

MacGregor, Geddes, *A Literary History of the Bible*. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1968. 400 pp. \$ 7.95.

This book covers both familiar ground and material which is generally not so well known. In the former category is the treatment of the English Bible, which occupies some two-thirds of the volume (pp. 73-81, and most of pp. 110-372). The story of Tyndale's NT, and of the Wyclif, Coverdale, Matthew, Taverner, Great, Geneva, Bishops', Douai-Rheims, King James, Revised, and other English Bibles is told once again. The richness of historical background and other allusions perhaps justifies this new treatment, as does also the fact that somewhat more than the usual attention is given to very recent Bible editions. Furthermore, this book contributes more than is commonly done to the matter of literary features. For example, ch. 33, "Conspectus of a Passage in Various English Versions" (pp. 357-372), illustrates over 50 English renderings of Heb 1: 1-4 from the late 14th century to the Jerusalem Bible of 1966.

The more unusual part of the book, however, consists of the chapters dealing with such topics as the following (before p. 110): vernacular Bible manuscripts and early printed editions (other than English); use of Scripture in the Middle Ages; medieval Hebrew scholarship; textual study and the development of Bible commentary; attitudes toward literal and figurative; and the 16th-century Biblical Renaissance. Unfortunately, such items have had to be covered rather sketchily. Nevertheless, the author has packed a wealth of useful information into this section (as indeed he has throughout the whole book). Inasmuch as the kind of material here presented would often require consultation of various sources not readily accessible to the general reader, the service rendered is particularly important.

MacGregor's book furnishes very little with which one could or should quibble. The writer provides excellent historical backgrounds for various points, and presents balanced evaluations in areas where dispute exists. His mastery of a truly large amount of significant material is outstanding. In this reviewer's opinion, the main drawback of the book (by no means a serious one) is the sketchiness of some parts of the treatment. In addition, one could raise questions on a few relatively minor points, such as the following: Why is the rich field of early German Bible manuscripts treated only very cursorily and even introduced only rather obliquely (p. 68)? Is it correct to say that "the theological teaching of the Reformers accorded with the dictum of Cyprian (d. 258) that 'he cannot have God as his Father who has not the Church for his Mother'" (p. 87)? Should not the first word of line 39 on p. 51 be "exceed" instead of "excel"?

The scholar will also note the paucity of footnotes and the omission of a bibliography. However, one receives the impression that the book is, after all, intended to be a popular work. As such, it has less need for footnotes and bibliography.

On the whole, this is a good book. It deserves to be in the libraries

of both laymen and scholars interested in the literary history of the Bible.

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KENNETH A. STRAND

Martyn, J. Louis, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*. New York: Harper and Row, 1968. xi + 168 pp. \$ 7.00.

The book deals with the origin of the Fourth Gospel. Martyn's intention is to trace a completely new path on a terrain already marked by several criss-crossing footsteps. The key to success in this journey is to recognize that the author of this Gospel created a literary genre of his own "quite without counterpart in the body of the gospels" (p. 21). The purpose for devising this new technique was to demonstrate that the life of Jesus is being relived in his disciples and that therefore his disciples should take courage under persecution. The foundation is theological, but the theology has two historical *points d'appui*, one in the life of Jesus, designated *einmalig*, and one in the life of the disciples, designated contemporary. The way in which this was done was by means of *dramatic expansions* of miracle stories (specifically two miracles of healing: the lame man and the blind beggar) which no longer are true to form, according to the model established by *Formgeschichte*.

This means that reading the Gospel, Martyn sees two sets of actors playing identical roles on two separate stages. The primary historical foundation for this approach Martyn finds in the story of the blind beggar who "plays not only the part of a Jew in Jerusalem healed by Jesus of Nazareth, but also the part of Jews known to John who have become members of the separated church because of their messianic faith and because of the awesome Benediction" (p. 41). Martyn develops a rather lengthy argument to establish the historical reference of Jn 9: 22 in the contemporary level. Here a characteristic in the argumentation of the book is clearly made evident. There is nothing new in arguing that the threat to put out of the synagogue anyone who confessed Christ is not a reference to the Jewish ban (either as *גויסה*, *גודי*, or *שמחה*), but rather should be understood in terms of the rewording of the 12th Benediction done at Jamnia by Samuel the Small under the auspices of Gamaliel II. Moore, Simon, Barrett, Foerster, just to name a few, have so argued.

But Martyn wishes to recreate the exact historical circumstances which permitted this Benediction to be used in order to discover members of the synagogue who had a divided allegiance. Thus while dropping disclaimers profusely along the way, he advances with a sense of certainty not quite warranted by the evidence he himself provides. The author introduces new steps in the argumentation by: "strongly to suggest" (p. 17), "appears to be highly probable" (p. 39), "The further step . . . *may* have been taken. . . . And if that be true"