate can benefit: let Moltmann himself have the last word:

there are also mirrors in which one recognizes oneself better than one had known oneself before. From these mirrors one learns something new about oneself and one's theological career, and one is glad of this revelation of the hidden motives and methods in one's thought. (Richard Bauckham's work has been this kind of mirror for me (p. vii).)

**L. H. Osborn, London.**

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**David N. Power, *The Sacrifice We Offer: the Tridentine Dogma and its Reinterpretation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 206 pp., £12.95.**

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David Power is an Irish Roman Catholic theologian, now teaching in America. His book is a readable but fairly technical discussion of the meaning of the Council of Trent's teaching on the sacrifice of the mass.

The motivation of the book is ecumenical, and it begins with an examination of a number of recent ecumenical documents which have attempted to bridge the gap between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism on the subject of the mass-sacrifice, such as the Lima report 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry' and the first (miscalled 'final') report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. He concludes, truly enough, that they are not altogether consistent and have not wholly succeeded in this aim.

He then goes on to look at some recent Roman Catholic statements which emphasize the gap rather than minimize it, notably the papal letter *Dominicae Cenae* (1980) and the *Observations of the Holy Office* on the ARCIC report. He argues that these give a one-sided

interpretation of Trent, and make the gap seem wider than they need.

In explaining Trent, Power rightly considers the various views expressed by participants at the Council, before they formulated its decrees and canons, so as to show how much breadth of opinion it intended to embrace. He also points out that such theological statements should not be assessed in the abstract, without considering the sort of practice which they were intended to interpret. This is his most original contribution. A much more familiar point is his claim that it is legitimate to reinterpret Trent (without rejecting it), so as to correct any perceived imbalance in the underlying conceptions of 16th-century theology.

The commitment of Roman Catholics to Trent does, of course, put severe limits on the extent to which they are able to rethink the traditional theology of the mass. The biblical objections to this teaching are hardly glanced at in the present volume. As the author modestly says, such considerations would require 'another book'.

**Roger Beckwith, Latimer House, Oxford.**

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**John Driver, *Understanding the Atonement for the Mission of the Church* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania/Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1986), 286 pp., \$19.95 US, 27.95 CN.**

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Although the work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Golgotha is considered central in theology there weren't many major works on the atonement for several years. Happily in the last three years this situation has changed with the appearance of books by John Stott, H. D. Macdonald, and John Driver, the author of the book now under review. John Driver writes from a strong missionary point of view having served in many Spanish-speaking countries for the Mennonite Board of Missions. His keen interest lies in Christian community living and the impact of the gospel in our social relations. The reader will appreciate Driver's emphasis on the covenant fellowship we have with God the Father through his Son. He stresses our common life in the kingdom of God and calls us to exemplify this life in the brokenness of the world. Part of the purpose of the book is to see what impact our teaching on the cross necessarily has on this kingdom life.

The book begins by insisting that we view the cross of Christ in the series of images presented rather unsystematically by the Bible and resist the temptation to reduce the meaning to an essential core. Driver proposes ten images and gives a brief summary of each. He follows with a critique of the classic theories held at various times in the church. The book ends with some chapters on contemporary implications of his presentation of the ten images of the cross. The bulk of the work is a detailed look at each image always contrasted with one of the older theories. The author is rightly concerned about the individualistic approach to faith and salvation which leaves commitment to the body of Christ and obedience to Christ's global mission as options for the more dedicated.

The reviewer believes allowance must be made because of the ground-breaking nature of the book. It is at times tediously repetitive. Bold assertions are made which when taken literally seem dangerous, *i.e.* 'by definition, atonement, in its biblical sense, cannot be experienced outside a reconciled community' (p. 247), and 'people need each other if they are to be saved at all' (p. 226). Driver pushes the pendulum of personal salvation back toward community salvation with such force as to sometimes lose the biblical balance.

The author charges the traditional theories of atonement with reductionism. They insisted on one core meaning and left out many other images with different content of equal importance. It is in Driver's effort to distance himself from Abelard's moral influence theory and Anselm's satisfaction theory that the reviewer finds the greatest problems of convincing reasoning. He states Abelard's view of the cross as 'a demonstration to humanity of God's matchless love' (p. 44). He correctly shows the weakness of the position because 'it does not tell us why the death of Jesus was necessary in order to reveal the love of God' (p. 48). Yet on p. 183 in the section on the reconciliation image of the cross he states, 'But how does the death

of Christ reconcile God's enemies? For one thing, Christ's death is a demonstration of God's love. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus – but even more specifically the cross – bring together and present in a dramatic demonstration the love of God.' Why is Driver's view not subject to his own critique of Abelard? He must show the spiritual necessity of Christ's death.

The classic 'satisfaction' view of the atonement stated by Anselm centuries ago insists that the necessity of the cross is found in the need to appease the righteous wrath of a holy God against the sins of his disobedient creatures made in his image. Driver argues forcefully against this position. But can he prove then the necessity of the cross? The author does speak of the wrath of God: 'God's response to the unfaithfulness of humanity is wrath' (p. 183). He continues, however, 'But neither is wrath a mere aspect of the divine essence so that God, like the pagan deities of the ancient world, somehow needs to be appeased or placated so that he will renounce the effects of his wrathfulness. Inasmuch as God's wrath is his wounded covenant love, it is in reality more salvific than punitive in its intention. The appropriate response to God's wrath is repentance and conversion, *i.e.*, return to God and to relationship in the community of his covenant.' There seem to be other ways of expressing wrath and bringing people back to the covenant without the incarnation and death of the only begotten Son of God – something rather extreme for a God who doesn't need to be appeased!

The problem originates in Driver's basic misunderstanding of God's honour or, better, holiness. In his critique of Anselm he states: 'God's honor is sacred, in Anselm's view. One is impressed by the fact that in this view God is *captive of his own honor* (emphasis mine). God's liberty, kindness and will, for example, are all subordinated to the importance assigned to his honor' (p. 51). He repeats this statement on p. 62 and even adds that in this view God's pride is the foremost attribute of divinity. This way of presenting the classic evangelical position on the atonement is straw-man argumentation. His claims that the theory is based on Roman civil law and that it makes 'Christ's death a human initiative directed Godward' will surprise many who believe the incarnation was God's idea and are thankful that in the cross both wrath against our sin and love for us as sinners are harmonized.

*Understanding the Atonement* has serious exegetical and reasoning problems. It remains, however, a stimulating book as it stresses the place of the cross in the community of Christ. It should be read in conjunction with a more 'classic' approach, such as John Murray's *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*.

**Gordon Woolard, Brussels.**

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**Douglas Spanner, *Biblical Creation and the Theory of Evolution* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1987), 191 pp., £6.95.**

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It is some years now since interest in the creation-evolution question was at its height in this country, though perhaps the appearance of this book (together with one or two others of late) is evidence that interest is rising again. Professor Spanner, now an Anglican clergyman, was once Professor of Plant Biophysics in the University of London, and his volume appears complete with commendations from Sir Robert Boyd and Professor R. J. Berry. The present reviewer believes he is correct in suggesting that *Biblical Creation and the Theory of Evolution* is the fullest exposition of a theistic evolutionary doctrine of creation to be published in this country for many years.

As Sir Robert Boyd points out, this book is scholarly (full of references; somewhat overfull – almost 70 pages of notes, appendices and so forth) but not written for the scholar. It is the bane of this field of discussion that since it encompasses so many distinct questions and areas of expertise, it is well-nigh impossible for any one individual to survey it without leaving his own field(s) of competence behind. One result is that there is a tendency to write as this book is written, with the apparatus of learning but (save perhaps in Plant Biophysics, whatever that is, and no doubt in related

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ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ  
προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.