

Book Reviews

Jesus Christ and His Spirit: by James Dupuis S. J. Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1977. Pp. viii+261. Price Rs 14.

In this book the author shares with us his reflections on the mystery of Jesus Christ and His Spirit. Many theologians have written on this subject. The author's special contribution lies in the fact that he has taken his guidelines from the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council. Vatican II has ushered in a new era of openness in the Catholic Church in matters of faith and the Church's approach to other Christian groups, Orthodox and Protestant, and to the non-Christian religions and secular ideologies. The Council has opened the door for the Church to come out of its traditional feeling of self-sufficiency and intolerance and enter into meaningful dialogue with the world at large. There is the recognition that God has been working amongst all peoples of the world, and that glimpses of His revelations can be seen in all religions. The influence of Vatican II on the author is obvious, and he quotes extensively from the Council documents as he reflects on Christology and Pneumatology. The new theology characterised by openness has paved the way for an appreciative understanding of different religious doctrines amongst the Christian Churches and for seeing them as inseparable aspects of the Christian mystery. The same principle has been applied to the Christian approach to other faiths.

The author's methodology seems to move from a theological analysis of traditional beliefs to his own reflection on them, and from there to move on to dialogue. The differences of opinions existing in different Christian groups on various matters of faith are traced to distinct emphases laid on issues by different sides. The author has succeeded in showing that these differences in emphasis belong to an essential unity of the Christian mystery and that they are complementary. According to the author, to find the essential unity, with diversity of expression, is the greatest need of the hour and the pressing duty of all Christians of all the Churches. He believes that the Indian Church, set in the midst of a plurality of religions and cultures, can play an active role in this theological task. This book is dedicated to this objective.

The author has chosen the themes of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, because he believes that these deserve urgent consideration in the present context. For centuries the eastern and western Churches have been divided with the western Church emphasising Christocentricism, and the eastern Church emphasising Pneumatology.

Such a dividing line has been an unhappy one. In the light of the openness which Vatican II advocated, one can see the need of holding these two positions together with reciprocal enrichment. The work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit are part and parcel of the same redemptive act of God. The author seeks to establish the unity of faith in the midst of dogmatic pluralism. In the same manner the author attempts to resolve the dichotomy of knowing Christ and experiencing Christ, by arguing that knowledge is knowledge through experience (see Part II).

Part III on Dialogue is the most interesting part of the book, since the issue dealt with in this section is a lively issue in India, namely, the problem of the relation between Christian faith and other faiths. In dealing with this delicate question, the author rejects as dangerous the ideas of exclusiveness on the one hand and syncretism on the other. The author unhesitatingly maintains the uniqueness of Christ and the universality of the redemptive work of Christ. At the same time the author believes that Christ's salvific power operates beyond the boundaries of the Christian Church. How salvation in Christ is made available to the millions who live outside the Christian fold is the problem to which an adequate solution is yet to be found. Two possible solutions are carefully and critically analysed, namely, the fulfilment theory and the theory of the presence of Christ in world religions. The author's contribution lies in his attempt to bring the two streams closer to each other.

The epilogue on "The Holy Spirit and Evangelism" is a significant contribution to missiology.

I have no doubt that the reader of this book will be greatly rewarded. He will have a pleasant peep into the theological resurgence taking place in the Catholic Church, initiated by Vatican II. He will find new insights into God's working as he is led to reflect upon the relation of the Christian faith and other faiths. This book will no doubt stimulate the reader for further reflection on the relevance of the Christian faith in the Indian context.

V. P. THOMAS

Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam

Christian Life and Work at the Pastorate Level and Practical Theology in South India: by Roland Gierth. C.L.S., Madras, 1977. Pp. x+396. Price Rs 15.

This book is the published version of a doctoral thesis submitted by the author to the Faculty of Theology of Fredrich-Auremberg, West Germany, in 1975. An earlier version, based on work done by the author during his 11 month stay in India in 1973-74, was submitted to the United Theological College, Bangalore, for the Post-Graduate Diploma in 1974. The doctoral thesis, completed during

1974-75 while the author served as an assistant at the seminary for missiology of the Erlangen-Nuremberg University, is essentially an elaboration of the earlier version. Apparently no changes in the doctoral thesis were made before publication except for the addition of a seven page appendix dealing with materials which came to the author's attention after completion of the thesis. This is unfortunate since careful revision and editing would have given the book greater coherence and readability. According to the dust-cover the author, at the time of publication, was serving as a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria.

Elsewhere in India this volume has already been reviewed and favourable comments have been made about its value for the study of Indian Practical Theology.¹ The author's sympathetic concern for strengthening practical theology in India is obvious. He has managed, in a relatively short period of time, to study several pastorates and discuss a fairly wide range of materials already available in the field of Indian practical theology. This information will be of interest to a number of lay persons; especially those in the pastorates studied, and a useful source for the more serious student.

However, the volume, which is divided into four parts, is not without its problems. The absence of a sufficient focus is indicated by the author's objectives which are stated in the introduction as being (1) "to give some reliable information on the life of this Church" (the C.S.I.); (2) "to give a rather comprehensive and systematic evaluation" of Indian practical theology or pastoralia; (3) "to see the relation from the various parts of theology and from practical theology in particular to church life and vice versus"; (4) "to provide a study which would be an actual help for the Church" by helping to improve weaknesses and strengthen Church life and theology, and (5) "to enable some interested Christians in Germany and elsewhere to learn something from the C.S.I." The discerning reader will immediately note that the first and fifth objectives suffer from extreme vagueness ("some" and "something" are undefined); the second merits a complete study alone; the third is extremely broad and would require coverage of all theological disciplines as well as "church life," and the fourth should be a by-product of a well-designed study in any of these areas. The vagueness, generality, and breadth of the objectives suggest that too much has been attempted, with too little direction.

Following the introduction is a 183 page report on the author's study of 16 pastorates in the Bangalore and Kolar Gold Fields areas of the Karnataka Central Diocese of the Church of South India. This part is virtually a reproduction of material from his U.T.C. thesis, except for occasional slight modifications and the inclusion of three

¹ See, e.g., the review by A. C. Dharmaraj in the *National Christian Council Review*, Vol. XCII, Nos. 6-7 (June-July, 1978), pp. 334-36.

additional pastorates. The author discusses, among other things, the history, leadership and programme of each pastorate. His data were gathered largely through being a participant-observer in the pastorates during his 11 months in India and through talking with leaders—specially the pastors. This field study report is quite readable, being written in semi-popular, almost autobiographical style. The historical sections especially will be of interest to persons in the diocese.

Unfortunately, the author has concentrated his field study exclusively on urban pastorates—thirteen are from Bangalore, a city of approximately 20 lakhs, and the other three are from Kolar Gold Fields, an area which has often been described as an industrialized township. Not one rural pastorate was studied, even though the majority of South Indian Christians live in villages. The author justifies this omission on the basis of difficulties in “transportation connections,” limitation of time, and the existence of studies on rural Christianity in South India. Nevertheless, the author frequently tends to make generalization for all of the C.S.I., conveniently ignoring the limited character of his data and failing to provide other satisfactory grounds for such generalizations. At times Giertz is frank in acknowledging some of his limitations and, on the basis of his field studies, makes a number of oft-repeated suggestions for strengthening Church life—but he does not go far enough. Empirical studies of both rural and urban congregations are greatly needed to enlarge our understanding of contemporary Christianity in India, but a much more rigorous methodology will need to be followed if such studies are to yield representative and reliable data which will serve as a solid base for understanding the present and planning for the future.

The third part of the volume consists of a 173 page survey of publications in “Indian practical theology” followed by a 17 page bibliography. Whereas the second part deals with selected pastorates within a single diocese of the C.S.I., this section has a much wider framework and considers materials from both the C.S.I. and other sources. Materials dealt with are from such areas as Church administration, counselling, Christian education, social service, homiletics and Christian worship. Within these subject areas Giertz considers materials which are either (i) written by an Indian and published in India, or (ii) written by a missionary and published in India, or (iii) foreign but edited in India, or (iv) written by an Indian or a missionary with experience in India but published abroad, or (v) foreign but distributed in large numbers in India and whose influence he was able to “prove.”

It is this third section which contains the basic modification of the author's U.T.C. thesis—a 68 page discussion of “Indian practical theology” has been elaborated into a 173 page discussion. Giertz provides a useful short survey of historical studies of the C.S.I. He

has brought together a wide variety of materials related to practical theology, and tends to criticize theological writings outside of practical theology as impractical. At points his discussion has a number of useful insights, and his bibliography may serve as a handy starting point to students wishing to explore any of these areas further. However, as the author freely admits, the survey is limited to materials in English; no effort has been made to consider materials in other languages of India, and the author himself acknowledges that he has probably not dealt with much more than 30 per cent of the English language materials. Nevertheless, he claims that "all important publications are actually discussed in this thesis." In view of the magnitude of the material omitted, one cannot help but wonder at the audacity of this categorical claim.

This volume is marred by a number of errors which one is surprised to find in a doctoral thesis. We are told, for example, (1) that Union Biblical Seminary, Yeotmal, is located in the state of Madhya Pradesh (rather than Maharashtra); (2) that the Rev. Roy Pape was "a good Anglican from England" (he was a British *Methodist* missionary); (3) that Dr F. G. Muliyl is a professor at U.T.C. (he retired in 1962); (4) that in India reconversion to Hinduism "does *not* play *any* role except in some disturbed areas of Andhra Pradesh" (italics added); (5) that "there is just one publication from a church institution" on family planning. (No mention is made, for example, of the important work of the Christian Medical Association of India in this area; its Family Planning Project, begun in 1966, has continuously had its national headquarters in Bangalore, the city where Gierth resided during his 11 month stay in India); and (6) that North East India is only 200 kms. from South India.

It also appears that Gierth frequently takes refuge in ambiguities and makes generalisations beyond those warranted by his data. For example, in the discussion of his field studies, he often refers to a certain portion of a congregation—such as 50 per cent, or 30 per cent, or 15 per cent—as being from a particular social class or holding a particular view. However, he does not provide *any* data to show the basis for these percentages; one is therefore left with the impression that these are his own rough estimates which may not be very reliable. At another point Gierth notes that at a large urban church in Bangalore the *total* giving was larger than at some other urban churches. Then without any actual examination of the relative financial capacities of different congregations he proceeds to commend this congregation, in comparison with others, for its "very good example of Christian stewardship." The actual average per member giving was Rs 1.50 per *month*; other data known to this reviewer indicates that the per family income in this congregation is in the range of Rs 300 to Rs 1,500 per *month*. By what criteria Gierth judges their giving to be "excellent" is not at all clear. Again, even though he made no attempt to survey practical theology literature available in the vernacular,

Gierth apparently has no hesitation in making the unqualified assertion that "special services for village folks have obviously completely disappeared." Since any such services would be virtually always in the vernacular, it is incomprehensible how Gierth can conclude there are no such services when he has limited himself to English materials. Had he investigated vernacular materials, which would be the proper way of finding out what is available for village congregations, he would have found that such services do exist.

Two final points. Firstly, Gierth obviously has much sympathy for the Christian community in India, but this sympathy does not extend to those outside the Christian fold. Parents of non-Christian children are referred to as "pagan parents"; the environment in which the Indian Christian lives is regarded as a "pagan environment," and non-Christian civil officials are referred to as "pagan" officials. He shows little appreciation of attempts to nurture indigenous forms of worship; these are to him but ways of bringing into the Church aspects of the surrounding "pagan" environment which will serve to hinder the Christian mission. Second, there are certain other elements of style which will probably be disconcerting to the serious reader. Much of the volume is written as a personal commentary on what the author found with evaluative judgements being frequently offered without the criteria for judgement being specified. He has a tendency to become repetitious and admonitory. Surprisingly, quite a number of pages are but shortened versions of research already done by others. Gierth states that he "was not able to get hold of" books such as Marcus Ward's *The Pilgrim Church: An Account of the First Five Years in the Life of the Church of South India* (1953), and R.D. Paul's *The First Decade: An Account of the Church of South India* (1958). One wonders why: copies of these books were available in the library of the United Theological College when Gierth was residing there. Similarly, in his bibliography Gierth lists a large number of books as "not available." It is not clear what he means for at least some of these books were available in the U.T.C. library. Lastly, there is no index.

All in all, this is a rather mixed work. Parts of it will be of interest to the layman in the Karnataka Central Diocese, and parts of it will be useful starting points for students wishing to do further work in this area. However, Gierth has attempted to do too much and his level of scholarship cannot be taken as a standard. His work will have served a useful purpose if it stimulates more adequate research in practical theology in India, and it is to be hoped that if other persons are tempted to elaborate their post-graduate theses and submit them for doctoral degrees, the examiners will be more rigorous.

HUNTER P. MABRY

United Theological College, Bangalore

The First Followers of Jesus—A Sociological Analysis of the Earliest Christianity: by Gerd Theissen. S.C.M. Press, London, 1978. Pp. xii+131. Price. £ 2.50.

The "intrusion" of sociology into New Testament spheres has raised a number of objections. As the author points out, the legitimacy of such an approach is more often called in question than its feasibility. It is true that sociology "covers only general patterns, and leaves the individual out of account" (p. 4). Natural enough also is the suspicion that sociology is out to reduce religious phenomena to non-religious. However, Prof. Theissen in his investigation into the interaction between the "Jesus movement," during the first forty years of its existence, and the tense social situation in Palestine is fully aware of the limitations of his procedure. He points out that whilst it is generally true that sociology cannot explain everything about the structure and dynamism of early Christianity one should not underestimate the importance of the universal and typical. Furthermore, whilst reminding the reader that there is a distinction between origin and validity (the genetic fallacy) in whatever causal conclusions sociology may draw from the evidence, he is not satisfied with a "one-sided causal derivation of religious phenomena from social facts" since this is both an "improbable" interpretation of the facts and "it is more satisfactory to assume an interaction between the two (p. 2)."

There is another serious limitation in a sociology of the Jesus movement of which the author is also aware. The question of whether or not Prof. Theissen's study is a viable one ultimately depends on the source material available:

Unfortunately, this source material is scanty and difficult to use; there are disputes over the way in which it should be interpreted and it can hardly be said to have had an interest in communicating data for sociology (p. 2).

Whatever information the author is able to extract is by the admittedly dangerous process of inference for which he distinguishes three different procedures—"constructive conclusions," "analytical conclusions" and "comparative conclusions."

Prof. Theissen's book is arranged in four main parts. The introduction takes the form of a methodology for a sociology of the Jesus movement, clearly setting out the salient points of procedure. He omits a statement of his thesis, allowing the prefaces to each of the three major sections—analysis of roles, analysis of factors, analysis of function—to unfold the development of his argument gradually. Whilst it may have been desirable to have the statement at the beginning with the methodology, the clarity with which he offers his presuppositions, hypotheses, restatement of methodological principles, and procedure before each section is nevertheless highly commendable.

In Part One—Analysis of Roles—the author views the internal structure of the Jesus movement with reference to the “wandering charismatics” as the prime bearers of earliest Christianity in relationship to the local communities of “sympathisers,” and Jesus, “the transcendent bearer of revelation” (p. 7). The form of discussion here is dictated by the three methodological procedures mentioned above.

“Analysis of Factors” distinguishes socio-economic, socio-ecological, socio-political and socio-cultural influences requiring consideration in a study of the “reciprocal interaction between Jewish society in Palestine and the Jesus movement” (p. 31). One is reminded that primarily attention is on the prefix “socio” since

... the factors under investigation do not have an immediate effect on human behaviour, but make their impact through the “totality” of social interconnections (p. 31).

It is an apt note of realism. The criticism that the isolation of economic, ecological etc., as factors is an artificial procedure would take on a seriousness were Prof. Theissen’s method to allow him to conjecture too hasty conclusions regarding cause and effect thereby. What his method preserves, however, is a fine awareness that cause-effect relations in reality are never so obvious as they are on the sociologist’s paper.

Each analysis of factor is further broken down into a discussion of the phenomenon itself, analogies from contemporary Judaism, “intentions” meaning the deliberate attitudes adopted towards social conditioning, and concluding with an analysis of causes. Further reluctance on Prof. Theissen’s part concerning social causes is due to his sensitivity to the limited and indirect nature of his sources, forcing upon him a heavy reliance on analogies with which to back up his argument. This inevitably involves a demonstration that “the phenomena associated with the Jesus movement cannot be brought into a direct association with their social causes” (p. 32).

What is striking about the analogies drawn is that very often they do not fit. Support for the statement, “the programmes of all the renewal movements suggest a detachment from the Hellenistic cities and an ambivalent towards Jerusalem” (p. 50) is forthcoming from Qumran, the Zealots, and the Jesus movement “at first.” “Nevertheless, their attitude towards the neighbouring city states was unlike that of other renewal movements.” The positive character of missions into Samaria and Syria at an early date, the note that Tyre and Sidon would repent before Bethsaida and Chorazin (Matt. 11:20 ff.), reminiscences from the Old Testament (the Widow of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian, (Lk. 4:24 ff.) were very different from the prevailing attitudes in other renewal movements. Moreover,

the open attitude towards the Hellenistic cities modified the attitude of the Jesus movement towards Jerusalem: Jerusalem was regarded as the destination of the eschatological pilgrimage of all nations (pp. 51f.).

Again,

whereas opposition to foreign rule is unmistakable in the eschatology of prophetic movements, resistance fighters and Essenes, such a context played only an indirect part in the case of the Jesus movement (p. 62).

These breaks in analogy have something important to say for the elucidation of the character of earliest Christianity, and is further taken up in the final part—Analysis of Function.

No treatment of a sociology of the Jesus movement would be complete without recognising that

the connections between social reality and spiritual phenomena is to be seen not only as the effect of a situation on the movement but also as the response of the movement to that situation (p. 32).

Prof. Theissen further notes that

an analysis of religious phenomena cannot ignore religious self-understanding and its awareness of its own autonomy . . . an analysis of the effects of religious phenomena cannot be identical with an analysis of the factors which condition them since as a result of these religious phenomena new elements come into play which cannot be derived from the conditioning factors (p. 98).

The truth of such a statement emerges slowly but powerfully from the book. The failing of much of New Testament scholarship has been in a too one-sided interpretation of early Christianity as "*Jewish Christianity*." But from an appreciation of the stormy crisis which Jewish society was facing Prof. Theissen takes the reader to the point where Christianity's distinctive contribution to a viable solution becomes obvious. This is a significant addition to one's understanding of the origin of Christianity.

When the author proclaims almost ecstatically, "without question this is something tremendous, unique" (p. 110), he is discovering the uniqueness of the Christian faith in what must be its proper place—according to the measure of relevance to its social context. When he sums up thus:

A small group of outsiders experimented with a vision of love and reconciliation in a society which had been put out of joint, suffering from an excess of tensions, pressures and forms of aggression, in order to renew this society from within (p. 110)

it is neither the sociologist nor the New Testament scholar who is speaking. This does nothing less than punch home to the sensitive Church member—not so much the academician—the fact that the Christian's responsibility is to work from *within* society to renew it, through participation in the local Jesus movement whose obligation to speak to social crises is not one yod or tittle less now than it was then.

Whether this short book is meant for the sociologist, biblical scholar or whomever is uncertain. Nonetheless, it has enormous possibilities and is not without interest for all categories of person. Its very able sketching of the social situation in Palestine between A.D. 30 and 40 captures the desperation of crisis—or “anomie,” existential lostness, as Emile Durkheim had called it—something of which is found in every culture where the present day Jesus movement exists. It remains as a challenge to it.

S. ANDREW MORTON

United Theological College, Bangalore

The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis: by William R. Farmer.
Western North Carolina Press, Dillsboro, North Carolina, 1976.
Pp. 308. Price \$ 12.95.

In 1964 a book bearing the title *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* and written by W. R. Farmer was published by Collier-Macmillan (London). It is surprising that another book with the same title and written by the same author be published in 1976 by another publisher without any indication at the beginning or at least in the Preface as to whether it is a new book or a reprint (with or without modifications) of the old. The Preface in the 1976 publication is dated “December 18, 1963” and says nothing about an earlier publication with the same title. The mystery, however, is resolved when the reader comes to page 228 where Dr Farmer refers to “the first printing of this book” but does not mention its date or publisher. This, so far as the present reviewer could notice, is the only indication that *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* of 1976 is a second printing of Dr Farmer's earlier book of 1964. But this is a reprint presumably with some changes, at least one of which is noted by the author on page 228. As the earlier edition is not accessible to the present reviewer attention cannot be drawn to any other changes, if any, in the reprint.

This book both in its first print in 1964 and the present reprint of 1976 contains plenty of fresh material and argumentation and is a

positive contribution to the study of the so-called Synoptic Problem and one which can have far reaching consequences in the disciplines of Source Criticism, Textual Criticism and Biblical (New Testament) Theology. May be it is because of this suspicion that since its first publication in 1964 it has not been given the attention and publicity it deserves. It has generally featured in parentheses and footnotes in scholarly works related to the subject. The emergence of this book must be considered against the background of recent scholarly opinions about the solutions to the Synoptic Problem.

Since the publication of B. H. Streeter's *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd.) in 1924 the study of the Synoptic Problem has been conditioned and even eclipsed by Streeter's advocacy of the "Two Document Hypothesis" (i.e. that Mark, or as Streeter would say, "a source which in content, in order, and in wording must have been practically identical with Mark [p. 168], and 'Q' were the two basic sources used by Matthew and Luke) and his elaboration of it into the "Four Document Hypothesis" (i.e. that Mark, Q, M and L are the four basic sources behind the composition of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke [pp. 227-70]). One of the most important results of Streeter's work has been the consolidation of the assumption of the "priority of Mark" over Matthew and Luke implying the dependence of Matthew and Luke in content, in wording, and in order on Mark's Gospel, and also of the assumption that 'Q' was the other primitive source used by Matthew and Luke. The confidence that modern scholars have placed in these assumptions is evident from such a statement as R. H. Fuller's "Despite the continuing attacks upon it, the two source theory may be regarded as one of the assured results of modern criticism, which has proved very fruitful both for historical reconstruction and for exegesis" (*A Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, London: G. Duckworth, reprint with corrections, 1971, p. 81).

The hypothesis of Marcan Priority has become the almost unquestionable presupposition to reconstruction of theology in the New Testament. Thus R. Bultmann in *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. I (London: SCM, 1952) states: "The synoptic gospels are the source for Jesus' message. Their use as history is governed by the so-called two-source theory: i.e., Mark (which we know, however, only in a later redaction) is one source of Matthew and Luke; the other is a collection of Jesus' sayings (Q)" (p. 3). Or, take the case of J. Jeremias who in his *New Testament Theology*, Part I (London: S.C.M., 1971) setting out for the reader "the view of literary criticism that has been presupposed in this work" argues that Mark's Gospel "is the earliest of the four canonical gospels" and that "Mark formed the basis of the other two synoptic gospels" (p. 37).

The fact that this presupposition to reconstruction of theology in the New Testament is acknowledged as such in scholarly works on "New Testament Theology" shows that such an assumption (i.e. some positive solution to the Synoptic Problem) is vital to interpreting

the Gospels and to reconstructing theology or theologies in the New Testament. This also means that a different solution to the Synoptic Problem from that based on the hypothesis of Marcan Priority and 'Q' will lead to a different interpretation of the material in the Synoptic Gospels, and therefore to a different "biblical theology." Hence the significance of source criticism of the Gospels and the need for arriving at a near decisive or definitive solution to the Synoptic Problem (R.H. Fuller in his *Critical Introduction to the New Testament* referred to above says: "B.H. Streeter's work *The Four Gospels*, 1924, is still definitive." F.n. p. 70). We can also say that if and when the widely accepted "Two Document Hypothesis" (or the "Four Document Hypothesis") is replaced by some other and more convincing solution to the Synoptic Problem a good deal of biblical theology will have to be re-written. That may be one of the reasons why New Testament scholarships have generally been slow and whispering in questioning the so-called "assured results" of source criticism. Adjustments will also have to be made in the discipline and the results of Textual Criticism since the hypothesis of Marcan Priority has also secured a place in the "basic criteria and considerations to be taken into account in evaluating variant readings." (See Bruce M. Metzger's *The Text of the New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1968, p. 210. Also see his *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, London and New York: U.B.S., 1971, p. xxviii.)

The "Two Document Hypothesis," however, has not gone on unchallenged. The logical fallacy involved in the argument for the priority of Mark based on the order common to the Synoptic Gospels in common material was exposed by H. G. Jameson as early as 1922 (i.e. about 3 years after B. H. Streeter had also advocated this hypothesis in his article on the Synoptic Problem in the 1919 edition of Peake's Commentary) in *The Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (Oxford, 1922). Streeter, however, in his later *magnum opus* (still claimed to be "definitive") seems to have taken no notice of Jameson's refutation of the "Two Document Hypothesis." About this Dr W. R. Farmer in his book under review remarks:

Streeter's refusal to acknowledge the serious and responsible work of Jameson, in which the logical fallacy of Streeter's arguments had been exposed, constitutes in the history of the Synoptic Problem the single and most unparalleled act of academic bravado on record (p. 152).

Jameson is not the only one who has questioned the soundness or the necessity of the "Two Document Hypothesis" as an acceptable solution to the Synoptic Problem. B. C. Butler in his *The Originality of St. Matthew: A Critique of the Two-Document Hypothesis* (Cambridge, 1951) attacked both the "Q" hypothesis and the hypothesis of Marcan Priority. Pierson Parker in his *The Gospel Before Mark* (Chicago, 1953) suggests that the present Mark (in its Greek Form)

is a translation from an abridgement of an Aramaic gospel which contained material similar to a combination of the present Mark and the material peculiar to Matthew. That Aramaic Gospel he denotes by the symbol 'K'. Thus not the present Mark but the Aramaic 'K' is prior to Matthew as well as to Mark. He finds some evidence to support the 'Q' hypothesis. Hugo Meynell in his article entitled "The Synoptic Problem: Some Unorthodox Solutions" in *Theology* (Vol. LXX, No. 567, Sept. 1967, pp. 386-97) recognising "The insuperable difficulties of the hypothesis that Mark depends on Matthew, and almost equal difficulties . . . of Matthew's dependence on Mark" (p. 390) decides in favour of Pierson Parker's suggestion with one modification:

that when Matthew and Luke became known in Rome, which had been previously familiar with a version of Mark differing from ours in order but hardly if at all in content, the order of this version was rearranged to tally with that of Matthew and Luke whenever they agreed (p. 396).

In *Studies in the Gospels* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955) edited by D. E. Nineham, in a chapter entitled "On Dispensing with Q" (pp. 55-86) A.M. Farrer sets out a damaging critique of the 'Q' hypothesis. G. M. Styler, who in an Excursus on "The Priority of Mark" in C.F.D. Moule's *The Birth of the New Testament* (London: A and C Black, 1962, pp. 223-32) himself shares the view that the hypothesis of Marcan Priority "is in fact securely grounded" (p. 224), and in this Excursus defends that hypothesis, admits that Butler is correct in claiming that the advocates of the Marcan Priority Hypothesis "are guilty of a fallacy in reasoning" (p. 225). There are also those scholars who though not fully convinced by the arguments supporting the "Two Document Hypothesis" accept it because other alternatives are even less convincing. A. W. Argyle, for instance, accepts the hypotheses of 'Q' and the Marcan Priority but adds: "Nevertheless the Q hypothesis is very far from having been proved" (*The Gospel According to Matthew*, Cambridge: The University Press, 1963, p. 14).

It was in such a climate of increasing doubts about some aspect or the other of the "Two Document Hypothesis" that Dr W. R. Farmer's book *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* first appeared in 1964 published by Collier-Macmillan, London. It offered a fresh and comprehensive critique of the "Two Document Hypothesis" and revived the old Augustinian hypothesis in a modified form arguing for the priority of Matthew and suggesting the order: Matthew-Luke-Mark. (This same order was earlier advocated by T. Zahn, A. Schlatter and others). As Dr Farmer's book questioned the long established assumptions it received little notice in scholarly works except in footnotes, generally:

D. Guthrie, in a footnote on page 186 in his *New Testament Introduction* (London: Tyndale Press, 1970) assessing the positive contribution of Dr Farmer's book says: "Nevertheless the appearance of this book is a salutary reminder that the last word has not yet been said about Marcan priority."

R. C. Briggs, in a footnote on page 60 in his *Interpreting the Gospels* (New York: Abingdon, 1969), referring to Dr Farmer's argument for the Matthaean Priority writes: "Although Farmer's thesis raises important issues, it has not won the approval of the majority of New Testament scholars."

The only two substantial critiques of Dr Farmer's arguments known to the present reviewer are F. W. Beare's article in *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. LXXXIV, 1965, pp. 295-97, and Hugo Meynell's article in *Theology*, LXX, No. 567, Sept. 1967, pp. 386-97. Meynell who himself prefers P. Parker's solution to Dr Farmer's acknowledges "the relevant observations of Butler, Farmer and Parker" and admits that there has been "no serious attempt to contest them" (p. 390).

The result of some of the studies on the Synoptic Problem mentioned above and particularly Dr W. R. Farmer's *Synoptic Problem* of 1964 has been that the grounds of the hypotheses of 'Q' and of Marcan Priority as established in the "Two Document Hypothesis" by B. H. Streeter and others are being increasingly doubted and New Testament scholars are more open to the possibility of a new solution to the Synoptic Problem. The Synoptic Problem stands reopened for further exploration and Dr Farmer's earlier book on the subject and also its republication by Western North Carolina Press, North Carolina, in 1976 is an invitation to the reader to have a fresh look at the Synoptic Problem and to further research towards discovering a more satisfactory solution to it. This effect of Dr Farmer's work is clearly reflected in recent scholarly writings, though often in parentheses or footnotes as mentioned above.

David Wenham in his article entitled "Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower" in *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3, April 1974, p. 299, writes:

Whatever else W. R. Farmer and others like him have achieved by their arguments for Matthaean Priority, they have at least convinced many scholars that the Synoptic Problem is still a problem. The arguments for the Two-Document Hypothesis are not unambiguous as has often been thought; and even if most scholars feel that the hypothesis remains the simplest explanation of the phenomena that has yet been proposed, the case is far from being proved, and there is ample scope for further study.

The following words from Dr J. A. T. Robinson's *Redating the New Testament* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1976, p. 93) aptly describe the academic climate prevailing around the Synoptic Problem today:

This is not the place to become involved in the Synoptic problem for its own sake. It is also a time when the state of opinion with regard to it is more fluid than it has been for fifty years. The consensus frozen by the success of the "fundamental solution" propounded by Streeter has begun to show signs of cracking. Though this is still the dominant hypothesis, incapsulated in the text books, its conclusions can no longer be taken for granted as among the "assured results" of biblical criticism. It is far too early yet to say what new patterns or modifications of older patterns will establish themselves.

Dr Robinson asks for "a suspension of former dogmatisms" in the matter and for an "admission that none of the various hypotheses so confidently advanced as overall solutions may satisfy all facts." He further quotes E. P. Sanders' conclusion from his careful study, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969, p. 278 f.) advocating a similar mental attitude and expressing the view that

... when and if a new view of the Synoptic problem becomes accepted, it will be more flexible and complicated than the two-document hypothesis.

Among the recent studies on the Synoptic Problem, Dr W. R. Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* (North Carolina, 1976) is the most revealing and hopeful contribution. "The Synoptic Problem is difficult but not necessarily insoluble" (p. 199).

In this book (and it is now available to those who lost the opportunity of possessing its earlier publication in 1964) Dr Farmer not only revives the hypothesis of Matthaen Priority but in the first five chapters of the book exposes what he calls "the anatomy of consensus" that built up around Streeter's treatment of the "Two Document Hypothesis." This most revealing part of the book (supplemented also by Appendix B, pp. 286-93) places before the reader that aspect of the history of the "success" of the "Two Document Hypothesis" which had hitherto not been set out by anyone in so compact and readable a form. In Chapter VI Dr Farmer spells out his main thesis in sixteen progressive "Steps" advocating the priority of Matthew and the sequence: Matthew-Luke-Mark, supported by his evidence and reasoning. This chapter with the title "A New Introduction to the Problem," he hopes, "in some modified form, may serve as a beginner's manual for a study of the Synoptic Problem" (p. viii). There is much in this chapter to justify such a hope. We set out below these 16 "Steps" or theses as stated by Dr Farmer:

1. The similarity between Matthew, Mark, and Luke is such as to justify the assertion that they stand in some kind of literary relationship to one another.
2. There are eighteen and only eighteen fundamental ways in which three documents, among which there exists some kind of direct literary dependence, may be related to one another.
3. While it is possible to conceive of an infinite number of variations of these eighteen basic relationships by positing additional hypothetical documents, these eighteen should be given first consideration.
4. Only six out of eighteen basic hypothetical arrangements are viable.
5. There are isolable and objectively definable categories of literary phenomena which have played a prominent role in the history of the Synoptic Problem which when properly understood are more readily explicable when Mark is placed third than when either Matthew or Luke is placed third.
6. The phenomena of agreement and disagreement in the respective order and content of material in each of the Synoptic Gospels constitutes a category of Literary phenomena which is more readily explicable on a hypothesis where Mark is regarded as third with Matthew and Luke before him than on any other alternative hypothesis.
7. The Minor Agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark constitute a second category of literary phenomena which is more readily explicable on a hypothesis where Mark is regarded as third with Matthew and Luke before him than on any other alternative hypothesis.
8. There exists a positive correlation between agreement in order and agreement in wording among the Synoptic Gospels which is most readily explicable on the hypothesis that Mark was written after Matthew and Luke and is the result of a redactional procedure in which Mark made use of both Matthew and Luke.
9. It is possible to understand the redactional process through which Mark went, on the hypothesis that he composed his Gospel based primarily on Matthew and Luke.
10. The most probable explanation for the extensive agreement between Matthew and Luke is that the author of one made use of the work of the other.
11. The hypothesis that Luke made use of Matthew is in accord with Luke's declaration in the prologue to his Gospel concerning his purpose in writing.

12. Assuming that there is direct literary dependence between Matthew and Luke, internal evidence indicates that the direction of dependence is that of Luke upon Matthew.
13. The weight of external evidence is against the hypothesis that Matthew was written after Luke.
14. The weight of external evidence is against the hypothesis that Matthew was written after Mark.
15. That Mark was written after both Matthew and Luke is in accord with the earliest and best external evidence on the question.
16. A historico-critical analysis of the Synoptic tradition, utilising both literary-historical and form-critical canons of criticism, supports a hypothesis which recognises that Matthew is in many respects secondary to the life situation of Jesus, and the primitive Palestinian Christian community, but that this Gospel was nonetheless copied by Luke, and that Mark was secondary to both Matthew and Luke, and frequently combined their respective texts.

However tidy, attractive and cumulatively forceful this "web of argumentation" (Dr Farmer's own description, p. 202) may appear to be, it is not without its weaknesses. We shall mention three:

- (a) The thesis that Matthew is the prior and basic source behind the other two of the Synoptic Gospels is simple and can be a probable explanation of a great deal of the Synoptic literary phenomena as Dr Farmer has shown. But with an awareness of some of the points raised and solutions proposed by other scholars the reader is left with the uneasy feeling that Dr Farmer's is too simplistic a solution to be true and that it certainly goes against the grain of E. P. Sanders' projection mentioned above that "when and if a new view of the Synoptic problem becomes accepted, it will be more flexible and complicated than the tidy two-document hypothesis." This is not so much a problem of Dr Farmer's work as of the reader, possibly a hangover of his Streetarian upbringing, but is not unrelated to the conclusions Dr Farmer has so neatly stated.
- (b) Dr Farmer's argument in theses (5), (6), (7) and (8) that because certain literary phenomena are "more readily explicable" on the hypothesis that Mark was written after Matthew and Luke therefore Mark is later than the other two is not conclusive. This with theses (12 and 13) places the Matthaean Priority hypothesis in a better position than the Marcan Priority hypothesis only *relatively* and not *absolutely* and is therefore inconclusive for deciding *absolutely* in favour of Matthaean Priority. **The**

difference between the ability of two hypotheses to explain a literary phenomenon "more readily" or "less readily" is a difference of degree determinable by the subjective judgement of the observer, and may even be a matter of opinion.

- (c) In thesis (11) Dr Farmer's assertion that Luke made use of Matthew is in accord with Luke's declaration in the prologue to his Gospel seems to go beyond the evidence of Lk. 1: 1-4, and the exegesis of Luke's use of *diegesis* offered by Dr Farmer on pp. 221-23. Dr Farmer agrees with Lessing in interpreting *diegesis* as referring to a "single narrative" but identifies it with Matthew rather than with the Gospel of the Nazarenes which he regards "highly conjectural" (p. 222). After giving his explanation of this thesis (No. 11) all he can say is that "it is quite possible" that the Gospel of Matthew was in his mind, and in the minds of those for whom he had prepared his work (p. 223). But this is far from having been proved. This particular thesis does not stand on its own legs; it needs theses (12), (13) and (16) for its support and therefore by itself is not so supportive of the argument for the Matthaean Priority as might be assumed.

These criticisms may not be serious enough to weaken Dr Farmer's main thesis and the reader may find them already dealt with in the book. The reader may even feel convinced that the "web of evidence" and the "web of argumentation" created by Dr Farmer, after all, do "constitute a supportive basis that will bear the full weight of the conclusion: 'It is historically probable that Mark was written after Matthew and Luke and was dependent upon both.'" (p. 202). A student of the Synoptic Problem will find studying Dr Farmer's book *The Synoptic Problem* (1976) very rewarding.

PRITAM B. SANTRAM
Bishop's College, Calcutta

The Search for Salvation: by D. F. Wells. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1978. Pp. 176. Price £ 2.65.

In this concise, logically structured and very readable book, the Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Illinois, U.S.A. seeks to guide students through the maze of modern interpretations of "salvation."

If at times the map achieves clarity at the expense of over-simplification, or appears to give a rather flattened two-dimensional image of multi-dimensioned reality, this is no more than a warning to the

user of the limitations of all maps. No one pretends that the sights and sounds and smells of a city, or the depths of human suffering and the heights of fortitude, hope and self-sacrifice of its citizens are conveyed by an official street map. But for all that it remains a useful pointer to the areas that should be explored personally, and on foot.

So, before he sets out on his own investigations, the reader will find in this book a helpful introduction to the issues raised in modern discussion of the concept of salvation, and an analysis of the main schools of interpretation. Nygren, Aulén, Brunner and Barth are made to speak for neo-orthodoxy, Bultmann and Tillich for the existentialists, whilst Cox, Robinson and Altizer represent the secularists. Liberation theology is the subject of chapter five, and recent Roman Catholic theology is allowed nineteen (!) pages in chapter six.

Clearly, the North American Protestant context in which the author writes is also responsible for the space given to Cox and Altizer. Wells admits that their contribution is comparatively insubstantial (p. 104), but one wonders if they will merit much more than a footnote 25 years from now. Time will also tell if Schillebeeckx should have more than the passing mention (p. 159) that he enjoys at present.

But such criticisms should not be allowed to detract from the very positive values of this survey. In the first place, analysis of basic trends through discussion of major figures is complemented by indication of the place of minor ones, and frequent reference is given in the voluminous but unobtrusive notes to material for further study. In the second place, the whole book is written from an evangelical perspective which provides the basis for the concise evaluations given at the end of each chapter. Readers unfamiliar with conservative evangelical theology will find the first chapter of the book informative, and those predisposed towards it will note the author's observation (pp. 39 ff., 173) that concern for faithful exegesis and its summary in right doctrine is no substitute for wrestling with theological application. For, if one may be pardoned for using a metaphor twice, the user of doctrinal maps, however impeccable their origin, also has to risk getting his feet muddy.

PHILIP N. HILLYER

Bishop's College, Calcutta

Three Mile an Hour God: by Kosuke Koyama. S.C.M. Press, London, 1979. Pp. viii+146. Price £ 2.95.

Dr Kosuke Koyama has established a place for himself with his *Waterbuffalo Theology* and other books. The book under review is a collection of brief pieces (some are under two pages long) which were presumably delivered regularly as sermons or addresses. These have been gathered under the headings "Life Deepening," "World Meeting," "Nation Searching," "Justice Insisting."

There are certain marks which run right through the book. First, there is a lively pictorial imagination which is used to great advantage in introducing the subjects. For example, a meditation on Romans 5: 3-5 is introduced by comparing wrinkled old women in Russian churches with the stewardesses on Air New Zealand.

Secondly, the meditations are firmly rooted in the biblical perspective. The author has a gift for drawing out a basic biblical attitude through a particular text. Sometimes this passage from the particular to the general, it must be admitted, seems to owe more to the writer's imagination than to anything else, so that the interpretation verges on the allegorical. For example, God's call to Abraham to go to Canaan (Gen. 11:31) leads to the conclusion that "promised life . . . means intersected life" (p. 45). Generally, though, the touch is deft and sure.

Thirdly, the book is marked by the author's ability to relate the biblical insights he elucidates to the various societies he knows—particularly to Thailand, where he worked for many years, to New Zealand, where he lives at present, and above all to his native Japan.

Fourthly, there is throughout the book a sympathetic yet by no means uncritical relationship to the other religious traditions: indeed all religious traditions, including the Christian tradition, are judged in the light of the biblical perspectives which are being illuminated.

The book touches on many subjects, but certain themes recur again and again, for example, the true meaning of syncretism, the ambivalent nature of technology, responsible and irresponsible power. There are one or two points where a recurring theme passes over into repetition. For example, the 650,000 Koreans living in Japan occur in relation to the text "There was no place for them in the inn" on pages 114 and 126. In both cases this is followed by very similar paragraphs about the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840 and the effect of this on the Maoris of New Zealand. The 650,000 Koreans turn up again on p. 132. The repetition is no doubt due to the way in which addresses given to different audiences have been collected here. However, a little editing would not have been out of place. I also noted a number of, mostly very minor, misprints.

However, there is much to savour from being in dialogue with such a critical, imaginative and essentially Christian mind.

MICHAEL R. WESTALL
Bishop's College, Calcutta