BOOK REVIEWS

Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright (eds.) New Dictionary of Theology (Alister McGrath)

Dale Patrick Old Testament Law (David G. Deboys)

B. G. Webb The Book of the Judges. An Integrated Reading (David F. Penriant)

Joel Rosenberg King and Kin: Political Allegory in the Hebrew Bible (Kenneth M. Craig, Jr.)

Adele Berlin The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism (Kenneth M. Craig, Jr.)

Graeme Goldsworthy Gospel and Wisdom (Derek Kidner)


J. R. Stevenson A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337 (D. F. Wright)

Heige Stadelmann Grundlinien eines bibeltreuen Schriftverständnisses (Howard Marshall)


Donald G. Bloesch The Battle For The Trinity (Gordon R. Palmer)

Roger Hooker and Christopher Lamb Love the Stranger (Christian Ministry in Multi-Faith Areas) (Colin Marchant)

C. René Padilla Mission Between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom (J. C. Hall)

Emilio Castro Sent Free. Mission and Unity in the Perspective of the Kingdom (J. C. Hall)

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Special issue on the gospels

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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 even when they are 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 evangelical ideas and situations — and there is value in noting these — but the main point of the gospels is to tell us 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. Many 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 all 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 easily verified — most notables who have even remotely been associated with ‘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 that any scholar can now 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 history 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 Pontius Pilate, Hero of the Great and the Ponticus Pilate, or whether it is the Dead Sea Scrolls and the insight that they give us about 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 Mark 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 essentially in what is called the Markan 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 2:22–4:16). 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. 19:9–10, or his mention of Jesus appearing to Peter in 1 Cor. 15:5–8 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-
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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 gospel 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, 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/Zondervran, 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 'Augustianian' view of synoptic relationships.

Today the situation has changed. The Augustinian view has won few adherents, but in its place a vigorous reexamination of the Griesbach Hypothesis, spearheaded by W. R. Farmer, has won a significant number of supporters. On this view Matthew came first, and Mark is a deliberate conflation and redaction (if such a term can ever 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 the Griesbach's eighteenth-century theory, but it is obvious that if a significant number of scholars cease to believe that Matthew used Mark and Q then on Matthewian studies will be enormous. This is particularly true of reduction-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 synoptics specialists busy, and some of which have proved suitable ammunition for the Griesbachians, are nought as a genuine problem. Perhaps certain, perhaps that no such tidy theory is likely to correspond to the way books were actually written in the experience of early Christianity. While to speak simply of 'the independence of Matthew and Mark' 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.

So while some reduction-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 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. 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, which offer a date before AD 63 and the apostle Matthew as the author. Gundry's arguments include a contrary 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 Künzlinger's translation of Papias' Hebraice 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 for the apostle Matthew-Levi as the author. Of course no one disputes the unanimity of the patristic tradition after Papias for apostolic authorship. But second-century and later traditions...
Matthew’s gospel in recent study

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(5) The traditional ascertainment 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 are 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-attributions 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.
and irreversible, so that there was no further point in evangelism among Jews — God had rejected Israel.' This impressionistic statement is in fact based on the statement that 'the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation which produces its fruits' (21:43). This is the parable of the vineyard, and in the parable, the declared innocence of Pilate and the eager acceptance by 'all the people' of the responsibility for the death of Jesus. It is not further unfolded here, nor does it run through the book, particularly judgment on Jerusalem, on the temple, and on 'this generation', in whom all Israel's past rebellion can be found (21:24-29). The use of language which underlies the proposals mentioned earlier to regard Matthew as in its final form an anti-Jewish manifesto by a Gentile writer is observable.

Two factors, however, must not be overlooked in evaluating the anti-Jewish strain in Matthew's historical setting. The Jerusalem temple, which the leaders of the Jews included among the principal objects of their hatred of Jesus, was indeed destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. Israel remains, of course, the constituent part of the nation which the Gentiles found it impossible to recognize in Jesus. Two aspects of this situation must be recognized: the thoroughgoing anti-Semitism with which the Gentiles encountered Jews, as Philippe R. Descola points out, and the Gentile drive to identify with that which was distinct from themselves. This drive was especially evident in the Christian community, which was by definition not Jewish.

It is important to recognize, however, that Matthew also emphasizes, above all, the essential Jewishness of the Christian movement. In the parable of the sower (13:1-23), where the sower is called 'Son of Man', the seed is represented as 'the word of God', the sower as 'the kingdom', the fields as 'the world', the hard ground as 'the Gentiles', the path as 'the way of the world', and the good soil as 'the church'. The parable of the mustard seed (13:31-32), which is often interpreted as a symbol of the church, is also a reminder of the Jewishness of the movement. The parable of the vineyard (21:1-11), which is often interpreted as a symbol of the Gentile expansion of the church, is also a reminder of the Jewishness of the movement. The parable of the talents (25:14-30), which is often interpreted as a symbol of the church's mission, is also a reminder of the Jewishness of the movement. 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and irreversible, so that there was no further point in evangelism among Jews — God had rejected Israel." This rejection of Israel is thus presented as the reason for the statement that 'the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation which produces its fruits' (21:43), which brings to mind the well-known prophecy of 27:18. This Prophecy, as we have seen, declares the innocence of Pilate and the eager acceptance by 'all the people' of the responsibility for the death of Jesus. It is thus a further attempt to present the Christian argument which runs through the book, particularly judgment on Jerusalem, on the temple, and on 'this generation', in whom all Israel's past rebellion (chapters 1-22) and all the use of 'all the language which underlies the proposals mentioned earlier to regard Matthew as in its final form an anti-Jewish manifesto by a Gentile writer Christian.

Two factors, however, must not be overlooked in evaluating the claim that Matthew is a Gentile writer. It is true that the Gentile who brings the Synoptic gospel into existence, and who is the Gentile to be seen as a kind of writer in relation to first-century church life, and its link with the pastoral concern rather than the more formal 'church discipline'.

The lack of reference to church offices has been characterized by E. Schweizer, whose picture of 'Matthew's church' offers a clear and consistent concept of a 'traditional' ecclesiastical' image: a picture in which prophets, wise men and scribes have an important role, but do not occupy exclusive office, where all disciples recognize another as 'little ones', and where any move towards a formally constituted leadership is resisted. If Schweizer's picture is overdrawn, it nevertheless seems clear that the atmosphere of Matthew 18 than those who do read inside Matthew's ecclesiastical' language an anarchistic scenario of formal ecclesiastical organization.

It has been generally recognized, however, that Matthew was writing to a church which was concerned with the relevance of his material to the life and thinking of a particular first-century congregation. The organization of his teaching material into extended 'discourses' with coherent thematic points to such a purpose, and the repeated emphasis on the nature of the church as a corpus mysticum seems to reflect the particular group's understanding of the church as a Christian group. It has been argued by some that Matthew is better characterized as a pastor than as a theologian.

Christology

Among the various christological titles used in Matthew, there have been two 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 context in which this title is used indicates that 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'. It is clear that Jesus'teaching of the connection with his healing ministry. While this could be partly coincidental (in that it tends to be used by 'outsiders' and 'strangers') the connection with a request for healing), the suggestion has been made that a healing of Son of David formed part of Jewish tradition, and that this could be the key to the gospel's Christology. There the vision of 'the enthronement of the Son of Man' drawn from Daniel 7:13-14 reaches its triumphant fulfillment 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.

J. D. Kingsley has become well known for his reiterative emphasis on the central importance of 'Son of God' for Matthew's (and Mark's) christology, 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 uses the title 'Son of David'. The accompanying parallel, that of 'Son of God' (Kingsley).

A stimulating recent article by D. J. Verhees offers a more restricted understanding of Matthew's use of the title 'Son of David'. In focusing 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' claim to kingship, the term therefore represents a calculated challenge to popular 'Son of David' messianism. This is an important article, but it is not without its reservations (it is 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 'son of man' (28:19). 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, he has drawn attention to the Matthew's careful adaptation of the tradition of a few of Jesus' sayings in order to present Jesus as not merely the ruler of Israel, but as himself the presence of the divine Wisdom among men.

But Matthew's Jesus is not to be confined within ready-made models and titles, however created. Running through the gospel is a perception of Jesus as breaking through existing expectation, as a new kind of figure, particularly that which is displayed in his miracles. 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 this clear in his 'Son of God' (with us (12:35), 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).

Most recent interpreters agree in finding in the final scene in the healing at Galilee (28:16-20) a culmination of all the key to the gospel's Christology. There the vision of 'the enthronement of the Son of Man' drawn from Daniel 7:13-14 reaches its triumphal fulfillment 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.


J. D. Gunther, Matthew and Luke (Manchester: Koinonia, 1978); and many others. An important weapon used against the 'post-Straussian consensus' has been the study of Matthew's use of the 'I am the Messiah of the Upretarian Hypothesis' (Edinburgh: T & C. Clark, 1980).


J. M. Rist, On the Independence of Matthew and Mark (Cambridge: UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985) is otherwise in the form of a study of Matthew's use of material from Q, oral and written, but denies that either gospel is based on the other.


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 research on the historical Jesus.

I have attempted to trace some of these hermeneutical patterns in the four formula-quotations of Matthew 2:23 (20801, 20811). See also Gundry, Matthew and Luke, pp. 301-308.

Gundry, Matthew, A Commentary, pp. 623-640 ('A Theological Prologue').


It is notGG's approach from the point of view of Jewish studies in P. Alexander's paper 'Midrash and the
The Gospel of Mark in recent study

L. W. Hurtado

Professor Hurtado is Associate Professor in the Department of Religion at the University of Manitoba in Canada. This is a very useful commentary on Mark in The Good News Bible Commentary series.

The Gospel of Mark is a major centrepiece 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 Markan scholarship within approximately the last ten years (since 1978), as coverage of earlier work is readily available.1 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

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

2. S. M. Anchor Bible commentary on Mark3 advocates the 'Griesbach hypothesis' (Mark dependent upon Matthew and Luke), giving us the only major modern commentary on Mark built upon this premise. Many propose 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.4 The following page will have a more detailed discussion, however, a dispassionately unremarkable analysis of the text of Mark that is particularly weak in awareness of the narrative design of the gospel.5

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 development of the synoptic priority hypothesis (Smalley's view is backward rather than forward). Schmitt's view is also idiosyncratic to be a reliable guide, and the works by Gnilla and Ernst are informed but unintrinsically 'safe' discussions.

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. Markan 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 Markan commentary is evidence that the two-source hypothesis involving the priority of Mark has been challenged by several scholars in recent decades. C. M.旸 the recent attempt to overturn the theory of Markan priority by advocates of the 'Griesbach hypothesis' shows cogently, however, that major characteristics of Mark fit more exactly the mould of a first-century redactor, and that the case against it involves a number of fallacies and inaccuracies.6 In order for the Griesbach position to become a truly alternating theory, advocates will have to produce a persuasive analysis of the text 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, Marxen and Kelber set Mark's origin in Galilee, either near the beginning of the Jewish revolt (Marxen), or just after this war (Kelber). Kelber suggested that the setting of Mark was in southern Syria, sometime during the revolt but before the fall of Jerusalem.

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.7 Hengel's discussion of Mark 13 as indicating the situation of the Markan church is particularly impressive. Hengel also insists that the ancient tradition is correct about Mark's connection with tradition stemming from the apostle Peter.

The use of Markan geographical references as evidence of the setting is supported by advocates of a Syro-Palestinian provenance has been criticized succinctly by E. S. Malbon as representing a kind of referential fallacy.8 Perhaps a similar sort of critique could be leveled against the tendency of some scholars, such as G. Thesen and Kee, to read out conclusions about the social and economic situation of Mark's audience from details of the Markan narratives about the ministry of Jesus and his first followers.9 Their approach seems to reflect a failure to reckon with the reasons religious groups preserve traditions even after social and economic change.

Donald Sand has given attention to the concern for a universalism in Mark (e.g. 13:19-13) 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.).10 In these pages, we shall not accept the claim that Mark's gospel was written (at least in part) to advance a particular understanding of Christ and of Christian life, perhaps over against a more syncretic or 'Jewish' orientation (13:5-6, 21-22). But Senator and others recently remind us that the author's purposes and stimuli were probably more complex.11
The Gospel of Mark in recent study

L. W. Hurtado

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The Gospel of Mark is a major source of creative and constructive discussion among NT scholars. In the following pages, after some remarks about commentaries, I focus on major developments and trends in Markan scholarship within approximately the last ten years (since 1974), as coverage of earlier work is readily available. 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

Some major English-language commentary has appeared in the last decade though several recent general-reader commentaries are available. There are several large German commentaries of relatively recent vintage.

C. S. Mann's Anchor Bible commentary on Mark 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. The page arrangement of Mark, however, a disappointingly unremarkable analysis of the text of Mark that is particularly weak in awareness of the narrative design of the gospel.

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 developments of the son of Man (so long denied in German scholarship) see C. Cargnoni, The Son of Man (Tübingen: Mohr, 1980).

The Gospel of Mark in recent study

L. W. Hurtado


4. R. H. Gundry, Use, pp. 2-5, drew attention to the importance of the allusive references over against Schüssler's concentration on direct quotations.

This interpretation of Matthew as 'conservative' with regard to the observance of the law is most recently defended by H. M. Schüssler, Matthew and Paul (Cambridge: UP, 1984), pp. 7-26, 42-47.


11. For Matthew's particularly hostile presentation of the Pharisees see G. Strecker, Weg, pp. 137-143; D. R. A. Hare, Persuasion, pp. 80-96.


16. For another letter to read Matthew in the light of the Quran see Amarnath in this issue.

17. J. R. Gundry, Use, pp. 18-20. For another letter to read Matthew in the light of the Quran see Amarnath in this issue.


20. Donaldson's recent attempt to overthrow the theory of Markan priority by advocates of the 'Griesbach hypothesis' shows cogently, however, that major characteristics of Mark fit more easily into the priority-source hypothesis, and that the case against it involves a number of fallacies and inaccuracies. In order for the Griesbach position to become a truly altering one, advocates will have to develop a text persuasively on the theory that it is a harmonization of Matthew and Luke.

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Donald Senior has drawn attention to the concern for a uniform tradition in Mark (e.g. 13:19-13) 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.). Such reasoning struggles against the critical spirit of the current historical-critical approach to Mark's text, and in the final analysis, against the view that Mark's gospel was written (at least in part) to advance a particular understanding of Christ and of Christian life, perhaps over against the current Jewish environment (cf. Mark 13:5-6, 21-22). But Senior and others recently remind us that the author's purposes and stimuli were probably more complex.
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. Most scholars seem to have concluded that, if the fragments of 'secret Mark' are genuine, this is the result of a conscious alteration of canonical Mark or from some other writing that may have been attributed to Mark.

4. Literary nature/settting

In the recent analysis of Mark, there have been two main types of literary-critical developments. One approach uses modern literary-critical methods (such as modern English-style 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-critical methods is varied and fervent. J. G. Williams has drawn upon modern theories about narrative and parables to argue that Mark constitutes the attempt to overcome the "incoherent polyvalent quality of parables by placing them in a narrative context which limits the possibilities for interpretation." However, this study may be too much controlled by assumptions arising from peculiarly modern hermeneutical issues and aims, and may miss the "other things as parables actually functioned in the ancient setting."

More general understanding of narratives and their conventions, however, has been advanced by recent work in biblical studies, the origins of which are often given in an article by D. Rhoads, who has also co-authored a book-length analysis of Mark informed by narrative criticism. The recent work of students of Mark is enabled to identify such matters as the 'Marcan plot,' the influence of the Gospel of Mark on later parables, and their roles in the narrative, and the way in which the author has constructed the narrative to achieve his ends. The broad range of results reported by these scholars appropriately suggests that the view that Mark is a generally well-constructed narrative with evident and successfully-executed authorial purposes and intentions is a highly plausible one.

A particular type of literary-critical investigation of Mark adopted from contemporary literary studies is represented by 'reader-response' analysis. Here the text is analysed in terms of how it is studied, constructed by the careful reader. Fowler's study of the two feeding accounts incorporates this approach. He argues that both these stories fit meaningfully within a continuum of Mark's literary strategy and concludes 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. Bass, who criticizes Fowler and other reader-response critics for working with an 'ideal reader' unraveled in time. She insists that with ancient texts such as Mark one should attempt to read the text as a picture as possible of the nature of the ancient reader and the ancient reading process. Mark was probably written to be read out loud in a saloon. He discusses the reader's "performance", and reader-response analysis should recognize the more complex process involved in the ancient reading/listening experience.

Mark and ancient literature

Until recently, the ancient view has been that the gospels (especially Mark) represented a significantly new Christian type of writing, and that comparison with Greco-Roman literature is inappropriate. 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 (e.g. NT scholars nowadays) would have known much more fluid and susceptible to alterations (sometimes considerable) ancient texts when they had to be copied by hand. This is surely one reason why ancient preferred eye-witnesses and tended to distrust written accounts.

Kerbel focuses on valid questions: Why did early Christians distinguish between the Gospel of Mark and other gospels? 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 is undermined by the need for a more historically controlled and genuinely critical approach.

5. Marcan style

The several investigations of Marcan style that have appeared in the last decade can be organized according to the basic question of whether Mark was dependent on Q or Deuteronomy, and also whether Mark had a redactor. Both Deutero-Christian and Peabody are mainly prompted by the question of whether Markan redactional style can be distinguished and whether Mark was written by a single author. Koester argues that the style of the Gospel of Mark is consistent and pervasive throughout the writing, underlining that the author is more particularistic style.

Peabody is somewhat distinctive in approach. His work does not present a particular solution to the synthetic problem (he is a pupil of Farmer), and focuses on 'chronic phenomenon of a change in the description of the oracles'. His analysis is based on a study of the 'oracles' and demonstrates the influence of other aspects of Greco-Roman culture as well, particularly rhetoric.

Further assistance to seeing Mark's gospel in the Greco-Roman world is found in a renewed awareness of the debt to the "oracles." Particularly illuminating for NT scholars here is discussion of the way people with 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, and also the influence of the missionary/teacher or 'scribe' in a Christian group that was not a closed sect but evangelistic in ethos, and offers her own interpretation of the several key Marcan motifs and the design of the narrative.

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. Kerbel's The Oral and Written Gospel. His conclusion is that Mark's relations to the historical and authorial means of communication are largely those of the Greco-Roman world, and that Marcan style shows Semitic linguistic 'interference' (influence).

The problem is that these two studies seem to disagree, at least superficially, in so far as Kerbel concludes that there is some influence in Marcan syntax on 'every page of the gospel,' 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.

6. The ending of Mark

A 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 the gospel with any reliability in the textual tradition. On text-critical grounds it is likely that the original ending was lost or else 16:8 is the Marcan ending. However, the problem with the text is 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 181, two complementary articles appeared in the same issue of this journal. In the one article, T. C. 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.

In the other article, Boomershine studies 16:8 in the context of the Marcan text. He notes that the description of the fearful women 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.

Some other scholars who take 16:8 as the original ending have seen in it a particularly striking christological emphasis. Such scholars call a "Christology of absence": in this interpretation, 16:8 was intended to shift attention totally from resurrection appearances, and counter the beliefs of the Pharisees, and to place Christ with an understanding of Christ that focused on his pre-Easter ministry and viewed Christ as 'absent' in the way it was immediately preceded by a 1976 collection of essays by a particular circle of American Marcian scholars, and has been elaborated and re-affirmed subsequently by a number of scholars, most notably the eminence 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 construct, as any possible understanding of the drama against Weeden.

The most recent study of the shortening of Mark is by J. Magnes. Drawing upon modern analysis of narrative closure, Magnes argues (somewhat similarly to Kerbel and Reiser) that the "oral" nature of Mark's oral/audience 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 Magnes has had the last word.

Two noteworthy studies have been devoted to the 'long ending' of Mark, that of G. J. Botterell, and J. H. Hudson. H. J. H. Hudson argues that the passage was composed in the early second century and was not a compilation of material from the other gospels but was written as a separate appendix by P. M. Trenerry. Hudson's analysis is formal, and demonstrates the nature of the passage, arguing that the 'core narrative' was 16:15-20a, to which was added vv. 16-19, 20b, with some provocative
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 theory and criticism (e.g., Greek New Testament literature studies). The other approach attempts to set Mark’s gospel into the Greco-Roman literary and cultural environment, which emphasizes the conventions and aims of ancient literature.

Modern literary criticism and Mark

The analysis of Mark through the use of modern literary theory is varied and frequent. J. G. Williams has drawn upon modern theories about narrative and parables to argue that Mark constitutes the attempt to overcome the "mysterious polychromatic qualitv of parables by placing them in a narrative context which limits the possibilities for interpretation." However, this study may be too much controlled by assumptions arising from particularly modern hermeneutical issues and is consequently burdened with such things as parables actually functioning in the ancient setting.

More general understanding of narratives and their components in Mark are increasingly assumed to be given in an article by D. Rhoads, who has also co-authored a book-length analysis of Mark informed by narrative criticism. Students of Mark are enabled to identify such matters as the Markan 'plot', the functions of parables, their roles in the narrative, and the way in which the author has constructed the narrative to achieve his ends. The broad result of this study, however, is to suggest that the view that Mark is a generally well-constructed narrative with evident and successfully-executed authorial purposes and intentions is an oversimplification.

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 is to be interpreted by the reader. Fowler's study of the two feeding accounts incorporates this approach. He argues that both these stories fit meaningfully within the larger context of the Gospel as a whole. Fowler's purpose is 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 attend to the "narrative picture as possible of the nature of the ancient reader and the ancient reading process." Mark was probably written to be read aloud, and the meaning of the text was determined by the performance, and reader-response analysis should recognize the more complex process involved in the ancient reading/listening experience.

Moreover, Kelber observes 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, and all evidence points to the first-century Palestine as an avidly reading-and-writing setting.

Kelber focuses on valid questions: Why did early Christian theology develop such an emphasis on the OT? 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 is inextricable from the need for a more historically controlled and genuinely critical endeavour.

5. Markan style

The several investigations of Markan style that have appeared in the last decade can be organized according to the basic questions raised by P. J. Achterberg, D. D. Duling, and Peabody, are mainly prompted by the question of whether Markan redactional style can be distinguished from that of the Gospel of Mark. 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.

Pedobim 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 'reconstructions' of the Markan tradition. He advocates for the isolation of the text, analysis, and systematic display of the favourite or habitual expressions of the author of Mark's gospel.

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

Other scholars have attempted to characterize Markan style with a view to the question of whether it reflects the influence of Semitic languages (Aramaic or Hebrew). Both E. C. Maloney and M. Reiter have dealt with this question recently from different standpoints. Reiter investigated how Markan style fits within the spectrum of popular Greek literature of the time, and how much Markan style shows Semitic linguistic 'influence' (or 'influence').

The problem is that these two studies seem to disagree, at least in one important respect: Where Reiter found influence in Markan syntax on 'every page of the gospel', while Reiter finds Mark largely free of Semitisms and essentially an example of popular-level Greek literary style of the Greek-Roman period. Both scholars could be correct, actually, but further analysis of this matter is necessary.

6. The ending of Mark

A long-standing 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 on the basis of the various readings in the textual tradition. On text-critical grounds it is likely that the original ending was lost or else 16:8 is the Markan ending.

The other question is concerned with the possibility 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 "Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society". In the one article, T. W. Boersma and G. Bartholomew noted that the final words of 16:8 ("for they were afraid") form one of many Markan examples of explanatory clauses, often at the end of individual stories, and argue that 16:8 is the original ending. In the other article, Boersma and Bartholomew 16:8 in the context of the Markan Jesus to ancient traditions of vespers services, which description of the fearful women was intended to provoke the 'audience' (Boersma and Bartholomew) to interpret the Markan closure as a genuine poem or the delivery of the narrative before Christ would group as reflect on their own responsibility to proclaim the gospel message in the face of opposition.

Some other scholars who take 16:8 as the original ending have seen in it a particularly striking christological emphasis and have called a "christology of absence". In this interpretation, 16:8 was intended to shift attention totally from resurrection appearances, and counter the beliefs of Mark's community who were already acquainted with a Christ with an understanding of Christ that focused on his pre-Easter ministry and viewed Christ as 'absent' in the present. This approach is reflected by a 1976 collection of essays by a particular circle of American Markan scholars, and has been elaborated and re-affirmed subsequently. It is the view that 16:8 reflects the imitation of Weeden's theory of a Markan anti-Jerusalem polemic (with perhaps a dash of existentialism), this view comes under the same criticism of being an illogical construct that relies to some extent on the argument against Weeden.

The most recent study of the short ending of Mark is by J. Magnus. Drawing upon modern analysis of narrative closure, Magnus argues (somewhat similarly to Boersma and Bartholomew) that 16:8 was part of a planned closing of the Gospel as a whole and that the abrupt ending was essentially a narrative device intended to involve the readers more thoroughly in the drama of the Markan account of Jesus. It is unlikely, however, that Magnus has had the last word.

Two other noteworthy studies have been devoted to the 'long ending' of Mark. One by P. H. T. P. S. H. 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 was composed by one person. P. M. Mikołaj's work on the literary and historical features of the passage, arguing that the 'core narrative' was 16:9-20, which was added vv. 16-19, 20b, with some provocative
7. Chastity and discipleship
Discussion of the contents of Mark has continued to concentrate on themes such as Mark's picture of the Jesus movement and his treatment of the discipleship theme. Mark has been the centre of recent discussion about narrative as a 'mode of Christology.' This discussion usually involves application of aspects of modern literary criticism to Mark. These discussions have been stimulated by research (e.g. the decline of earlier claims about the thesis anterior category and the apocalypticism of Son of Man') title, and the employment of modern narrative analysis to discern the 'authoritative voice' in a narrative). Kingsley's analysis is a significant advance. He rejects earlier 'corrective' interpretations of Mark and concludes that there are two basic aspects to the Markan portrait of Jesus: the inner secret of Jesus as the 'Davidic Messiah-King, the Son of God', and the outer or public discourse 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 Markan Jesus. A new perspective is presented, however, that Kingsley's emphasis upon Markan 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 Markan Christology that unfortunately is hardly known. He argues that Mark works with a fundamentally God-human duality in his understanding of his subject, a notion that explains his reconciling this peculiarity and embodying it in his very text. Davis is certainly correct that the Christology of Mark is by no means 'low' or 'adopting.' The present critical work provides a necessary 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 issue of the order of Mark and the sequence of his key events. There have been several studies on this topic which include a helpful survey of research by C. Tuckett. F. Watson has argued that the sequence of Mark follows the order used in the liturgy of the ancient churches - that is, the simple chronology of early Christians who, though despised and rejected, viewed themselves as having elite status in the 'club of Jesus.' However, Watson fails to deal with the fact that Mark's story does not fit neatly into a pattern of Gospels chests and local churches. Watson's critical analysis of this chapter, however, we have earlier noted the difficulties involved in such analysis of Mark. Beavis' thesis mentioned earlier includes an analysis of the secularity of ch. 4:10-20.

On Mark's treatment of the disciples and discipleship, T. H. Robinson's 1977 study of Mark in Acts has been influential in stressing the fact that Mark intended simply to discreet the Jerusalem apostles, and remains instructive. Best has contributed several worthwhile discussions of discipleship in Mark and, in addition, Donald's study of this topic is precise and recommended. Reflecting contemporary concerns about the status of women, there are recent critical studies of Mark's treatment of women disciples. Via's discussion of Markan ethics is uniquely phenomenological and existentialist in mode.

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 apocalyptic employment of Markan material (e.g. in Joan Duggan's narrative criticism). There is growing recognition of Mark's text 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 anything 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.


We have already noted the difficulties involved in such analysis of Mark. Beavis'
The present state of Lucan studies

I. Howard Marshall

Professor Marshall of Aberdeen University is author of numerous articles and books on Lucan studies, including the newly revised Luke Historian and Theologian, the New International Commentary and the Tyndale commentary on Acts. His commentaries (which he forebears 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 recently that he 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.

Introductions and surveys


For the scholar the indispensable guide to Lucan scholarship is the survey by F. Bouillon which summarizes research under appropriate thematic headings research between 1950 and 1983. This work is of great value because Bouillon offers a critical survey of scholarship. Yet its usefulness is so extent limited by the nature of the sources themselves. It is at once to restrict the attention to Luke as a theologian and does not consider literary and historical questions. This is a justifiable limitation because Luke is perhaps the most outstanding feature of contemporary scholarship.

Commentaries on Luke

One 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: The Greek New Testament (1971), 680 pages, detailed and comprehensive, and readable, and luscious, and the student who can cope with it will not need to spend much time on other aids to study. Fitzmyer’s work is a fairly critical one; he gives good coverage to the variety of views on every topic, and his judgments are generally well-founded.

We are in no need of further work for such detailed work. The new trend in Lucan studies was introduced to English readers by E. E. Ellis.17 His work assumes some basic knowledge on the part of readers and concentrates on the theology and literary structure of the text. Nevertheless, it is a welcome contribution 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 multilum in parvo and from D. G. Morris who gives a useful verse-by-verse exposition but has very little to say on the structure and theological significance of the text.18 A. T. Bal Cook draws the structure and theology of Luke in broad lines and demonstrates abundantly the importance of structure for understanding the whole. The same is true of D. G. Gundry in his recent edition; this is an interesting work which combines a traditional type of evangelical application of the text with a carefully wrought rhetorical approach. The work is not without some significant differences in the final analysis, and it is not sure of the frame of reference instead of diabetes, and a very interesting commentary forming the frame into which Lucan material was subsequently inserted rather than vice versa.19 But M. D. Goulder and J. D. Drury argue that Q never existed and that Luke used a Syro-Palestinian source independently composed and reorganized by Matthew which he rearranged for his own purposes; Goulder originally developed this theory in relation to the hypothesis that Luke was a gentile, and he makes use of a framework which is fit in with a Jewish lexicography, and he promises a detailed defence of his theory of dependence on Matthew.20

The sources of Acts are also a puzzle. While Haenchen pressed scepticism about the use of written sources to the gathering up the scholarship of a previous generation and putting a new approach.21 So can be argued that both approaches will continue to be necessary.
The present state of Lucan studies

I. Howard Marshall

Professor Marshall of Aberdeen University is author of numerous articles and books on Lucan studies, including the newly revised Luke Historian and Theologian, the New International 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 recently 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.1

Introduction and surveys


For the scholar the indispensable guide to Lucan scholarship is the survey by F. Brown who surveys under appropriate thematic headings research between 1950 and 1983.3 This work is of great value because Brown offers a critical survey of scholarship. Yet its usefulness is to some extent limited, because, even today, Brown is already giving way to new scholarship. Attention to Luke as a theologian and does not consider literary and historical questions. This is a justifiable limitation because the study of Luke as a theologian is the most outstanding feature of contemporary scholarship.

Commentaries on Luke

One scholar 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 (1972). This commentary is very detailed and comprehensive, and readable and laid, and 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.

We may begin with one of the most detailed analysis of the new trend in Lucan studies was introduced to English readers by E. E. Ellis. His work assumes some basic knowledge on the part of readers and concentrates on the theology and liturgy students. The focus of his study is on the major themes of Luke's Gospel, in particular the therapeutic and the role of women in the Gospel. The Preface to his book, "Models of Faith in Luke", the most recent commentary on Luke by D. Juel, who writes about the structure and theology of Luke in broad lines and demonstrates abundantly the importance of structure for understanding the whole. The same is also true of D. G. Guthrie in his recent sections; this is an interesting work which combines a traditional type of evangelical application of the text with a carefully wrought rhetorical analysis.

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, but a few would elaborate on this with some form of the Proto-Luke hypothesis (according to which material from Q and L was first jointed together, possibly to form a 'gospel', and possibly forming the framework into which Marcan material was subsequently inserted rather than vice versa). But M. D. Goulder and J. Dray argue that Q never existed and that Luke is a direct witness to a form of the Gospel which he rearranged for his own purposes; Goulder originally developed this theory in relation to the hypothesis that Luke’s Gospel is set in the same frame of reference, rather than being just an excellent candidate for a Jewish lexicom, and he proposes a detailed defence of his theory of dependence on Matthew.4

The sources of Acts are also a puzzle. While Haenchen pressed scepticism about the use of written sources to the gathering up the scholarship of a previous generation and adding a "new approach". It can 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. The author’s earlier work on Colossians in which the scholar explains that he has written "theologically" in that 'no section was written up without being preached on some occasions" and that 'attention to Luke as a theologian is a characteristic feature of the most outstanding feature of contemporary scholarship.'
limit, more recent writers have been more open to their use; this is especially true of J. A. Fitzmyer and U. W. Lidemann whose discussion of the historicity of Acts depends on a careful separation of tradition from redaction.1

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 could not have written Acts, as he himself claims. He 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 if there is any one thing certain, whoever wrote Luke-Acts was not the author of any other books on the NT, whether the Pastoral Epistles or Ephesians.2

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'.3 We have discussed the general lack of interest in the question and have 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 'Heaven and earth are witness' (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 history of small that it is in the narrative of Luke at the time of his much-lamented early death (June 1967) had all but completed a full-scale study of the topic, which is being prepared for publication by C. R. Conzelmann.4

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 understanding this subject because we can compare the gospel with the other synoptics and also with Acts. Overall treatments of Luke's theology include a full-length discussion with thematic bibliography by J. A. Fitzmyer and a very readable account by R. B. O'Toole.5 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 expands 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 the Luke-Acts to one community and to its concerns have failed' writes R. F. Tiele.6 So 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 exegesis. The view expressed that Luke wrote to provide the confirmation for Christian message which they had heard or read should be accepted as the basis for most interpretations. Luke is concerning himself with the life 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, and shows how the mission took place in accordance with prophecy and at the direction of the Lord, and to confirm that the church was being established, for the Gentiles, part of the divine plan; thus he demonstrates that the gospel really does bring salvation. The story is obviously incommensurate with a Lucan authorship and mission and says next to nothing about the kind of inner church problems reflected in the Pauline correspondence and other NT writings.

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 'age of fulfilment' with the three-stage scheme of 'age of promise', 'the middle of time (Jesus and the early church)' and the 'final age'.7 Despite the support given to this Luke's theologically essential point (e.g. that salvation-history is older than Luke, and that he shares the two-stage scheme; the coming of Jesus is still the 'middle of time') is his last dialectic. Nevertheless, Conzelmann is right to establish that for Luke the history of Jesus and the establishment of the church belong together as the foundation of Christianity. Conzelmann further argues that for Luke the parousia is not a distant future event 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 parousia.8 However, recent writers 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.

Christology
Within this framework the question of Luke's understanding of Christ must be addressed. Two criteria are essential for the character of Jesus.9 E. Franklin has drawn attention to the central importance of the ascension and the character of Jesus as Servant and Lord. The importance of the OT for Luke's christology is also highlighted, and W. Schmithals, who has written extensively on this theme in which he argues that Luke presents a unified portrait of Jesus as 'Messiah-Servant' who is seen, as the story progresses, to be more than Messianic figure in that he has 'ascended to the right hand of the Lord. This offers a corrective to an over-stress on the prophetic elements in Luke's picture.' What emerges is that Luke's christology is complex and is not to be reduced to one single, simple category.

The death of Jesus
What 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, the sin-offering. Luke has a clear eschatological and historical practical equivalent to Paul's doctrine of dying with Christ.10

The Holy Spirit
Luke's understanding of the Spirit was taken up by J. D. G. Dunn in a manner which reflects a traditional Augustinian view of the sacramentistic 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 covenant in a conflict-ridden society.11 Various aspects of this thesis have been challenged by M. M. Turner who interprets the Spirit in Jesus as the Spirit of prophecy rather than the sign of the new covenant in the context of the church.12

Conclusion
We have by no means considered all the themes of current Luke-Acts scholarship. In particular, we have not looked at detailed monographs on specific passages.13 The interested reader will, however, find plenty of indications in the works cited above for further study. Here we have attempted to indicate whether any kind of consensus is emerging from current Lukean study. While the general lines of Luke's thought are clear, there is still a considerable scope for discussion on matters both major and minor.

3 In 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).
Lukes does not see it as a saving event in the manner of, say, the resurrection 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 a question of the foundational period of the early church, how the mission took place in accordance with prophecy and at the direction of the Lord, and to confirm that which he had heard, not as offhand revelation, for Gentile, was part of the divine plan; thus he demonstrates that the gospel really does bring salvation. The story is obviously incomplete, for the researcher, the early church, and the mission and says next to nothing about the kind of inner church problems reflected in the Pauline correspondence and other NT writings.

Reduction 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 a full understanding of this subject because we can compare the gospel with the other synoptics and also with Acts. Overall treatments of Luke's theology include a full-length discussion with thematic bibliography by J. A. Fitzmyer and a very readable account by R. F. O'Toole and others. 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 expands this topic simply and clearly.

Purpose and Sitze 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 link Luke-Acts to one community and to its concerns have failed' write R. F. O'Toole. 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 exegesis. The view expressed by Luke that he wrote to provide the confirmation of Christian message which they had heard or read should be accepted as the basis for more detailed study. Luke's claim is explicitly affirmed by the opening 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 a question of the foundational period of the early church, how the mission took place in accordance with prophecy and at the direction of the Lord, and to confirm that which he had heard, not as offhand revelation, for Gentile, was part of the divine plan; thus he demonstrates that the gospel really does bring salvation. The story is obviously incomplete, for the researcher, the early church, and the mission and says next to nothing about the kind of inner church problems reflected in the Pauline correspondence and other NT writings.

Christology
Within this framework the question of Luke's understanding of the person and work of Christ is essential to the character of Jesus. 


E. Franklin has drawn attention to the central importance of the ascension and the character of Jesus as Servant and Lord. The importance of the OT for Luke's understanding of the character of Jesus is also clear. In a passage in which he argues that Luke presents a unified portrait of Jesus as 'Messiah-Servant' who is seen, as the story progresses, to be more than Messianic figure in that he is Lord. This offers a corrective to an over-stress on the prophetic elements in Luke's picture. What emerges is that Luke's Christology is complex and is not to be reduced to one simple, single category.

The death of 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 the Lord intended the Magnificat and Benedictus to be interpreted in the light of the story that he goes on to narrate.

Conclusion
We have by no means considered all the themes of current Luke scholarship. In particular, we have not looked at detailed monographs on specific passages. The interested reader will, however, find plenty of indications in the works cited for further study and will be able to indicate whether any kind of consensus is emerging from current Luke study. While the general line of Luke's thought is now very clear, this essay gives an outline and an overview of scope for discussion on matters both major and minor.

References
Selected recent studies of the fourth gospel

D. A. Carson

Professor Carson teaches at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the USA, and is author of a number of articles and books on John’s gospel, including a monograph, Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility, and the new Tyndale commentary on John’s gospel (forthcoming).

A bare five years ago I prepared for this journal a rather lengthy article reviewing recent literature on the Gospel of John. I have since realized rather more breadth by depth: it surveyed about one hundred books and articles. The invitation to update my evaluation of recent John scholarship has thus provoked a rather playful cri: I am happy to oblige, in order both to avoid ‘wheat repainting’ 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 than the last twenty-five or thirty years than the Gospel of John. What means the latest commentaries are inevitably weighed by others for at least more plentiful standards than can usefully be applied to commentaries on some other books. Five commentaries deserve mention.

At the light end of the scale is the Good News Commentary by J. Ramsey Michaels (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 mischievous handling I have had of 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 passes 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. The discussion of the John’s Christology chapter is so well organized that it is hard not to like John’s Christology no matter how one might have been written, although it is not easily digested. It might be an easy introduction to the nature of the Johannine community, informed readers will observe numerous aids that attest his wide reading. Sometimes one might wish the commentary were more theological, more openly committed to nurturing its readers.

At the other end of the scale stand two technical works, both significant but both of limited value to many readers of
Selected recent studies of the fourth gospel

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A bare five years ago I prepared this journal a rather lengthy article reviewing recent literature on the gospel of John. A second survey has been rendered rather more by breadth than depth: it surveyed about one hundred books and articles. The invitation to update my evaluation of recent studies of the fourth gospel was justifiably viewed as rather platitudinous: 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 a 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.

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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 for 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's (330 pp.) commentary in a series 'written for laypeople, students, and pastors'. Those who want an easy survey of the main current scholarship will find the book by no means detailed, is the book to buy. On only two major points does he part company with the mainstream. (1) He thinks the community's case with the synagoge occurred in the 70th 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 an score of other points one thinks that mainstream Johannine scholarship has gone seriously astray, this book proves rather predictable and insufficiently detailed to challenge whose evaluation the evidence takes them outside the common herd. The six Johannine themes that Kysar emphasizes (who Jesus is, Spirit, exegesis, faith, the cross, and duaisiasm) are handled competently, and distinctively literary concerns, such as irony and symbolism, receive their due. But Kysar is far too easily content with an 'interpretation' which sees 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 James Ramsey (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 passes 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. The commentary is written in non-specialist English with a wide lexical range. 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 passes 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 a Johnsonian, and his interpretation of the Johannine corpus is in line with this, though he has been a resident of the Jerusalem School, and he diverges from it on a number of points. The style of writing is in line with this, and most of his introductory comments are tersely and directly to the point. The book is not exhaustive, but it is a helpful guide to the Johannine corpus and will be found useful for those who are new to the literature.
Haeckel insists that Quinlan has virtually nothing to do with John's Johannine commentary and that the "three gnostic works" of Thomas and The Gospel of Philip. Mercifully, the trove from Nag Hammadi appeared too late for him to generate an inaccurate commentary. Thomas and The Gospel of Philip. Mercifully, the trove from Nag Hammadi appeared too late for him to generate an inaccurate commentary.

Worse yet, although there are useful insights in the first third or so of the work, the commentary becomes thinner and thinner as one peruses through the gospel. In the latter half, entire pericope are summed up in a few lines of commentary. The kindest thing that can be said about the "contemporary perspective" is that they are an interesting insight into Haeckel's mind and scholarship in the closing years of his life, and a remarkable ecumene paralleled the Roman Catholic Church, Catholic Epistles to the , especially when more significant work has yet to be translated.

In short, Haeckel's work is an unfinished commentary. It is a dated and unfinished manuscript whose admirers deserve better. Wiser and finally kinder to their mentor had 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 for Word study, and Beasley-Murray's commentary on John indicates.

Conceived with one or two volumes in this series that have become the definitive translation of John, this is certainly not a treatise. It is, rather, a relatively short commentary, a little over 400 pp., that most of the readers may find it useful and interesting. The "Word for Word" study, and Beasley-Murray's commentary on John introduces the gospels. This is a fascinating commentary that has turned out to be quite useful on the body resurrection of Jesus, and not at all interesting in sacramentarianism. The book is a major contribution to the study of John, and to the question of who John was and why he wrote the gospel. This is a fascinating commentary that has turned out to be quite useful on the body resurrection of Jesus, and not at all interesting in sacramentarianism. The book is a major contribution to the study of John, and to the question of who John was and why he wrote the gospel. This is a fascinating commentary that has turned out to be quite useful on the body resurrection of Jesus, and not at all interesting in sacramentarianism. The book is a major contribution to the study of John, and to the question of who John was and why he wrote the gospel.
Haeckeln insists that Quimran has virtually nothing to do with John's Gospel. Conversely, the commentaries are drawn between John and other Gnostic works. The Gospel of Thomas and The Gospel of Philip. Mercifully, the twofold from Nag Hammadi appeared too late for him to generate a monographic presentation. The second is made up of five excurses: "The Johannine Community and the Experience of Spirit for Spiritual Experience: Gestaestehaltendes und die christliche Theologie." The kinder things I know of these communities is that they are an interesting insight into Haeckeln's of the Johannine Epistles and the six years of his life, and a remarkable sense of the purpose of Paris and Bussi. This to make the Heremetic commentary on John depreciates the prestige of the series almost as badly as alloting his attention to what Smith has put in the forefront of ten of the essays he has written on John over the years. The first survey the studies of Johannean scholarship a dozen years ago. Haeckeln's work is a linguistic matter for a whole 400 page, not of Smith's continuing interest in such questions, pressing on from the days when his doctoral dissertation offered a perceptive critique of Bultmann's

**Introduction**

Of course, the commentary mentioned above adopt a variety of approaches to such matters. In addition, however, a number of recent publications treat these subjects without offering full commentary. D. Moody Smith has put in the category of "Morris," Bultmann's work, and one who with a book which deal, for instance, the present paper, of Smith's continuing interest in such questions, pressing on from the days when his doctoral dissertation offered a perceptive critique of Bultmann's

**The Second Technical Work**

The English translation of the German commentary by Ernst Haeckeln. The German original was briefly described in the earlier review article. Despite the best efforts of the editors of Ulrich Busse, Haeckeln's student who put the German work together from Haeckeln's notes and manuscripts, and of Robert Funk, the translator and English Bible, the two volumes of the English translation (and why two, when the German original managed to fit into one, unless there is to be manufactured into two volumes) constitute a major disappointment. The scholarship is terribly dull and full of dead sources consulted but also in outlook. Haeckeln not only stands outside the trading edge of the history-of-religions school, but his approach to source and redaction criticism, though frequently interesting because it is so independent in his judgments, has learned nothing from the massive critiques and judgements leveled against arbitrary practitioners of these disciplines.

The only comparable treatment of John is the commentary by Bultmann in the Simplicity Series. Source criticism seeks to delineate sources right down to the half of the Gospel. Haeckeln argues that even the existence of a signs source is not a source in the normal sense ofy it is to be known. "Haeckeln's 'ecclesiastical redactor' has disappeared. But suddenly he reappears as a 'supplemental' who composed a much larger portion of the text than was ever actually

**The New Testament**

Here there is neat encapsulation and evaluation of many positions, wonderful clarity of style, a certain independence critical judgment, and numerous useful insights. If hesitations must also be voiced, they must not detract from the solid merit of the work. For instance, although at certain critical junctures Beasley-Murray's discussion is satisfactorily full, the relevance of his views cannot be easily seen. This is a distinct disadvantage. Instead, the 'Explanations' sections are sometimes disappointingly thin. That is where more must be done to dig into the sources. Bultmann, for instance, writes in a way that is both historically responsible and reflective of a unitary vision. Third, owing perhaps to the comprehension of the 'Commentary' sections (most of which are quite excellent), Haeckeln's commentary is not a work to be digested in one reading. But it needs to be. Finally, on almost every conceivable issue Beasley-Murray adopts what might be considered a fairly conservative version of the critical viewpoint, a viewpoint which certain readers will find to be theologically satisfying. There is a good deal of 'on the one hand' and 'on the other hand' argumentation. Closer inspection prompts to be asked a number of questions which, in the absence of substantial and well argued responses, may be theological sense of going to the "next step" of some questions.

**Conclusion**

The present essay offers four 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 to explain why Beasley-Murray's work is so striking, Smith himself has become more open, for instance, to the possibility that John knew one or more of the synoptic gospels, to his work has not been study. As a moderate guide and contributor to the drift of the discussion, Smith is really quite excellent. Along the way he has not only included the three synopses of John, I think very few or not at all to Becker, Richter, de Waard, and Thissen and broken, but not much new ground is broken.

Quite a different approach is found in the recent work by Craig Blomberg. There is only one lengthy essay (36 pp.) on John, but it is well worth the price it is being asked. It is the same kind of critical essay that is being asked. It is also a contribution to the current era of research by someone who does not have the kind of "classic" viewpoint. This is the "Word but who has not abandoned critical thought. The essay does not claim to be a new course, and it is not as fresh or as comprehensive as it is somewhat modest in scope, with Luke, which to Blomberg has devoted most of his scholarly energy. But the essay should be read by all students, the more so since the author is a professor in the field, as well as 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 of the Fourth Gospel: Craig Evans, John was written before the war with Rome (AD 66-70), when tensions were very high, on the one hand, the churches in John 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 to the prophetic role of the Christian community. This message is the cry of a people that included martyrdom. That Mearns can make any sort of plausible case for this hypothesis shows how fragile is the case for which such a broad and comprehensive synthesis is built. On the other hand, the evidence that Christian prophets were not only to speak in Jesus' name but to project his thoughts and ideas in a new way which the first century had brought has received telling criticism in recent years. In John's case, the possibility of such anachronistic projection is even less plausible, and the way in which the evangelist carefully distinguishes between what was understood in Jesus' day and what was understood only much later. Mearns has not been able to show any way the time and the culture in which this possible author had to deal with a text that he likel did not know about the earliest possible author — the view that a literary hypothesis is for Christians — I have increasingly come to doubt.

The second book is idiosyncratic not only in its conclusions, but also in its manner, which gives it a great deal of style, and for the whole of its little book. 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, Beloved disciple! Be not as original a thinker as we had thought; 'chomping the flesh' [Does 17:12] really mean that?). In the last third of the book (pp. 124-140), the author turns not quite out of the woods: he turns out to be quite insistent on the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and not at all interested in sacrificialism. The book is great, which I think is all that it is supposed to be. It is obviously not a copy of something else, and one gets a clear sense of the author's own arguments, which are the most argumentative parts of the book, which deal, for instance, the presentation of the present paper, of Smith's continuing interest in such questions, pressing on from the days when his doctoral dissertation offered a perceptive critique of Bultmann's

**Conclusion**

In a class by itself, idiosyncratic but immensely erudite, is a recent book that is a published work by John C. K. Robinson, The Priority of John. Prepared as a 'heavy' volume of the Banister Lectures, the work was touched up by Prof. C. F. D. Craven, who agrees with all of his conclusions or not, we are immensely indebted to Robinson for his massive marshalling of arguments. The author of this book identifies all the flaws I found in Eller's arguments, the evidence not presented or presented in strikingly slanted ways, as I had watching Eller poke holes in other's work.

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of our knowledge of the setting and authorship of the fourth gospel. From the beginning, the section is devoted to the question of who wrote the gospel. To me, the most crucial question is what is necessary: the apostle John wrote the book, and probably he was a first cousin of Jesus. Whatever one makes of this in the light of such phenomena as the Johannine anagromes (not least knowen in 9:22). Chapter 3 is devoted to the chronology of Jesus' ministry, which then sets out the agenda for chapters 4-6. Robin argues for a 40-year ministry, and seeks to fit the synoptic narratives into this structure. Not a little of the argumentation is parallel to Morris' Studies, to which reference has already been made, though Robinson often makes bigger, more convincing, more consistently argued, and frequently convincing, that many details in the synoptic gospels make sense when information from John's gospel is kept in mind. Picking up on a suggestion made by Ernst Bammer, he argues that the real John took place forty days or more before passion week, and is reflected in the apocryphal Psalms of Jesus. 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, and the second to the points of similarity between John and the synoptists, and the third, to 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 are not. The present reviewer, for instance, remains quite unenlightened in his view that the fourth gospel was written after AD 70. But since we are left to wonder what the John himself would say, we know how the former Bishop of Woolwich could simultaneously be the author of Honest to God and Redating New Testament History. In this chapter, Robin forcefully argues that dating techniques that depend on plugging a document into a predetermined trajectory of christology are deeply flawed; 'high' christology developed first, not in response to the high christology of the fourth gospel; John is no more a pre-70 date than to apostolic authorship. But it turns out that Robinson's 'high' christology developed in the 2nd century, not in response to the fourth gospel, no more did it respond to the Johannine text.

Lona' adopts a quite different approach. He runs through his 'models and methods of the fourth gospel', and deploys more or less standard reduction-crucial techniques, while the second time through he follows the models of 'literary semiotics'. By this he means that he has a series of approaches to the gospels, and deploys the methods of the fourth gospel, he believes, to be the Son of God. Jesus is above all else the prophet, the man of God. In 1:8, the reading nowe is probably original, but was was a slippowerciew that John himself would have gladly corrected. As for 1:14,14, although the were becomes flesh/ person, before this 'incarnation' the was not personal. In briefy commenting on 20:28, Robinson acknowledges that this passage 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. The idea, then, that there was pre-existent God did not arise until the fourth gospel, Robinson argues that it cannot be found even there. In my judgment, sober excesses insist 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 problems of the fourth gospel. Critics of this work have been unable to engage in the arguments that were commonplace in an earlier generation of scholars, and cast them in a new and modern light at the very outset. Robinson's argument is that the consensus built up of increasingly speculative reduction-critical reconstructions. But I fear that few scholars will adopt Robinson's critical positions. Ironically, this will be primarily because of 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 arguments is to call into question whether this reading of John's christology is sustainable. 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, who is an literary figure or an literary character, in the sense of a character.

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 synchronous approach to the text. Of course, older studies that focused on, say, the Greek idioms of the fourth gospel or its interpretative style could also be included, and thus this older approach and more recent concerns is the technical monograph by van Belle, who seeks to identify all the 'pictorial essays' in the Gospel of John. Focusing on one technique, Duke examines every passage where one might argue that John is using irony. This work is neither highly innovative nor original, and, because it is well written, it should be invited to the law of irony with its interpretive style, which carefully distinguishes irony, double meaning, misunder- standing and metaphor. Its weakness is that it adopts without qualification a dichotomous interpretive style, which claims that the theological stances are to the incidental. In other words, it gives the impression of being so narrowly focused that it is a matter of some importance that the narrator cannot have known. In a word, van Belle's book is a desultory text, and with much of the secondary literature. But despite the caveat, this is a good book.

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of our knowledge of the setting and authorship of the fourth gospel. Rather, we do better to look at what is necessary: the apostle John wrote the book, and probably he was a first cousin of Jesus. Whatever one makes of such purely subjective considerations, the result is a much firmer consensus built up of increasingly speculative reductionistic reconstructions. But I fear that few scholars will adopt Robinson's critical positions. Ironically, this will be primarily because they have read his reading of John's christology. Once genuinely 'high' christiology is acknowledged to lie thick on the ground in the fourth gospel, the effect of Robinson's reading will be to drive the reader into his rather conservative historical and theological construction (which of course Robinson would disdain).

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Loun's4 adopts a quite different approach. He runs through his text, paying special attention to the language, where he deploys more or less standard reduction-techniques, while the second time through he follows the models of 'literary semantics'. By this he means that he applies approaches to the text. These approaches to the text, and with much of the secondary literature. But despite the caveat, this is a good book.

by far the most important work in this category is that of Cullner. To the methods of the new 'rhetorical criticism' in a full-length monograph to the Gospel of John. Cullner's primary indebtedness is perhaps to Seymour Chatman and Cullner Genett,5 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 of literary work, using the categories of such criticism. Committing himself not only to a synchronic approach but to the holistic approach, Cullner argues that if meaning is produced in the mental reading of the text, then 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 the gospels and literary genres'. In the study of scripture through time, it is often the case that have been settled as long ago as Schleiermacher.6 In this 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 there are certain literary genres. The question is whether the light of the literary conventions of other literature, but whether the modern novel is the best parallel to first-century gospels. In the modern novel, we find a strongly parallel between the Gospel of John and 'novelistic, realistic narrative', but Cullner makes no attempt whatever to isolate the 'dissimilarity' between the two. Cullner assumes discussion of the evidence in the New Testament. In John under the narrative categories of narrator and implied author, without seriously considering that the narratorial framework other than the novel, the shape of the discussion inescapably swings to some consideration of the kind and quality of the literary criticism, the terms and not just to the shape of the story being narrated.

Cullner's second line of defence is the argument of Hans Frei in his important work, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative.6 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 German church into her present crisis1 in the narration of God. Jesus as a miracle worker with full recognition of his presence and knowledge of his life after death,7 is not true. The reality of the historical narrative of God, but to recognize the peculiar nature of narrative truth. Cullner is not saying that the fourth gospel's narratives convey an 'account of historical fact', but an account 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 on the text or the other.8 Yet not only does his example of miracles in the life of Jesus fail to inspire confidence (Could the resurrection be thrown into the mix of certainties? If not, why not?) but he gives no criteria to guide us, as if the division was incidental.

His favourite analogy is more uncontested yet. He does not need a windscreen wiper to keep the ministry of Jesus, enabling us to see through the text to that life and ministry, but as a mirage in which we see not only ourselves but also the meaning of the text, that lies beyond the text and that Jesus' life and our response mean for us what the story has led us to believe they mean.9 But 'reliable' and 'literary-critical' are not antithetical terms, but can be 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 text, that is to say that is sacrificed off Realism and the 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 remainder of the sentence 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 echo of the voice, even if redeemed, cannot be overcome by appealing to the novel. In any case, not a few historians are persuaded Frey's analysis of the rise of biblical criticism as a religious movement revives the secular idea that the novel is the voice of the community, that it does 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 triumphs; it is 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. The novel offers us much that is common sense, and a 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 ('existential') component, it is not just a matter of the 'window 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 Culepppe's work and the consequent clouding of his exegetical judgment can be traced at scores of points. For instance, the notion that God is not a writer is that kind of thing as being besides ever - it is 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. The novel offers us much that is common sense, and a 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 ('existential') component, it is not just a matter of the 'window of the window'. Biblical Christianity cannot outlive the 'scandal of historical particularity'. By contrast, the novel thrives on the universals of human existence.

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Many of these are descriptive dissertations, re-worked for the press or otherwise; most of these dissertations are educational tools and focus rather more attention on the delineation of the Johannean community than on wrestling with the person, teaching and works of the historical Jesus. Where these generalizations must not mask the considerable diversity of opinion that can be found on critical matters.

A few sample works may be noted. In the published form of his dissertation at Vanderbilt, Nicholson examines all the gospels, the epistle of James, the Apocalypse and relate them to the theme of Jesus 'going away' through death. Nicholson attempts to delineate the entire plot in terms of literary structure. Most people believe Jesus is idealized to the readers at the beginning of the gospel, the descent- ascent motifs 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. Segovia undertakes to examine all the passages in 1 John where ἐπανέστησεν appears, 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 noted. 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 historiographical literary history of 1 John. Although his work is abundant in insights, it is characterized by so many instances of the rawest form of disjunctive thought, and in so many instances of the same thought being put forward in a different form, though admitted by many, will prove confusing to few.

The major study by Kremer on the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn. 11) is structurally very different from the two studies just mentioned. The first part of the book (pp. 11-19) is a kind of painstaking, analytical, diachronically oriented study of the text. At first, or more less traditional conclusions are drawn: John sees this as the greatest of the signs he records, and as the one that points most definitively 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 offer any evidence of some sort of actual 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 problem is to explain the ignorance of John's community. 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. 111-338), traces the way this account has influenced Christian culture through the Middle Ages, the Reformation and the Enlightenment to modern times. Kremer acknowledges that the historicity of the narrative was not in question before the Enlightenment, and that interpretations turned on theological, allegorical and symbolic approaches to the narrative. Since the Enlightenment, however, the issues of its historicity have been raised again, 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 opposite to the modernist's. Kremer takes the text to refer to the resurrection of Jesus literally, and he wants us to preach the Jesus of history over and over, in what he judges to be an existential sense. It is not 'existential', merely in the sense that it has an impact on modern society. His purpose is to turn the modernist's rejection of the literalism of the Apostles' Creed and of 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. The text, he thinks, is the kind of thing that can be said only by theologians who follow Kremer's advice who 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 Parable of the Parable by Frans... Since I recently reviewed it elsewhere, and turn to another book on the Spirit. The published form of Burge's 'Aberdeen dissertation' examines the passages in John, and to some extent in the Johannine Epistles, that deal with the Holy Spirit; the scholarly text is cast fairly widely over the secondary literature, and the book is therefore a mine of useful and critical information. Of greater importance is the book's expositional aspect, which is a community circumspect that called forth the peculiar emphasis 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 check to offer any concluding reflections as to the state of Johannean 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 research is taking shape as a new individual judgments may be made upon an agreed base of method. As modern scholarship has stretched out to embrace more and more 'tools' for the historian, the existing corpus of tradition itself has multiplied the slay of the discussion 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 'Johannean enigma'. It is argued that all the particular motifs, the particular spiritual judgments made upon an agreed base of method. As modern scholarship has stretched out to embrace more and more tools for the historian, the existing corpus of tradition itself has multiplied the slay of the discussion has deepened.
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 and another with the theological. This consensus is more diverse than first meets the eye. Some interpreters use the two-level drama of Mary and John; others prefer the symbol of the vine and the branches; still others refer to traditions on sonship, and so forth. Rees and others for the New Testament are critical to detail in the reconstruction of the Johannine community and the development of its thought. Once a particular reconstruction becomes accepted with the footnotes of critical orthodoxy, however, it is exceedingly difficult to do anything about it, whether or not its real supports may be. To betray for a moment my own quirks, increasingly I find myself unpersuaded by many features in the dominant theories 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 from complete. It is clear that much connection exists as 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 this field of exegesis 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 Neirynck. Since so many reconstructions have been based on the assumption of a Johannine tradition, or rather a Johannine community, which has been cut 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 one of the main threads of modern thought appears to rest on such a basis as agreed upon by any 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 themselves to read this book in its modern way trends to see that a devotional stance over against genuine scholarship. From the perspective of Christian disciplehship, from the perspective of the Gospel of John itself, that artihness increasingly calls out to be rejected, at least in some technical writing, as a pagan supenation.

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Culppeer, op. cit., p. 238.
Pp. 237.
Culppeer, op. cit., p. 47.
Idem, op. cit., p. 71.
P. Frendo, John's Use of the Johannine Tradition (SBLDS 58; Chico: SP, 1982).

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This book is a translation of the second part of Martin Noth's highly influential Uberlieferungs- und geschichtliche Studien, which first appeared as a separate book in the same year that Martin Noth's more celebrated treatise on the Deuteronomic history, which also appeared in a translation under the title The History of the Deuteronomic Tradition, was published in English. Noth's appearance now of The Chronicle's History fills an important gap in the range of material available to the English reader. It is also of considerable interest in tracing the history of studies of Chronos (Ch) in the present century has 1960s and 1970s.

The influence of Noth is well charted by H. G. Williamson, the translator. In his study of Ch, the fourth gospel and the source he identifies as the source of John in his text. And so it is with John that he identifies in his own terms and the Chronos as having theological concerns. Related to this is the role of John in the form of the text he produced. The role of the Ch, the second to which Noth refers, is very much like that of the source of the text in the gospels. Noth's understanding of 1970s.

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Theoretically, the importance of Noth's work is that in its nature it raises these fundamental questions. In doing so it is both comprehensive and product. The present volume is also supplied with an appendix to the German original, which pertains directly to the Deuteronomic history rather than to the Ch.

Gordon McConville, Trinity College, Bristol.

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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 Jonah and Judges have made him one of the most distinguished and popular expositors of the Old Testament.

The book of Amos is divided into three sections, and the commentary is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the Greek and Syriac version of the book of Amos. The second part deals with the English version of the book.

The text of the book of Amos is divided into smaller units, and each unit is given its own section. The third section deals with the Greek and Syriac version of the book of Amos.

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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, the other with the apocalyptic. This consensus is more diverse than one first meets the eye. Some interpreters use the two-level drama of Maryan; others prefer the symbolism of the last things. Still others appeal to the apocalyptic concern with traditional source- and redemption-critical distinctions; and others have opted for the new literary criticism. It is often far too 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 other more plausible reconstructions.

Once a particular reconstruction becomes encrusted with the footnotes of critical orthodoxies, however, it is exceedingly difficult to modify or replace it. Only a partial correction of the New Year's Day 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 the visible church and as 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 their 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 Neirynck. Since so many reconstructions have been based on the assumption of a Johannine tradition, logically 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 a new interest has emerged in the latter's 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 look more at the modern mood trends to seek 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 us out to be rejected, at least in its technical writing, as a pagan supercession.

Erich Beth, Die Evangelien, Fortress, 1943.
ulm, op. cit., p. 258.
J. M. Cooper, op. cit., p. 258.
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It is a meticulous and heavily documented study, in classical PhD style, offering a detailed and systematic survey of relevant literature, but not very much by way of synthesis or integration of the results of the study with the wider field of Matthew.

The first main part attempts a phrase by phrase discussion of the Gospel text, marked by the author as 11:21-38 (the 'Third Book of Bacon'), classic 'pentecostal' analysis of the Gospel. In this section she provides two related and richly pertinent paragraphs, one on the effect of the Gospel of Mark upon the other, and another on the role of revelation in the Gospel. She has no difficulty in reaching this point, and makes it worthwhile.

The second and longer main part combs through the literature of the Gospels (but not the OT, surprisingly) for parallels to what she identifies as 'the problem' for Matthew (11:21-22). The method is useful, as she looks separately for each of three themes selected for each of the two pericolous, and traces them in the context of the Gospels, and the relationship of the two texts, 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 subsection. And the remarkable lack of an index of the non-biblical literature discussed makes it still less accessible. 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 passages as a whole in its wider context, and thus to appreciate just what is going on to the author.

At any rate, I am sure he would have said it more interestingly.

Dick France, London Bible College.

This is not a commentary in the traditional sense, but a series of essays whose main purpose is to work with and against the prevailing interpretations of the Gospel, and to explain how the Gospel, in its various parts, was constructed. The author draws on a wide range of sources, including the early Church fathers, and on the work of others, such as Bultmann and others, to provide a new perspective on the Gospel. The author is also careful to explain the historical background of the Gospel, and to show how the Gospel was written in a particular historical context.


This book is based on different Bible meditations, mainly given to Christian base communities in Mexico in 1978-80. They give the reader the opportunity to hear the voice of a professor of biblical studies, on different texts from the Gospel of Mark. The headings of the seven chapters indicate the main concerns of the meditations: Jesus in memory, Jesus in suffering, the Good Samaritan, the Christological speeches, the social and political situation in Latin America: 1. Jesus' conflicts (Mark 3:11-12; 7:1; 9:30-31; 10:35-45); 2. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37; 18:35-39); 3. Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-26); 4. Jesus and the Pharisees (Mark 12:1-7; 11:29-32); 5. The parables (Mark 14:36-37; 15:21-27); 6. The last supper (Mark 14:12-25); 7. The resurrection (Mark 16:1-6).

The never published sermons, on which the present work is based, are extremely significant. They are a part of the human dimension of the faith, demonstrating the power of the Gospel to speak to the present moment. This volume is a unique contribution to the study of Mark and has been highly acclaimed.


The Gospel of Luke was once described (sanctifyingly) as 'the most beautiful book in the library', and for thirty years at least has been a strong human concern for the poor and the outcast. There was, however, we are told, a kindly side to Hitler that co-existed with his darker side. If Luke were Hitler, it would have been much more powerful and at times vehemently - in this book Luke too had 'a fundamental political goal in mind', and his message to the Athenians was in general because they crucified Jesus and opposed the church, and the 'true measure of human history'. One could add that the book is in certain respects a unique 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 modern scholarship. The author is not afraid to go off from reading it to the end because of its iconoclastic stance and may be read as a statement of the need to put Jesus back in the context of his time and place, or at least of the respect for Luke. Although Sandars 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, Sandars looks at Luke's portrait of Jesus. He claims that the book has a strong sense that Luke has sharpened the picture of the hospitality 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 that 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, Sandars makes an interesting distinction between the picture of them in the speeches and in the narrative. In the discourse material there is a stark identity between the Jews and the Sadducees against Jesus (see Jn 7:19-24), but in the narrative there is a development in their attitude to Jesus and the Christians from initial fear to total rejection. Correspondingly, the emphasis is increasingly on the way in which the offer of the gospel is withdrawn from them; from initial fear and rejection on the part of the Jews, and later rejection, is registered, eventually the final rejection of the Jews and the end of their historical mission. In this context there is a sense that individuals or groups are exploited or deprived of their basic human rights.

But Párrales' integration of exegesis and application to a Latin American situation seems to me to result in a biased and oversimplified rejection of the Jewish community, and to end up with a view that seems to be based on the type of the Jewish Christians of one day in the church who were similar to the Jews of the New Testament and who therefore could keep up the Jewish character and continue the ritual of the law. Luke himself argued that Gentiles should not be incorporated into the Jewish community, let alone be allowed to be bypassed by God in them in Lev. 17-18. Between the Jews and the Gentiles there is a regional zone inhabited by outcasts, Samarians, pagans, who are the only ones who can be admitted to the church group through whom salvation passes from the Jews to the Gentiles. Sandars' approach to the text of Luke and Acts shows how the story develops and to pick up points not covered in the thematic analysis. There is new material in Sandars' book that has been previously mentioned.

Finally, Sandars asks questions concerning Luke's motives and in presenting the story of the Jews and Christianity in a way that sounds like it is something that cannot be misunderstood, and that is an indication of the great power of the Jesus story. T. & C. Clark, 'Jesus and Christianity: A Study in Christian Belief', 1990, reprinted in a different form from the early Church of the Synagogue, the latter part of which has been received by Sandars in a way that the author had come to understand primarily in terms of the Synagogue tradition.


Since 1970, when the works of Soggin and of F. Christ published, including the translation of a Reformed Wisdom Christology in Matthew, there have been many studies on this passage (11:22-19; 11:25-23; 33-39), and of these 11:25-30 has been recognized as one of the most important of the so-called echo of the language of Ben Sira 51:23-27. So perhaps the time was ripe for a full-scale study. In his book, the author sets out to deal with the meanings and implications of this important text, which has been used throughout the history of the church to support the idea of the mediatorial role of the church as the 'visible body of Christ'. The author sets out to explore how the text can be understood in its historical context, and to give a new interpretation of its significance for the church today.
It is meticulous and heavily documented study, in classical PhD style, offering a detailed and systematic review of relevant literature, but not very much by way of synthesis or integration of the results of the study with the wider field of Matthew research.

The first main part attempts a phrase by phrase discussion of the Gospel. The author, not only the transmission and the individual characters of the Gospel, but also the whole of the Gospel is dealt with. The author identifies 11:23-38 (the "Third Book" of Bacon) as classic 'penetranct analysis of the Gospel'. In this section she examines two related issues, namely the influence of the Gospel on the Church and the relation of the Gospel to the Church. The evidence of the Gospel on the Church is discussed, and that of revelation/concealment/dislosure. She has no difficulty in explaining these issues.

The second and longer main part combs through the literature of the Gospel. The author (but not the OT, surprisingly) for parallels to what he identifies as 'theological' but not as 'lived' of the Gospel. He does not identify any lack of an index of the non-biblical literature discussed makes it still less accessible. The author is not interested in the use of the Gospel 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 partisans, rejected by the great ones of the earth and their retainers to the point of being reduced to orf and malediction, is the very one who reveals the God of liberation to the world.

Dick France, London Bible College.

This is not a commentary in the traditional sense, but a series of essays on the Gospels. It is not intended to be a standard reference work, but a work of theological investigation. It is an attempt to understand the Gospel in the light of modern scholarship.

Dick France, London Bible College.


This book is based on different biblical meditations, mainly given to Christian base communities in Mexico in 1978-79. They give the reader a much-needed perspective and depth of understanding of Mark's Gospel, and the questions raised may be helpful to many scholars in their work on the Gospel.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part, "A Poor Man Called Jesus," contains reflections on the Gospel of Mark. The second part, "Reflections," contains reflections on the social and political situation in Latin America. The book is a valuable resource for those who are interested in the Gospel of Mark and its application to contemporary issues.

The book is well-written and accessible to a wide audience. It is a valuable resource for those who are interested in the Gospel of Mark and its application to contemporary issues.

The bibliography and many references to the scholarly debate on historical and exegetical issues give convincing proof of the author's knowledge and careful preparation. At the same time this book presents a challenge to the tendency of biblical scholars in the West to study the biblical text through a modern lens and to overlook the context of the text.

By the end of this book, the author will have convinced the reader that the Gospel of Mark is still relevant today. This is a valuable resource for those who are interested in the Gospel of Mark and its application to contemporary issues.

Dick France, London Bible College.
As with other books in this series, there are regrets and a strong sense of obligation to the many scholars who have contributed their time and effort in presenting their work which is long overdue. John Ashton (ed.). The Interpretation of John. Issues in Religion and Theology No. 9 (SPCK/Fortress Press, 1986). 182 pp., £3.95/97.95.


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As with other books in this series, there are reprints of articles by a variety of scholars, and the introduction by L. J. Matthews is the director of the department of New Testament in the University of Oxford. He points out in the preface that this book is intended to help students who are interested in the study of John the Evangelist and his work.

The book opens with an introduction by Ashton in which he expands on the theme of the book and offers a new perspective. The introduction is followed by several articles by different authors, each focusing on a particular aspect of John's Gospel. The contributions are organized thematically, and the book concludes with a conclusion by the editor.

The chapters are as follows:


Each chapter is a detailed exploration of a specific aspect of John's Gospel, providing insights and interpretations that are relevant to the study of the text. The book is an indispensable resource for students and scholars interested in the study of John's Gospel.
After discussing the problems of correlating chronological evidence in Paul's letters with that in Acts, Chapter Four explains the importance of understanding one's own times and the times. It is not necessarily the case that Paul wrote the letters alone as primary evidence. Using the mediating argument documents as the main source of evidence is driven by the spring of the times and the date of both letters.

Throughout the book, there are occasional 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 for distinguishing the use of rhetorical devices from one another. Using classical rhetorical terminology (exordium, narratio, propositio, quaestio, arbitratio, conclusio), they discuss tabular 'rhetorical analyses' for both letters; the genre of 1 Thess. is established as demonstrative/epideictic (p. 71), that of 2 Thess. as pathetic.

The technical and perhaps gratuitously detailed discussion of Chapter Five is a description of the cultural, social, and historical grounds of ancient rhetorical practice that the long narrative section in 1 Thess. (11.6-33) reflects Paul's definite concern with certain problems of writing and rhetorical style. The terseness of the Thessalonian concern over experienced persecution (2.14; 3.1-5) and the death of church members (4.1-18), the apparent unconsciousness to remain prepared for the parousia (5.3-6, 8), the problem of the 'unknown' (obstinate resisters of God) and the rejection of virtually what is known of the setting in Thessalonica. Jewett infers from the report in Acts that the charge of Acts 17.37 must have arisen from actual sedition behavior by Jason and his church. He supposes the Thessalonian church to have consisted of mostly Gentile, relatively poor artisans and small farmers (p. 128f.) plagued by high taxation, unfavorable economic conditions and virtual political disfranchisement. Religion, the indiscriminate use of Christ in popular piety, and the incorporation the Redeemer mystic cult of Cebus - thus a religion of a very practical, down-to-earth sort 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 have four parties (such as the 'upper class', 'Gentiles', 'humble poor', 'servants') which are insufficiently critical and specific. The 'emotionalist' model lacks an appropriate social theory to account for the poverty of the Thessalonians and the absence of a number of essential Gnostic features in Thessalonica. The 'divine man' model fails to recognize that Thessalonians are actual people, not abstract symbols. The 'Israel' model introduces other features which are not all reflected; nevertheless it is quite useful.

Chapter Nine brings anthropological and sociological analyses of modern millenarian movements to bear upon the Thessalonian situation. The Thessalonians are not in a special sense of 'white workers' but are also distinctively present in Thessalonica. Phenomena such as the movement's religious and secular activity, general neglect work and civil obligations are taken as illustrative of a 'millenarian' radicalism which Paul's letters try to correct. Paul's problem is not simply one of moral instruction, but is a matter of religious and political radicals along the lines of the discredit Cebus cult, in which the benefit of the collective defense of laborers and freedom from a realm of freedom' and 'bliss' (p. 176).

Chapter Ten completes Jewett's argument: essentially the reason for the use of the rhetorical form is to confirm the instruction of the former letter (esp. of 2 Thess. 3.1-5): 2 Thess. 3.1-5 resulting in an intensification of the Thessalonians' hope of the return of the Lord. The occurrence of such a misunderstanding is to be most plausibly confirmed by Paul's statement possible for Egyptians in 2 Thess. 3.2, 3, 17. Jewett's integrative approach to the Thessalonian correspondence is at once the great strength and the potential nemesis of his model; his is the most complex model, particularly in terms of world of critical scholarship. Jewett's claim for his argument, however, is based on the other previous work (but cf. his curious忽视 of previous rhetorical studies for not presenting the 'total communication process' implicit in a letter). While doubtless to the extent of the author's occasional accommodation of seemingly taut and far-fetched evidence, found himself favourably impressed by the
David Wenham and Craig Blomberg (eds). Gospel Perspectives: VI The Miracles of Jesus (Sheffield: JPT Press, 1986), 456 pp., £25.00 hb, £10.95 pb (available to members ordering direct from publisher at 30% discount).

A warm welcome to this sixth and final volume in the Gospel Perspectives series. The series, which started with the volume on Thomas, has sought to provide a detailed evangelical apologia for the Gospels. In this particular volume attention is given to the controversy over the supernatural elements in the Gospels, especially the parables, and the point is made that though the historical evidence for such miracles may be no weaker than the evidence for many other established studies and debates in the Bible, because of these other criticisms, I would hesitate to recommend this as the only guide to the area, but it will usefully stand alongside another as a crucial and complex field of study.

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


Robert Jewett, whose previous books include Paul’s Anthropological Terms (1971) and A Chronology of Paul’s Life (1979), offers here a clearly and for the most part accessibly written addition to the historical investigation of the important Thessalonian letters. It is, apparently unprecedented in his treatment, to incorporate the reformed mystic cult of Cebos – thus leaving a religious history of Thessalonica which is not theologically informed by what is known of the setting in Thessalonica. Jewett infers from the report in Acts that the charge of Acts 17:17 must have arisen from actual sedition behaviour by Jason and his church. He supposes the Thessalonian church to have consisted of mostly Gentile, relatively poor artisans and small traders and farmers (pp. 128f.) plagued by high taxation, unfavourable economic conditions and virtual political disfranchisement. Religionically, the interests of the Pauline church were complementary to this; it incorporated the reformed mystic cult of Cebos – thus leaving a religious history of Thessalonica with the church being the only alternative to such a cult.

Chapter Eight surveys previous models of the Thessalonian congregation, pointing out their weaknesses. Traditional models are found wanting because of the absence of any of the essential features of the Thessalonian church. The ‘divine man’ model unfalsifies the Pauline letter and the ‘polytheistic’ model introduces other features which are not at all reflected; nevertheless it is the most plausible approach.

Chapter Nine brings anthropological and sociological analyses of modern millenarian movements to bear on the Thessalonian situation, in order to arrive at a more adequate understanding of the letter. Millenarian movements are also distinctly present in Thessalonica. Phenomena such as the growth of the ‘anti-Christian’ cults and the increasing neglect work and civil obligations is taken as illustrative of a ‘millenarian radicalism’ which Paul’s letters try to correct. Paul’s proclamations are based on his millenarian views, particularly the radicals along the lines of the discredited Cebos cult, in which the manner and message of the society is largely for the defense of laborers against a “realm of freedom and bliss” (p. 176).

Chapter Ten completes Jewett’s argument: essentially the reason for the Pauline instructions to Thessalonica is that the securing of a proper understanding of the first letter (of esp. 2:15; 5:1-5; 12:16-18) resulting in an intensification of the holiness of life of the Thessalonians. The final occurrence of such a misunderstanding to be most plausibly confirmed by Paul’s second possible formula in 2 Thess. 2:2, 13-17, as well as the logical sequence of references in the two letters to perspicacity and to the founding mission.

Chapter Twelve discusses theories of a reversed sequence and of the various sub-sequences of the argument put forward for the letter, as well as the world of critical scholarship. Jewett’s claim for his argument, however, is to be compared with previous work (but cf. his curious suggestion of previous rhetorical studies for not presenting the ‘total communication process implicit in a letter’ (p. 213)) and to the historical and theological implications of the author’s occasional accommodation of seemingly taut 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 critical interpretation which, while fully recognizing the existence of the text, gainfully identifies with the original meaning and thereby plausibly fits the prima facie appearance of Pauline authorship of both the author of 1 Corinthians and the author of Hebrews.

Markus Bockmuehl, Vancouver, Canada.

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

In 1983 Howard Clark Keen 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 ritual significance of healing. 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 final chapter:

The first 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 alien priestly prophet to Hellenistic culture, but was in direct continuity with the OT prophetic understanding of what God was doing in the New Age; thirdly, the healing works of Jesus are not to be seen as in the same category as the resurrection; fourthly, the portrayal of healing in the NT stands on the whole in close continuities with the tradition in the OT.

For the evangelistic scholar, this contribution to NT studies is a real tonic to the soul. In a clear and decisive manner Howard Clark Keen deals with the matter of the text, 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-Murphy, Spurgeon’s College.


A collection of essays presents opportunity for great reward and great disappointment. This author was hoping that, if not on their own, the volume would lack some coherence, but the editor succeeds admirably in his goal of limiting the diversity of perspectives. The book begins with an essay by Harri Jones and ends with a book by the Bible as an assembly of ‘little books’ (p.4) which has ‘transfigured itself into an undifferentiated mass’ (p.139). Such is the result: several texts, each with its own perspective. This book, the most unexpected, is convincing, but is, simply, the basis of all the other essays. A biblical commentary on literature and translation, in other words.

Harold Bloom, Yale deconstructionist, provides what the editor calls ‘a demotion of what an adventing mind can make of the Text of texts’ (p.17). Bloom lives up to his billing. Assuming (J of JEED) date 1230 BC for the writing of Genesis, he indicates that Moses is, simply, the basis of all the other essays. A biblical commentary on literature and translation, in other words.


This concise introduction to the historical and literary background of the NT is, on the whole, a fine introduction to the subject. In part, the book is a survey of the historical and literary background of the NT, each chapter looking at the different authors and themes. The second method is open to serious difficulties.


The Professor of Divinity at Durham here collects six pieces of diverse origins that are held together by a cluster of common concerns. The focus of these reflections is the authority of Scripture and the character of the scriptural writings as interpreted through the life of the church. The volume is enriched by an endnote that seeks to provide a workable agenda for avoiding these criticisms constitute some worthy limitations of the formalist method. In section three, Fkrev revisits the literal sense by suggesting a procedure for giving meaning to the text inter- notional discourse of "word of God" in the present. Part of their interest lies in the attempt to make theological bricks out of historical mortar. The larger question, however, is the extent to which the interpretation finds a firm and stable footing in our current theological context.

The essay on the interaction between deduction and inductive methods in fixing the authority of the Bible. Dunn is clearly closer to the latter, although he might well wish to promote a greater appreciation of the former. His approach is, at least, to seek to establish a functional notion of scriptural authority, from the most Scriptural form of 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 reappraisal of earlier traditions. This forms the basis of his argument that the NT's concern with the historical context and 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 of 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 as relevant to his own preaching with even new force and effect in light of fresh situations.

In contrast, originally published in 1982, it takes its cue from the 'canon' criticism of Brevard Childs and others, but argues for four different 'levels of canonical authority' - those of tradition-based authority, of tradition-based interpretation, of canon-law, and of the ecclesiastical tradition. The argument depends on a confusion of using 'canon' (in the sense of 'official statement' or 'formulation' in the broader sense) which a community of faith treats as its rule of faith, as constitutive or normative for its self-understanding, one has determined by 'canonization' processes from which (e.g. the New Testament) becomes a tradition and a narrative in the curios.

Finally, Herbert Schneiders attempts to re-establish differences between Semitic and non-Semitic mindsets, on the basis of recent work in Semitic studies, and to be part of the service of canons into the curios. His conclusion is that point to John's 'arrival to the evangelical' field of the 'canonical' (p.139).

Schneiders recognises the weakness of this characterization, but stresses that this point stands out in contrast with the much more pronounced' (p.139).

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Schneiders recognises the weakness of this characterization, but stresses that this point stands out in contrast with the much more pronounced' (p.139).
uncommon coherence and flexibility of the overall argument. In the end one must also give full credit to a crisp interpretative work which, with wit and skill, at least sometimes, and perhaps at times in a plausibly fits the prima facie appearance of Pauline authorship of both Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians.

Markus Bockmuehl, Vancouver, Canada.


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 ways in which healing magic might have worked. Thus, after an introductory chapter on definitions and contexts for healing, in four successive chapters he examines in detail healing in the OTP and post-biblical traditions; medicine in the Greek and Roman traditions; miracles; and magic. This leads him to the conclusion that healing was a source of profound appeal to early Christians and that the portrayal of healing in the NT stands on the whole in contrast to most modern medical thought.

For the evangelical scholar, this contribution to NT studies in a real tonic to the soul. In a clear and decisive manner Howard Clark Kee deals with a wealth of material 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.


A collection of essays presents opportunity for great reward and great disappointment. This anthology is a selection of essays written by 12 scholars from the University of South Florida on their own, the volume would lack coherence, but the editor deserves much praise for his capacity to bring together the essays in a coherent whole. The theme is the Bible as an assembly of ‘little books’ (p.4) which has ‘transformed itself into a new kind of narrative’ (p.5). This is, simply, the basis of all biblical narrative commentary and literary study.

Harold Bloom, Yale deconstructivist, provides what the editor calls ‘a demonstration of what an awed mind can make of the Text of texts’ (p. 17). Bloom lives up to his billings. Assuming (J of JEDP) dates and a range of transcriptions, he deftly turns the Bible as an assembly of ‘little books’ into a coherent whole.


The Professor of Divinity at Durham here collects six pieces of diverse origin that are held together by a cluster of common concerns. Such a strategy has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of this strategy allow familiar and well-adapted models to be employed and, in turn, to reformulate an evangelical understanding of biblical authority in terms that are both accessible and relatively straightforward. However, the risk is that the reader might be left with the impression that Scripture and the character of the scriptural writings as interpreted to stand as a whole in the same way as the inner-directed practices of a community. This is perhaps too narrow a concept of biblical authority, and may leave the reader with the impression that Scripture and the Spirit-led discernment of ‘word of God’ in the present. Part of their interest lies in the attempt to make theological bricks out of historical stones, but the result is that the theological edifice is not as strong as is needed for a biblical hermeneutical task).

This volume is the first attempt to distill the language of the biblical canon into a form that is theologically acceptable. The question of whether the authors 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 it is relative in the larger sense, but this is not necessarily the case. A proper scriptural analogy to yet without winning’. This will in my view allow the reader to place the book within the question without theologically uncontrolled aprioristic reasoning. It would be akin to tackling the subject of natural ad ignitum or perhaps better, potential ad dubium.

Professor Dunn operates with a distinction between the Word of God in the history of the church and the Word of God in the mouth of Paul. He allows that ‘what Scripture [when correctly understood] says, God through the apostles and through the church has taught’ (p.81). This is of course in line with the quod verbum Dei kai thea deuteron (God’s Word of God may, when reappropriated and republished in new form, be theologically to what the author-intended meaning, give vent to a new Word of God today. This is a dialectical between historical exegesis (discovering the historical meaning of the biblical texts) and Christian exegesis (reading the text in the light of the living church). 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, the term ‘Word of God’ is to be understood as a historical and existential relationship: ‘the divine presence manifested in the historical and ceremonial law ceased to be the “word of God” with the coming of Christ and were “abandoned” by Christianity. The category “fulfilment” is simply a form of discontinuity. It is not 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 subapostolic (as in Kierkegaard’s apocalyptic theology) in the theological print-out of Dunn’s strictly tradi-storical-historical input. It is a criteria that Dunn’s concept of ‘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 completely the relationship between the Word of God and the Word of the Bible is “Word of God” today apart from some special theological understanding and the Bible is a collection of books which has become so peculiarly the gospel of late 20th century Christianity) suffers from historical relations. How are we to understand the ‘Word of God’ in the Gospel of John? Is it a word that Dunn for us it did, we are told, for Francis of Assisi? Dunn seems aware of the problem, but to have no answer to it beyond the theoretical. He moves from the diseased ‘Word of the Bible’ to the ‘directive authority of the Spirit revealing the mind of God’ here we face a serious hermeneutical and logical hurdle, and for that essentially Roman identification of the ‘mind of the church’ with the Spirit that has made such inroads into churches of the NT and the latter day.

This book’s advocacy of a ‘radical’ evangelical viewpoint is understandable and stimulating. (Radical) would certainly be a truer characterization of Jesus than Dunn’s ‘liberal’. Find Jesus as much more than ‘exclusive’ (or ‘inclusive’). Gaudiani are meant to be our ancestors. It is one of the more paradoxical of this discourse, under divine inspiration, of God’s Word by human authors. But there are so many others who do not help seeing the relevance of the Christological analogy.

Dunn is keen to promote internal categories and disentangle the criticisms of his main essay. Scripture and the Authority of Scripture according to Scripture (which earlier appeared in the Journal of Theological Studies) proposed that the incarnation the divine Word entered fully as possible into human culture (even unto death), without being subject to any other human existence. It is a paradigm for...
The essays are rather diverse and cover a wide range of issues. All deal with the theme of faith and its relation to reality.

In the first, 'The Logic of Biblical Authority,' the author, Dr. N. M. J. G. K. Collet, addresses the insights gained from Kirklap Lake (a prominent 19th-century biblical scholar). Dr. Collet examines the nature of faith and its role in the construction of knowledge. He argues that the logical structure of biblical authorities is not as rigid as traditionally assumed, and that faith and reason can be seen as complementary rather than contradictory.

In the second, 'Theological Anthropology and the Function of Scripture,' Dr. R. J. B. P. Blower discusses the role of scripture in shaping human identity and understanding. He argues that scripture is not just a set of rules or a blueprint for living, but a dynamic process that evolves with human experience and understanding. He concludes that the function of scripture lies in its capacity to challenge and transform human understanding.

In the third, 'The Eclipse of Biblical Authority,' Dr. G. J. M. R. Browne examines the historical and cultural factors that have led to the decline of biblical authority. He argues that the modern scientific and philosophical developments have led to a reassessment of the role of scripture in human understanding. He concludes that while the authority of scripture may have declined, its influence continues to be felt in various forms of human thought and action.

In the fourth, 'Theological Anthropology and the Function of Scripture,' Dr. R. J. B. P. Blower further explores the relationship between scripture and human understanding. He notes that the process of understanding scripture is not static, but rather a dynamic process that evolves with human experience. He concludes that the function of scripture lies in its capacity to challenge and transform human understanding.

In the fifth, 'The Eclipse of Biblical Authority,' Dr. G. J. M. R. Browne continues his exploration of the historical and cultural factors that have led to the decline of biblical authority. He notes that while the authority of scripture may have declined, its influence continues to be felt in various forms of human thought and action. He concludes that the role of scripture in human understanding continues to be a subject of ongoing debate and exploration.

David Jenkins, God, Miracle and the Church of England

This is a collection of short lecture series and four occasional items (two sermons, a lecture, a speech in Synod) by the Bishop of Durham, Dr. B. J. H. Jeffries. Dr. Jeffries argues that theology today must respond to two compelling pressures: the synchronistic trend towards the rationalistic (historical). The historical character of revelation from the option. Though our theology must respond to the needs of the time it must always be that the sources from which these pressures are brought to bear are the living voice of the ‘Spirit’. Though there are some overarching natural (e.g. on 71, ‘charismatics show a theological indifference which may split the World Council of Churches look on the ‘outlook’ of that which it is by no means true of all charismatics), this is a high stimulative and provocative book that gives interesting insights into the contemporary scene and the development of the Church.

The fifth contribution, by Prof. R. L. E. Reynolds of Covenant Theological Seminary, 'The Justification of Theology,' one of the wonders at Oxford in 1987 is not in any case, in my opinion, a book worth having. The author has done more than simply explain why he is an evangelical ‘Low’ theologian. He is engaged in the task of providing evidence for engaging in theology and offering some interesting observations on Reformation theology from below and Kázmierczyk’s ‘Christology from above’.

Jan Veendorf (of Systematic Theology in the Free University of Amsterdam) has contributed to the discussion on ‘Spirit and Heremetics’. Whilst rejecting the older orthodox distinction, he argues that there is no such thing as ‘theology’ and ‘the structure of living understanding beyond the purely historical one. It is in belief that he can see a distinct hermeneutics is needed. Theology comes to the text expecting the interpretation of the work of the Spirit. The Spirit works within us, in such a way as not to damage the text itself. This means that he will not lead us to abandon the ‘scientific’ disciplines as we find them, though he will influence the way in which we use such methods.

The final contribution, 'Calvin's Approach to Theology', comes from Professor W. L. Jason. It is well known for his writings on Calvin. In this essay Professor W. L. Jason discusses Calvin's approach to theology as a means of understanding the nature of God and the relationship between faith and reason. He argues that Calvin's approach to theology is 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 appears overly subjective, God always takes us out of ourselves. The knowledge of God must begin not from a position of doubt, but from faith. Theology for Calvin is not an exercise in purely human reasoning, as for example the ‘always faith seeking understanding’. Moreover, Calvin’s theology is carried out in a believing community that is formed around Christ and is under the leading of Christ's Holy Spirit. This orientation. Because the theologian is concerned with the truth of God and its nature, Calvin’s theology is not a purely rational discipline, but is concerned with the relationship between faith and reason.

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

On the whole, this is an excellent and authoritative collection of essays, which will be of great benefit to students of theology and religious studies. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the development of theological thought and the role of faith in contemporary society.


Rowan Williams, Arius: Heresy and Tradition

This is an important, though also a difficult book. Students must certainly not find it an easy read, but they will recognize a major academic contribution, which has been almost uniformly accepted in recent years. The book is controversial in recent patristic scholarship in that it is in the church of the one. 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 understanding of Christology, and this understanding has been accepted by both East and West. The book is divided into two main parts: Part I, which is a survey of the historical context and the development of Arius' thought, and Part II, which is a more detailed examination of Arius' thought and its influence on later Christian thought.

Dr. Williams argues that Arius' thought was shaped by his own understanding of Christ and his relationship to the Church. He also examines the role of Arius' thought in the development of Christian doctrine, and its influence on later Christian thought.

In conclusion, this book is a valuable contribution to the study of the early Church, and it should be read by anyone interested in the development of Christian thought.

Richard Backs, University of Manchester.

Bernard Lohse, Martin Luther. An Introduction to his Life and Work

This is an excellent book written by one of our most competent and respected Lutheran scholars, an American’s work. Nevertheless, this new edition written for Theologians, it should be stated at the outset that this book is not a simple guide into Luther’s life and work. It is a deep study of Luther’s life and work, with a focus on the history of Lutheranism and its influence on the modern world. The author, Dr. E. A. G. Robinson, explains that Luther’s work was not an isolated event, but a part of a larger historical process. Luther’s work was of particular importance to the development of modern science and philosophy, and his ideas have had a lasting impact on the modern world.

What is new in this book is that Dr. Robinson takes a closer look at Luther’s life, and how his ideas were shaped by his experiences as a teacher and pastor. He shows how Luther’s views on the nature of human beings and their relationship to God were influenced by his personal experience as a pastor. He also explores Luther’s views on the nature of the Church, and how his ideas on the nature of the Church have influenced modern views on the Church.

The book is divided into four parts, each focusing on a different aspect of Luther’s life and work. Part I is a biography of Luther, including his early life, his work as a professor, and his work as a pastor. Part II is a study of Luther’s doctrine, focusing on his views on the nature of the Church, the nature of salvation, and the relationship between faith and reason. Part III is a study of Luther’s influence on the modern world, focusing on his impact on science and philosophy. Part IV is a study of Luther’s influence on modern theology, focusing on his impact on the development of modern theology.

In conclusion, this book is a valuable contribution to the study of Lutheranism and its influence on the modern world. It is a deep study of Luther’s life and work, with a focus on the history of Lutheranism and its influence on the modern world. It is a deep study of Luther’s life and work, with a focus on the history of Lutheranism and its influence on the modern world.
The essays are rather diverse and cover a wide range of issues. All deal with religious and philosophical topics.

In the first essay, "The Logic of Biblical Authority", the author, Dr. D. R. McConville, argues that the insights gained from King's Chapel (a prominent 19th-century liberty church) are relevant to today's religious questions.

In the second essay, "Baptist Lectures", the author, John W. Buell, reconstructs the view of the evangelical wing of the Baptist church.

The third essay, "Analog of Faith in the Study of Scripture", Prof. Buell offers a way to reappropriate this significant aspect of their hermeneutical heritage for the contemporary Christian community.

The fourth essay, "Faith and History", the author, Dr. W. R. Norman, argues that faith is a critical component in understanding the significance of the event of salvation history. He emphasizes the importance of beginning with a strong, practical, and theologically coherent faith in order to understand the experience of salvation.

The fifth essay, "A Study in the New Testament", by Prof. Buell, offers an approach for a coherent and comprehensive study of the New Testament, showing the way to understanding its relevance and importance for contemporary life. He suggests that understanding the New Testament requires a deep understanding of its historical context.

The sixth essay, "Apartheid in South Africa", by Prof. Buell, examines the issue of apartheid in South Africa, focusing on the complex interplay of political, social, and economic factors that contributed to its development. He argues that understanding the history of apartheid is crucial for understanding the present and future of South Africa.

The final essay, "Calvin's Approach to Theology", comes from Prof. Buell, and it is well known for his writings on Calvin. In this essay, Prof. Buell offers a coherent and comprehensive study of Calvin's theological approach. He emphasizes the importance of understanding Calvin's theological approach in order to understand his influence on contemporary theology.

Rowan Williams, Aris: Heresy and Tradition (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1987), xi + 345 pp., £19.95

This is an important, though also a difficult book. Students not already fairly familiar with at least book 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 literature on the development of Christian doctrine. Williams has been almost entirely controversial in recent patristic scholarship in that he could be untrustworthy in the church's history of his own reconstruction. In doing so, Williams could be accusing himself of the more solid results of his synthesis of the works in Aris, but also makes his own original contributions. In so far as the book itself is a contribution, it will still remain a large step forward in Aris research. Its demonstration that Aris, though a贤能的 and his contemporaries could not be in the world is unlikely to be easily refuted. The alternative proposal — made by R. Greg and D. Grosh in Early Arusin (1981) and in Part B for stimulating recent interest in Aris; that Aris' central concern was soteriological not the trivial or intellectual — is a potentially important development. Rowan Williams is a major scholar and his work is a significant contribution to the study of Aris, and his synthesis of the works in Aris will be of major interest to students of the early church.

Richard Bauckham, University of Manchester.


This is an excellent book written by one of our most competent and respected church historians, and a significant contribution. Never before, in a new written for Thesaurus, it should be stated at the outset that this book is not a simple guide into Luther's 'life and work' but a significant study that is a major contribution to the study of Luther. What should be stressed is that this book is not a simple guide into Luther's 'life and work'. What we have here is a significant study that is a major contribution to the study of Luther. The average student would do well to reflect that we are developing a better knowledge of Luther, and that we should devote eight hours a day to reading and reading nothing else. Luther's work is not a book that emerges from under the covers; it is not a book that demands the reader a very good working knowledge of Luther, a knowledge that cannot be gained through a superficial examination of the texts.

What then is this book which describes itself as an introduction to Luther's life and work? It is not entirely clear. The book was written by the late Martin Luther, a man who was both a significant figure in the history of the church and a man who has been influential in the development of the church. The book is not a simple guide into Luther's 'life and work', but a significant study that is a major contribution to the study of Luther. What we have here is a significant study that is a major contribution to the study of Luther.

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The essays are rather diverse and cover a wide range of issues. All deal with religious and philosophical topics.

In the first essay, "The Logic of Biblical Authority", the author, Dr. D. R. McConville, argues that the insights gained from King's Chapel (a prominent 19th-century liberty church) are relevant to today's religious questions.

In the second essay, "Baptist Lectures", the author, John W. Buell, reconstructs the view of the evangelical wing of the Baptist church.

The third essay, "Analog of Faith in the Study of Scripture", Prof. Buell offers a way to reappropriate this significant aspect of their hermeneutical heritage for the contemporary Christian community.

The fourth essay, "Faith and History", the author, Dr. W. R. Norman, argues that faith is a critical component in understanding the significance of the event of salvation history. He emphasizes the importance of beginning with a strong, practical, and theologically coherent faith in order to understand the experience of salvation.

The fifth essay, "A Study in the New Testament", by Prof. Buell, offers an approach for a coherent and comprehensive study of the New Testament, showing the way to understanding its relevance and importance for contemporary life. He suggests that understanding the New Testament requires a deep understanding of its historical context.

The sixth essay, "Apartheid in South Africa", by Prof. Buell, examines the issue of apartheid in South Africa, focusing on the complex interplay of political, social, and economic factors that contributed to its development. He argues that understanding the history of apartheid is crucial for understanding the present and future of South Africa.

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the examination of the world into which Luther was born, and moves into a survey of his theological work and its development. It deals with all the major themes of his thought, including his understanding of grace, faith, and the nature of justification.

Luther's work is the focus of the third chapter, which discusses his views on the authority of the church and the role of the Bible. The chapter explores Luther's understanding of the relationship between the church and the state, and his views on the role of the pastor in the life of the church.

The fourth chapter examines Luther's understanding of the nature of the Christian life and the role of the believer in the life of the church. It deals with topics such as the nature of the church, the role of the individual in the church, and the role of the church in the world.

The fifth and final chapter examines the impact of Luther's work on the development of the Reformation and its legacy. It deals with topics such as the impact of Luther's work on the development of the Protestant churches, the impact of Luther's work on the development of the Roman Catholic Church, and the impact of Luther's work on the development of the world as a whole.

Throughout the book, the author provides a wealth of information and analysis, and offers a fresh perspective on Luther's work. The book is highly recommended for anyone interested in the study of the Reformation, the history of the church, or the history of ideas.
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