

KING'S THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

Volume II Number 2

Autumn 1979

"Theology is about God" Discuss <i>John Austin Baker</i>	49
Changing Patterns of Old Testament Study <i>Richard Coggins</i>	57
Some Reflections on Indian Spirituality <i>Friedhelm Hardy</i>	62
Hegel, Barth and the Rationality of the Trinity <i>Lisabeth During</i>	69
BOOK REVIEWS	
REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	

BOOK REVIEWS

TEST AND INTERPRETATION. STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT PRESENTED TO MATTHEW BLACK. Edited by Ernest Best and R. McL. Wilson. Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp.xv-268. £15.

The greatness of Matthew Black as a New Testament scholar is well attested by the eminence in this field of the twenty contributors to this Festschrift presented to him on his seventieth birthday. All these essays are worth reading, some are important, some merely interesting.

No less than four of the papers are concerned with that most puzzling of the New Testament writings—the Fourth Gospel. M. De Jonge gives a valuable analysis of the place of the Beloved Disciple, his insight being complementary to the leadership of Peter. Assuming that the book is of composite authorship, he gives reasons for thinking that the Beloved Disciple passages were inserted at a late stage in the book's development, and argues (against J.A.T. Robinson) for a late date for the book because "the Jews" are described from outside as a separate body whom there is no hope of converting. No mention is made of Cullmann's view that the Beloved Disciple was in fact the author of most of the book. Raymond E. Brown suggests that the heretics condemned in the First Epistle knew the Gospel and had falsely concluded from it that God was not fully human in Jesus and that the Christian gospel has no ethical implications. This is no more than interesting speculation: we cannot be sure either of the nature or of the origin of the errors against which the Epistle was written. W.C. Van Unnik throws valuable light on the manner of Jesus's claim to Messiahship in John iv, and discusses why so much weight is placed on the Messiah's claim to "disclose all things" (verses 25 and 29). David Hill considers what resemblances can be found between Jesus and the various Messianic or quasi-Messianic prophets described by Josephus, and argues that if we find in those prophets a claim to perform miracles and a proclamation of the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God we ought not to be prevented by the "principle of dissimilarity" from believing that these were also true of Jesus.

Morna Hooker returns to the problem of the

Son of Man and asks if it is really insoluble. Sensibly starting from the sound basis that Jesus did call himself by this title and that there is no evidence that it was in current use to denote an expected eschatological figure, she asks how we can reconcile the Vermes view that it is merely a polite circumlocution for "I" with the more fashionable view that it was a Messianic title. Her conclusion that he chose the title because he identified himself with the heavenly personage of Daniel vii as including the people of God is no doubt a possible solution, but the arguments she gives for it are less than fully persuasive.

Naturally many of the contributions are concerned with textual criticism. The best are on particular texts. Ernest Best considers the problem created by the omission of the reference to Ephesus in the most trustworthy manuscripts of Ephesians i.1, let anyone who thinks he knows the solution to this enigma read this essay, and beware. Harald Riesefeld justifies the retention of *hon* in Acts x.36 and makes sense of this otherwise awkward passage by understanding 36 as in apposition to 34-5. the word which God sent to Israel was none other than the message that God does not show partiality etc. He thinks it surprising that this interpretation, to be found in Bengel's *Gnomon*, for the reading *henos de estin chreia* in Luke x.42, beyond those in the U.B.S. *Textual Commentary*, and expresses surprise that the editors of the U.B.S. Greek New Testament rated its probability so low as C.

C.K. Barrett casts grave doubt on the thesis of Menoud and Epp that the Western text of Acts shows a special anti-Judaic tendency; this text merely emphasises and exaggerates tendencies already existing in Luke-Acts. K. Aland writes a trenchant criticism of Eldon Jay Epp's article on "The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism" (*JBL* 93, 1974, 386-414). Bruce M. Metzger analyses 27 cases where Jerome discusses or mentions textual variants, from which Jerome emerges as a sagacious textual critic. He also draws attention to the rather disturbing fact that sometimes Jerome attributes a reading to "most of the ancient manuscripts" whereas it occurs in only a few of the ancient manuscripts known to us today. F.F. Bruce gives a collection of quotations

from John in Victorinus, many from memory; they are interesting as illustrating Victorinus's outlook but of no value for the textual criticism of the New Testament. N.A. Dahl gives the result of a thorough examination of a recently discovered fragment (0230) of some verses from Ephesians vi. The text appears to be of typical Egyptian fifth-century character, and the discovery does not help towards the establishment of the original text. Dahl goes into much detail on the family relationships of other bilingual manuscripts of the Epistles because he is convinced that "neither the use of computers and statistical methods nor an eclecticism based on stylistic and linguistic criteria can ever substitute for careful examination of the most important manuscripts and their prehistory." But even if we could establish the archetypes underlying the most important manuscripts, how could we adjudicate on the differences between them except by the use of stylistic and linguistic criteria? R. McL. Wilson gives an *arrabon* of his work on a collected Fayyumic version of the New Testament.

Of more general interest is Eduard Schweizer's article which ably analyses the Pauline and post-Pauline lists of vices and "house-tables". He shows that although the "house-tables" can be paralleled in Stoic literature they differ in that they apply to women, children and slaves as well as to the adult male, and deal with particular situations rather than attempt to adjust man to a cosmic moral order. He concludes with some valuable inferences from Christian ethics today. Ferdinand Hahn discusses the parable of the sower in Mark iv.3-8 and its explanation in 14-20, he does not break fresh ground, but gives a useful exposition of the present state of scholarship on these passages. He brings out the contrast between the eschatological parable, with its missionary incentive, and the explanation designed rather for the strengthening of the Church. He points out in conclusion the difficulty of distinguishing sharply between parable and allegory.

The remaining four articles are interesting but of lesser importance. Hans Dieter Betz draws a parallel and a contrast between classical Greek philosophy and the thought of Matthew vi.22-23. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, by way of background to the problem of the relation between the words *Kephas* and *Petros*, establishes that *Kephas* was in previous use as a proper name (there is evidence of this at Elephantine as far back as

416 B.C.), whereas there is no such evidence of the previous use of *Petros*. A.F.J. Klijn examines the somewhat confused patristic references to gospels written in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Syriac, and concludes that some such writings did exist, but that they did not influence the canonical gospels. Max Wilcox considers the use made of the Old Testament by the writers of the New Testament, rightly regarding the New Testament writers as handling the Scriptures from within the Haggadic tradition; somewhat inconsistently he clings to Dodd's contention that the New Testament allusions to the Old Testament should not be considered as referring just to isolated texts but should be related to the wider contexts in which those texts appear. This looks like an illegitimate transplant of modern scholarship back into the first century.

Even if some of the contributions to this important Festschrift are only of limited interest, there are many things in it which no serious student of the New Testament can afford to ignore.

J.M. Ross

PAULINE PIECES by Morna D. Hooker. Epworth, 1979. 95pp. £1.25.

We are not told, but this book looks like five or six lectures on Paul's theology given to a group of clergy or lay-preachers. That would explain its light touch and sometimes diffident manner. Here is a lucid distillate of Paul's theology as seen by a penetrating and independent-minded exegete. Judicious, sometimes illuminating—one could hardly ask for more within a compass that leaves no space for explicit argument with other scholars or detailed discussion of the relatively few textual references.

Perhaps one is asking for a larger and different book, but from an author so sharply aware of the tension between making Paul meaningful for to-day and preserving his historical distance, one could have wished for something more developed on both counts. Doubts about an older style of biblical theology have not led to a new conception of the discipline. The descriptive historical task might have been more effectively done if a wider range of concepts, familiar in the scientific study of religion, had been used for the analysis. These might in turn offer new possibilities for theological interpretation. But this short book is not intended to break new ground; anyone at home on the old will find it instructive both in the questions it raises and the solutions it offers.

Robert Morgan