

inside the back cover contains three maps of the Christian world relating to the period treated in the text.

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Hunter, Archibald M., *According to John: A New Look at the Fourth Gospel*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968. 128 pp. Paperbound \$ 1.65.

This is a deceptive little book. It has been written in the very intimate tone ("if you compare . . . you may well come to the conclusion . . ." p. 114) of a father who teaches his little children the Sabbath School lesson with some sophistication. But what is given to the innocent neophytes is sometimes not quite right. The book at one and the same time wishes to be a report of current research in Johannine studies in order to show "some remarkable and encouraging turns" (p. 9), and also to present "a new look" with some arguments of its own ("if our arguments are sound . . ." p. 88). But what Hunter presents as new arguments of his are old arguments of someone else, and what he considers settled questions he sees in that way because they have been placed within the wrong framework. He caricatures the position of scholars who are referred to as "them" (p. 29), and then finds support in other scholars who, from different perspectives, happen to agree in one general point with what he wishes to say. These he refers to as "our scholars" (pp. 30, 47).

Wishing to argue that the Fourth Gospel is "a quarry for historical facts," Hunter goes through the traditional paces, including the questioning of the historical value of Mark (pp. 63, 114). Thus if K. L. Schmidt noticed discontinuity in the narrative of Mk 1:13, 14, this is taken by Hunter to mean that "we need not hesitate to fill it [the gap] with the traditional material we have been studying. The general probability of a traditional preliminary Judean ministry of Jesus, we may fairly claim, has been established" (p. 59). The importance of establishing "general probabilities" is, however, never defended. Rather it is assumed that what has been established is the historical trustworthiness of the Johannine tradition. Whereupon by some loose handling of the word *fact*, facts of the tradition are made to be facts of history (*pace* the attempts at making distinctions on p. 74). But still when confronted with the account of the changing of water into wine, Hunter suggests that "St. John is giving us here a dominant theme of his gospel" (p. 76).

In his analysis of the parables and the sayings of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, Hunter has no difficulty in finding a "true Dominical *obiter dictum*" here and there. Not quite satisfied with that, he also wishes to use the sayings and parables to find out the way in which the mind of Jesus operated (p. 84). But for this process he sets up straw men or straw texts from the OT, as when he says, "Despite Jülicher,

some of Jesus' parables have strong allegorical elements" (p. 86), or when he builds on Is 26:17 ff. in order to establish the doctrine of the resurrection.

There is no questioning the fact that the book gives some valuable information to beginners who are unaware of the archaeological discoveries of the last forty years which have some bearing on the Fourth Gospel. But, again, as is also the case with the reporting of the philosophical currents of the first century which must inform an intelligent reading of the Gospel, the total effect serves more for caricature than for understanding. Can it really be claimed that it is actually the *philostraton* mentioned in Jn 19:13 that "can be seen and walked on" now (p. 13) ? And does it help matters to say that "neither in the rabbis nor in the Stoics was there 'any kick, any joy.' All was dull as ditchwater" (pp. 109, 110) ?

Unlike some of Hunter's other attempts to introduce a large reading public to the advances of Biblical scholarship, this book is not a reliable guide to the Gospel according to John. In fact, Hunter seems to be not at all concerned with what John is concerned with.

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Kuitert, H. M., *The Reality of Faith*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968. 213 pp. \$ 5.50.

The main task of the author's book, *The Reality of Faith*, is to focus on the antimetaphysical trend in contemporary theology, as found in existential theology. Such existentialists as Bultmann, Fuchs, Ebeling, and Gogarten are given consideration in the study. Kuitert also briefly analyzes Van Buren's neo-positivism, since it shares with existential theology a common concern for subjectivism. It becomes quite evident, as the author's study progresses nicely to a realistic and most persuasive conclusion, that he wishes to extract the best thoughts of existential theology as they are expressed in man's existence and his need to experience redemption "here" and "now." However, the weaknesses of existentialism are pointed out and could best be explained by its peculiar hermeneutics, which Kuitert discusses in his chapter, "The Problem of Hermeneutics." With keen perception Kuitert penetrates the philosophical jargon of existentialism and crystallizes the ultimate error of existential theology. Paraphrasing this theology, he says, "Faith is genuine faith only as it lets itself be founded by God Himself in the here and now; faith fails whenever it looks to what someone else in the past has said about God" (pp. 112, 113).

Whatever Kuitert may imply about existential theology, he wishes the reader to grasp the idea that there is a legitimate motive in the efforts of this theology, *i.e.*, its driving concern to *apply* the redemptive