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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

# Recent New Testament Studies

**Robin Nixon**

It is intended that from time to time in *Churchman* we shall include articles which review a number of books in a certain field in order to help the non-specialist know what significant trends there are. A number of books on the New Testament in general and the Gospels in particular have been accumulated over the last two or three years for the purposes of this article.

A major event in recent New Testament studies is the publication of the first two volumes of *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* edited by Colin Brown (Paternoster Press, 1975, 822pp., £14.00: 1976, 1023pp., £18.00). This is first a basic translation and then an extensive revision and considerable enlargement of the German *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament* edited by Lothar Coenen, Erich Beyreuther and Hans Bietenhard, which first appeared in 1965. The whole dictionary has been rearranged in order to follow English alphabetical order (these volumes are A-F and G-Pre) and some seventy extra major articles have been prepared. The contributors are conservative scholars who are well abreast of modern theological writing and who give full English and German bibliographies on the theology behind the different words. A glossary at the beginning helps to define in neutral terms many difficult words from allegory and charisma to tannaim and Yahwist. This is essentially a work of New Testament theology, not about history, geography or literary questions. It will be an indispensable tool for students, teachers and preachers who are prepared to digest for themselves the feast which is offered. We look forward with eager anticipation to the arrival of the last volume.

Another major contribution in the same area, again from a conservative source, is *A Theology of the New Testament* by George Eldon Ladd (Lutterworth, 1975, 661pp., £5.80). The author is one of the best read Evangelical scholars in the U.S.A who tries to come to terms with the positive aspects of modern critical study of the Bible. He has already written a number of significant works particularly on this problem and on the Kingdom of God. He has now produced what may well be his *magnum opus*.

## Churchman

He laments that 'American scholarship has not been noted for its creative contribution to New Testament theology', and he seeks to do something to remedy this defect. It is a book for students, not very original in most of its ideas, but solidly researched and argued and with a massive bibliography. While he finds a basic unity in the New Testament he is anxious to find its richness in its diversity and he therefore takes the writers one by one. The fullest and most satisfactory treatments are of the Synoptic Gospels and of Paul (each some 200 pages). The section on John does not deal with some of the problems which might have been faced though there is great value in his treatment of the theological themes. He does not see justification by faith as the central doctrine of the Pauline Epistles. 'The unifying center is rather the redemptive work of Christ as the center of redemptive history'. While there are occasional points for disagreement with his exposition (and for regret that he gets his Ramsays and Ramseys confused) we should be grateful for the thorough and sensible scholarship which has provided for us what must be the standard conservative-critical work on New Testament theology for some years to come.

If Professor Ladd's work shows us the painstaking thoroughness of the American scholar who has learnt much and forgotten nothing, we have displayed in the next book the skill in presenting in attractive and readable form a distillation of current New Testament trends which its author shares in particular with his fellow Scot William Barclay.

*The New Testament for Today* by A.M. Hunter (Saint Andrew Press, 1975, 86pp., £0.60) is 'a plain man's primer on those books of the New Testament which tell of the "New Covenant" which God made with our prodigal human race when he gave us his only Son for our saving.' Professor Hunter writes for Bible classes, study circles etc. to bring 'the word from the Beyond for our human predicament'. He is good at doing this sort of thing with his popular style and vivid illustrations and his book should help to give people a taste for New Testament study. The text of the book is also available on cassettes – an idea which should be more widely used.

We welcome another major tool for students of the New Testament in its second edition. This is *Introduction to the New Testament* by W.G. Kummel (S.C.M. Press, 1975, 629pp., £8.50). The first English edition appeared in 1966 and the publishers tell us that there were 'justifiable criticisms of the American-made translation which unnecessarily complicated Dr. Kummel's style'. Another American scholar, Dr. Howard Clark Kee, has taken over as translator and the British edition is based on that of the Abingdon Press in the U.S.A. also published in 1975. The German edition (to go through the whole critical process in proper style!) was published in 1973, recording literature up to the end of 1971, and was itself the

seventeenth fully revised edition of the study initiated by Paul Feine and Johannes Behm. Kummel and Guthrie stand together (though not always seeing things from the same standpoint) as the best modern introductions to the literature of the New Testament. Kummel accepts more radical critical positions than does Guthrie, (though he is prepared to say when he is uncertain on issues) but he is fair in his consideration of all sorts of literature. What he will make of John Robinson's *Redating the New Testament* remains to be seen! Meanwhile we are grateful for the massive labours which provide so much material for others to use.

Another distinguished German New Testament scholar provides for us a much briefer and less technical work. *The New Testament, A Guide to its Writings* by Gunther Bornkamm (S.P.C.K., 1974, 166pp. £1.30) was first published in Germany in 1971 and then in an English translation by Fortress Press in America in 1973. His hope is 'to convey an impression of the rich variety and diverse history of the New Testament writings and to bring out their focal ideas and central concerns in such a way as to stimulate the reader's own thoughtful study of the writings themselves. Any reader should be able to find such stimulus from this book though not all will agree that 'a careful reading will soon show that the New Testament, despite major agreements, is full of discords. Sometimes its numerous answers enshrine a genuine faith which preserves and applies anew the original word of Jesus. Sometimes they fall back on familiar traditions, producing interpretations of faith which tend to error, even to downright misinterpretation'. But Bornkamm reminds us that all is rooted in the certainty of the resurrection of Christ and he gives us a fine exposition of the Pauline gospel.

Most ideas do not take nine years to cross the Atlantic. However *New Testament Word Lists for Rapid Reading of the New Testament* (Bagster 1975, 125pp., £2.50) was first published by Eerdmans in 1966. Lists of less common words are provided for each chapter of the New Testament, Acts 27 (the shipwreck chapter) taking pride of place. They are intended to help the student who is at a fairly elementary stage read more rapidly and easily than is possible with the ordinary reference volume. The compilers insist that they are not meant to be a substitute for but a complement to the more detailed study of the text with the traditional tools. Provided that the limitations are recognised this book has proved a help to many students.

Turning more specifically to the Gospels we are first of all confronted with a harmony, *Jesus, The four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*, combined in one narrative and rendered in modern English (Angus and Robertson, 1975, 222pp., £3.00). It is amazing that anyone with any scholarly instincts (and the editorial committee included at least one

## Churchman

internationally known scholar) should ever wish to set his hand to such an enterprise. It is even more amazing that the publishers should put on the front cover 'Everything Jesus Christ said and did, blended into a single narrative in modern English'. To say that 'nothing has been added to and nothing has been taken away from the combined record of the gospels' is highly misleading. Where is 'our', the first word in Matthew's Lord's Prayer? Where is the 'finger' of God (Luke 11:20)? God gave us four different Gospels, the individual treasures of which we are perhaps just beginning to appreciate fully. To try to put the clock back to Tatian and then bring it forward by putting it into modern Canadian is a sadly misconceived enterprise. It was first published in Canada in 1973 by McClelland and Stewart.

It is a great relief to turn from this to *The Gospels and Acts* by William Barclay (SCM Press. 1976, 303 and 341pp., £2.25 and £2.25). Ten years previously Dr. Barclay wrote *The First Three Gospels*. The first of these two volumes is an updating of this work with chapters added on the history of gospel criticism and 'reaction criticism' (*sic!*) The second volume is devoted to the Fourth Gospel and the Acts. Most of us know what to expect from Dr. Barclay and we shall not be disappointed in these two books. He is the great populariser of the modern Biblical theology movement who is able to communicate the technicalities of scholarship to the man in the pew. It is possible to cavil about his sense of proportion at times, about some of his judgments and about the omission from his bibliography of some of the latest books which had been published before he went to press. But when all is said and done this will deservedly be the most popular introduction to the subject of Gospel study for some time to come. Let us hope that the flow of his pen does not dry up too soon!

Another work on the Gospels which will have and deserve widespread use is *New Testament Foundations, A Guide for Christian Students*. Vol 1: *The Four Gospels*, by Ralph P. Martin (Paternoster, 1975, 325pp., £4.80). Dr. Martin is a British scholar with an international reputation who is now on the staff of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, where he works alongside George Eldon Ladd. His book will be an excellent companion to Dr. Ladd's. The second volume is due in 1977. Like his colleague, Professor Martin shows himself well abreast of modern critical study and well able to use critical methods positively. After telling us what to look for in the Gospels and bringing us up to date on recent study of Gospel history and interpretation, he turns to the backgrounds of the Gospels and then the problems about how they came to be written. There is then a useful survey of each of the four Gospels with the fullest treatment being given to Mark, on which he has previously written an important book. The

final section aims to 'cash out' the principles previously enunciated by the detailed treatment of three passages: The Great Thanksgiving and Invitation (Matthew 11:25-30), the Parable of the Owner's Son (Mark 12:1-12) and the Footwashing of the Disciples (John 13:1-20). These are chosen to illustrate form-critical procedures, the importance of understanding the religious and cultural setting and the centrality of the kerygmatic motif which runs through the Gospels. There are no easy answers in this book. It should be a positive mind-stretcher for Evangelical students, and it is to be hoped for many others also.

The Synoptic Gospels are of course so called because it is possible to look at them together in parallel. It has been the custom for some time now to produce Synopses in parallel columns. With a fine sense of originality Reuben J. Swanson has now broken with tradition and produced *The Horizontal Line Synopsis of the Gospels* (Western North Carolina Press, 1975, 597pp., \$23.95). Only time will tell how valuable this is, but it seems to score well in the exact comparison of words used in the different Gospels and less well when they diverge in order. This is an English edition and we look forward to a Greek edition. The scale of the operation is indicated by the fact that the compiler had to type out the whole thing himself and to set up a new publishing house to deal with the venture! It is a most praiseworthy venture and it is hoped that scholars will buy the book and use it in addition to rather than a substitute for the more traditionally arranged Synopses.

Two important books largely in this field have been added to the SNTS Monograph Series. They have much in common in that they are both based on Cambridge Ph. D. theses by Evangelical scholars from the Antipodes. *Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching* by G.N. Stanton (CUP, 1974, 207pp., £5.50) seeks to deal with the questions 'Was the primitive church interested in the life and character of Jesus? If so, when and in what context did this interest arise?' Dr. Stanton deals primarily with the Lucan writings which have been in the centre of much recent scholarly discussion. He finds that the content of the speeches in Acts is very closely related to the circumstances of the hearers, and that 'for Luke, the life and character of Jesus is part and parcel of the message of the church and is especially important in initial evangelistic preaching'. He follows Conzelmann some but not all of the way in seeing Luke as a theologian and finds for example that Peter's speech in Acts shows traces of pre-Lucan tradition and that Luke's own stylistic and theological emphases are not all-pervading. He finds that 'the view that Paul was not interested in the life and character of Jesus of Nazareth is built on a series of unjustifiable assertions'. Dr. Stanton believes that the Gospels are both kerygmatic and in a sense biographical and finds that 'interest in the life and character of Jesus was already present

## Churchman

*in nuce* in the ministry of Jesus'. He finds that 'there is no dichotomy between the gospel traditions' concern with the life and character of Jesus and their use in preaching'. Finally he shows the importance of the issue to the church today which still needs to know what sort of person Jesus was in his earthly life if the kerygma of the New Testament is to be comprehensible. Altogether an important, learned and judicious study on a vital subject.

The second volume is *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* by Robert Banks (CUP, 1975, 310pp., £8.75). The question of the place of the law in the Christian life still remains a basic one for Christian ethics today and proper consideration of this issue must be based upon careful study of the New Testament. It is just this that Dr. Banks has given us in a thorough, discriminating and readable book. He rightly begins by a fairly detailed survey of the Law in the Old Testament, Inter-Testamentary and later Jewish literature asking in each case three questions: 'Achievement of response? Rigid or flexible? Eternal or provisional?' He then divides the treatment of the Synoptic into three sections: Incidental sayings and actions, debates and controversies and extended teaching. From the first he concludes that 'the chief impression which these pieces of evidence supply is that of a life neither geared to nor drawn up against the Law, but one that is moved by quite different considerations yet to which observance of the Law can indirectly be made to bear witness'. Dr. Banks finds, after examining a number of alternatives, that 'the true solution lay in understanding "fulfilment" in terms of an affirmation of the whole of the Law, yet only through its transformation into the teaching of Christ which was something new and unique in comparison with it'. He concludes that 'his teaching questions the legitimacy of that polarity between law and love, order and freedom that is so widely presupposed in much contemporary secular and christian thought'. A rewarding and thought-provoking study.

### The Gospel of Mark.

We begin our survey of recent literature on the individual Gospels with Mark because, despite the bombshell of W.R. Farmer's book on the Synoptic problem in 1963, it still remains the opinion of the vast majority of NT scholars that this was the first of the Synoptics to be written. It is good to welcome a volume on Mark in the *New Testament Commentary* by William Hendriksen (Banner of Truth, 1976, 700pp., £4.00). Hendriksen is a scholarly American pastor. He writes essentially with a pastoral and devotional purpose and though he lists a considerable number of more academic works in his bibliography he quotes them very little except at

certain points where interpretations are disputed. The two commentaries which are singled out as 'perhaps most widely known' are those by H.B. Swete and Vincent Taylor. W.L. Lane's commentary (see below) is also listed in a further group though it appeared too late to be used. But strangely there is no R.P. Martin and, perhaps less strangely, no W. Marxsen. A good number of the problems which have arisen recently in scholarly debate about the gospel do not feature in this commentary. There is little about the Messianic secret, about form-criticism or redaction-criticism. He makes what he believes to be the reasonable assumption that the Mark mentioned at various places in the NT is the same man and he holds him to be the author of the Gospel. In his dating he relies too much on the speculative articles of Father O'Calligham (*sic*) but he concludes that the gospel was written sometime between A.D. 40 and 65, *with the balance of evidence now favouring the earlier part of this period* (his italics), a verdict which compares interestingly with J.A.T. Robinson's c. 45-60. The comments are always carefully thought out and positive, though the preacher's style may occasionally irritate as when Jesus is said to proceed 'from the Father's approving smile to Satan's contemptuous wile'. He believes that Mark has a doctrinal and practical aim and does much to bring this home to his readers. It is a mammoth task to try and write a commentary of this length on the whole of the NT and it is hoped that Dr. Hendriksen will be given the necessary strength to complete it.

W.L. Lane is another Evangelical American but his book *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1974, 652pp., £6.00) a further distinguished volume in the *New London Commentary on the New Testament* ('International' in the Eerdmans edition), is the work of a pastorally-minded scholar. We have waited some time for a heavyweight conservative commentary on Mark and it is good to have this volume which combines thorough scholarship and clear exegesis. Lane is Professor of NT and Judaic Studies at Gordon-Conwell Seminary Mass., which is one of an encouraging number of American colleges where Evangelical academics are really wrestling with the critical issues of the day. Like Hendriksen he does not argue whether there was more than one Mark in the NT, but he is much more sceptical of O'Callaghan's evidence for dating. He settles for the second half of the 60s. He assumes the facts of form-criticism and redaction-criticism and he deals at some length with Marxsen. The introduction is perhaps a little brief for a work of this kind and there is no separate treatment of the problems of the Son of Man and the Messianic Secret. It was thirteen years between the invitation to Dr. Lane to write this commentary and its publication, but that time has been very well spent and, used in conjunction with R. Martin's book *Mark Evangelist and Theologian*,



## Churchman

this will be the standard work for the conservative minded student for some time to come.

When we move on to the next volume we are treading on different ground. Etienne Trocmé, *The Formation of the Gospel according to Mark* (SPCK, 1975, 293pp., £8.50) is an English translation of a work first published in French in 1963. It is an important work but it is a pity that it was not possible to bring it more up to date as a great deal has happened in Marcan studies in those twelve years. The bibliography does not give the English editions of works which were first published in French or German. The updating bibliography (1963-74) does not include such an important conservative work as R.P. Martin's book. Trocme believes that 'it was the desire to define as precisely as possible the place and mission of the Christian Church and of its leaders in the society in which he lived that provided the Evangelist with the themes around which to group the stories and sayings of Jesus he derived from tradition and popular memory'. He surveys the aversions the evangelist displays which he thinks to be 'largely due to his own editorial work and reflect the animosities and impatience in his own mind and in the minds of those in his own circle'. He believes that there were two editions of Mark and that chapters 14-16 have different theological ideas from the rest of the gospel. He thinks that Luke did not know the final edition of Mark and as he dates that c. 80-85 he is inclined to give a similar date to our canonical Mark, which was used by Matthew! He finally links up the milieu of the Gospel with the Seven of Acts 6. This is a learned and important book though it fails to carry conviction.

### The Gospel of Matthew.

The last few years has seen a good deal of scholarly work done on the Gospel of Matthew. This is partly due to the way in which redaction-criticism has come more into the forefront of NT studies. In very general terms it might be said that Mark's Gospel is the best hunting ground for form-critics and it was on it that the pioneering form-critical work was done, while the other two Synoptics lend more definite scope to the redaction-critic who can see clearly how the other two evangelists made use of Mark. A significant study in this area is Jack Dean Kingsbury's *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (SPCK, 1976, 177pp., £6.50), a work first published in the USA by Fortress Press in 1975. Kingsbury, as has now rightly become the fashion, pays careful attention to the way in which Matthew uses words and arranges things, He finds particular significance in the expression 'From that time on Jesus began. . . .' which is found at 1:1-4:16 The Person of Jesus Messiah; 4:17-16:20 The Proclamation of Jesus Messiah; 16:21-28:20 The Suffering Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Messiah. This is certainly a valid, though not an exclusive, way of looking at the gospel. As far as its Christology is concerned he sees that the central title for Matthew is 'Son of God', though 'Son of Man' is also important. Perhaps he could have tied up a little more closely the relationship between 'Son of David' and 'Son of God' with the influential passage in 2 Samuel 7 in mind. With reference to the Kingdom, Professor Kingsbury holds that Matthew 'unlike scholars today, does not distinguish between the pre-Easter proclamation of Jesus and the post-Easter proclamation of the church'. It is in this area that some of his judgements are more debatable but all those interested in deeper study of the First Gospel will welcome this as a stimulating and penetrating study.

We welcome the commentary by William Hendriksen on Matthew in his *New Testament Commentary* (Banner of Truth, 1974, 1015pp., £3.50) in much the same way as we have greeted that on Mark. As this was written before that on Mark he includes an introduction to the Four Gospels, running to 74 pages. In this he really seeks to get to grips with the Synoptic problem while needing to justify his doing so to those American fundamentalists who would reject the critical method entirely. He has an interesting description of the first three Gospels. Mark is a swiftly flowing stream; Matthew flows smoothly and majestically '*at time it even takes a rest, as it were, by creating a lake, lingering there for a while*'. . . (his italics); Luke is a river with sections alternating above ground and underground. He deals fairly with attacks on the reliability of the Gospels and is prepared to allow a good number of positive elements in the work of more radical Biblical critics though he refutes strongly many of their conclusions. When dealing with the introduction to Matthew itself the style of his river changes somewhat and only 21 pages are devoted to this. The use of the mnemonic Methodical, Appealing, Turned towards the past, Turned towards to present, Hebraistic, Evangelistic, Written by a man whose qualifications corresponded with these characteristics, will be helpful to some but offputting to others in a substantial work of this kind. He accepts Matthaean authorship and suggest as date about AD 63-66. The general theme he entitles 'The Work which Thou Gavest Him to Do' and he subdivided this as 1:1-4:11 Its Beginning or Inauguration; 4:12-20:34 Its progress or Continuation; 21:1-28:20 Its Climax or Culmination. As is the case with his commentary on Mark he writes thoughtfully and with pastoral intent and much can be learnt from his exposition.

Eduard Schweizer's *The Good News According to Matthew* (SPCK, 1976, 572pp., £7.50) was first published in German in 1973 and the English translation was published by John Knox Press in the USA in 1975. This is a commentary which is by a man who is primarily an academic, yet he gives a

## Churchman

great deal less space than Hendriksen to matters of introduction (ten pages only with a bibliography largely consisting of continental works). He finds that the apostle Matthew was probably a prominent figure in the community in Syria out of which the gospel arose some time after AD 70. For most of the sections not already discussed in his commentary on Mark (previously published by SPCK) Professor Schweizer has a pattern of printing the text (usually *Good News for Modern Man*, except as amended to bring out a particular meaning) and then providing introduction detailed exegesis and conclusion. This is intellectually demanding but not in a particularly technical way and he writes without any footnotes. He is of course familiar with the current debate and writes in this way out of his own conclusions in these matters. There are numerous points where his judgements might be questioned but it is good to have a positive scholarly exposition of this kind. It is to be hoped that the English-speaking public, like their German counterparts, will be able to appreciate a commentary of this sort which is midway between the technical and the devotional.

*The New Clarendon Bible* has already won wide esteem in the volumes which have appeared over the last few years and to that can now be added *The Gospel according to Matthew* by H. Benedict Green (OUP, 1975, 264pp., n.p.). It does not often fall to the lot of a man to write a commentary which is replacing another by his own father, but F.W. Green in fact wrote the commentary on Matthew published in 1936 in the original Clarendon Bible. The Principal of Mirfield has done a lot of work on this gospel over the years and some of his detailed analysis of the arrangement of the gospel has been given at New Testament congresses in Oxford and printed in *Studia Evangelica*. If these have seemed sometimes too detailed to carry full conviction, it is interesting to note that he does not press them at all in the scope of this short commentary. Nonetheless as one of the many former pupils of R.H. Lightfoot at large in the academic world he continues to pay close attention to all the questions of arrangement and word use. He believes that the five discourses are a key feature of the gospel and sees them as each falling 'into two distinct halves of which the first speaks, on the face of it, to the disciples of Jesus in their original situation, while the second applies the message to the changed situation of Mt's contemporary Christians facing the imminent prospect of final judgement'. He believes that the gospel was written about AD 90-100 and is non-committal about how the name 'Matthew' might have become attached to it. As with other volumes in the series the commentary is concise and generally speaking illuminating. There are occasions where Fr. Green's proper emphasis on Matthew as a theologian may lead him to attribute to Matthew's editorial tendencies more than others would, but his reasons for adopting such positions are usually well

thought out. Like other volumes on their books in the series, this is probably the best of the shorter commentaries available on Matthew.

Michael Goulder is well known for his imaginative and at times fanciful approach to the New Testament. His extravagant *Type and History in Acts* published a few years ago provoked something akin to apoplexy in many reviewers! We therefore have some idea of the sort of thing to expect in his *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (SPCK, 1974, 528pp., £8.50). The main outline of his theme is simple. Matthew's Gospel had only one source – the Gospel of Mark. He has taken that as his starting point and with the standard Jewish expository technique of midrash he has expanded and developed it into a gospel of his own which was to be read as a cycle of lessons in Christian worship following the Jewish festal lectionary. The details of the outworking of this theme are extremely complicated, though argued with vigour, ingenuity and a rare touch of humour. As a former pupil of the late Austin Farrer he is of course bound to dispense with 'Q'. But to do so it remains necessary to suppose that Luke used Matthew, a theory which is really very hard to sustain when the evidence is examined carefully. And the building of a lectionary thesis suffers from many of the drawbacks of former attempts with other NT books. Again and again the reviewer has to say 'Yes, I can see a connection because I can see connections between the different aspects of the doctrine and work of God and between different parts of the Scriptures. But is it really *the* connection which accounts for the material as it emerges in Matthew?' The serious student of Matthew's Gospel will benefit greatly from reading this book if he does so in a thoroughly hard-headed manner.

### The Gospel of Luke.

The third Gospel and the Acts have recently been described as 'the storm-centre of New Testament studies'. Most of us have now become used to the work of Conzelmann at least and are aware of the debates about the historical reliability of Luke-Acts and about Luke's supposed tendency to 'early Catholicism'. There has been a good deal of attention paid to the purpose of Luke-Acts as there has to that of the other Gospels and we welcome a further essay in this field in *Christ the Lord, A study in the Purpose and Theology of Luke-Acts* by Eric Franklin (SPCK, 1975, 241pp., £6.95). He has taught theology at Brasted College, St. Chad's College, Durham and Chichester Theological College and acknowledges debts to Geoffrey Lampe and John Fenton among others. He argues against much fashionable scholarly opinion that 'Luke stood within the main eschatological stream of the early Christian expectations, and that salvation history in his two volumes, though present, is used in the service of his eschatology rather than as a replacement for it'. In his different chapters he argues that the

ascension is the event that guarantees the claims made of behalf of Jesus. Luke's readers are not called to join themselves to the past life of Jesus but to an acceptance of his present sovereignty. All this effects his understanding of the position of the church *vis-a-vis* the Jews and the Gentiles. He believes that Luke's Paul preaches the theology of Luke, but acknowledges that he learnt much from Paul and leans towards the possibility that he was a companion of Paul. He sees Luke's value to lie 'in the fact that, without abandoning the eschatological outlook of early Christianity, he was able to see the significance of continuing history, that it could be used as an indirect witness to the lordship of Jesus which was, nevertheless, reserved for its fulness to the sphere of the transcendent'. There is a lot of solid worth in this study of Lucan theology.

Another study connected with the purpose of Luke-Acts is *Tradition and Design in Luke's Gospel*, A study in Early Christian Historiography by John Drury (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976, 208pp., £3.95). The author, who is a canon of Norwich Cathedral, formerly lectured at Oxford. After writing a short popular commentary on Luke without resorting to the 'Q' hypothesis he began to see the importance of the Old Testament as a source for Luke and then attended the Speaker's Lectures by M.D. Goulder out of which his *Midrash and Lektion in Matthew* (reviewed above) emerged. His fondness for poetry and fiction as well as an academic training in history combined to give him some new methods of approach to Luke's writings. Though the work is much less detailed and much less fanciful than that of Goulder, it remains open to some of the same criticisms and its argument is seriously affected if Luke could be shown not to have used Matthew as one of his sources. But again there is much material of fresh insight and real value in the book. He tries to show how Luke moved in three scenes which connected and interacted to form to context of his work. There were the meetings of the Christian congegation, the educated society of the ancient world and Luke's own desk where he draws upon the Old Testament, two or three Christian writings and the picture-book of life as he observed it. He believes the realism of Luke and his ability to tell stories as a theological form are things which have a lot to say to the contemporary church.

### The Gospel of John.

A great deal of heavyweight material has recently been produced relating to John's Gospel. Since 1970 there have been the commentaries of Barnabas Lindars (New Century Bible) and Leon Morris (New London Commentary) a British edition of R.E. Brown's two-volume commentary and an English translation of Rudolf Bultmann's. It is time for a stocktaking

exercise and this is what we have in *John: Witness and Theologian* by John Painter (SPCK, 1975, 158pp., £2.50). Dr. Painter is an Australian who obtained a Durham Ph. D. in this field working under C.K. Barrett and he is now Associate Professor of Religious Studies in The University of Capetown. He states that he is attempting to give a systematic presentation of the theology of the 'new look' on the Fourth Gospel and on the First Epistle of John. He does not refer directly to John Robinson's essay 'The New Look on the Fourth Gospel' in his *Twelve New Testament Studies* and as this concentrated mainly on questions of authorship and dating (which have found fuller expression recently in his *Redating the New Testament*), it is perhaps surprising that Dr. Painter uses this phrase in a book which is dealing largely with the theology of John. It was the Robinsonian 'new look' which was more directly dealt with by A.M. Hunter in his *According to John* (SCM Press, 1968) and this book provides something of a companion volume to that one rather in the sense that W.F. Howard's two volumes *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism* (Epworth, 1931, fourth revised edition 1955) and *Christianity according to St. John* (Duckworth, 1943). After thirteen pages of introduction the writer devotes by far the greatest part of the book to the theology of the Gospel of John. The idea of revelation is used as the thread which binds together different aspects of Johannine theology. There is a much shorter section on interpreting 1 John. He finds that 'the differences between the Gospel and 1 John are not due to independent authors but to different situations for which each book was written'. He concludes that the Gospel is best understood against a Jewish background and that it provides 'a unique blending of the gospel tradition with the primitive Christian interpretation of that material and its implications! . . . thus safeguarding the unity of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith in a manner which is not explicitly spelt out by Paul or by any other writer in the New Testament'. A proper understanding of John's theology shows us authentic Christian faith as against Jewish legalism or pagan mysticism.

If Dr. Painter has given us a perspective of the whole field of Johannine studies, in the next book we have an incisive look into one particular aspect of the Gospel. *Jesus on Trial, A study in the Fourth Gospel*, by A.E. Harvey (SPCK, 1976, 140pp., £2.95). argues that a large part of the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus as being 'on trial' before his contemporaries. Anthony Harvey as a writer of originality with a most readable style and he has thrown a lot of new light on the Gospel by this particular approach. His different chapters deal with the case of Jesus Christ, the witnesses in the case, the procedure, the charges, the defence, the verdict and the record of the proceedings. There are times when the brevity of the book means that arguments are not fully developed and there is a good deal of recent writing

## Churchman

on John to which he makes no explicit reference, but the book still deserves to be taken very seriously in academic circles. 'That Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, is a proposition presented in the Fourth Gospel, not as an established fact, but as an issue on which a judgement is to be passed. . . The verdict reached by Jesus' contemporary judges was not final: the issue is still open and each reader has to make up his mind.'

In some contrast to this stands *The Law in the Fourth Gospel* by Severino Pancaro (Brill 1975, 571pp., 128 guilders). It is an abridged (!) version of a doctrinal dissertation accepted by the University of Munster in 1972 by a Canadian Roman Catholic scholar. It is subtitled 'The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity according to John'. The first part deals with 'The law as a norm which the Jews vainly try to use against Jesus in order to judge and condemn him'. It deals with the sabbath question, the charges of blasphemy, of false teaching and of being an enemy of the Jewish nation. The second part is entitled 'The Law testifies against the Jews and in favour of Jesus' and the third describes 'the trial before Pilate as the "denouement" of the confrontation of Jesus with the Jews and "their" Law'. The next part is entitled 'The metamorphosis of "Nomistic Termini" and the transferral of symbols for the Law to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel', dealing particularly with doing the will and the works of God and keeping his word and his commandments and with the symbols of bread, water, life and light. In conclusion the author summarises his arguments and gives an exegesis of John 1:17. 'One can speak of the fulfilment of the Law only the reservation Jn makes is maintained, if the Law itself is seen not as the Law of the Jews, but as it manifests itself to Christians. In this sense the work and death of Jesus fulfil the Law . . . and in this sense there is an element of continuity between the Law given through Moses and the *charis kai aletheia* which came to be through Jesus Christ'. An important and erudite work but it could have been published in a shorter form!

This is an interesting and important crop of books and we may take encouragement from the amount of serious work on the New Testament and on the Gospels in particular which is being published in the face of current inflation. Many readers of *Churchman* may note with special pleasure the way in which conservative scholars are grappling with critical problems in a positive fashion and the stress in most of the books from all stables on the theology of the NT writings. The apostolic deposit is so rich and varied that it will remain a productive mine for many years to come.