

Käsemann, Ernst. *New Testament Questions of Today*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969. xi + 305 pp. \$ 6.75.

The fifteen essays and lectures that make up this collection were all prepared in the 1950's and 1960's and have, with only two exceptions, been previously published, for the most part, in German periodicals and *Festschriften*. The varied subject matter reveals Käsemann's wide-ranging interest and breadth of scholarship.

The first two articles entitled "New Testament Questions of Today" and "Blind Alleys in the 'Jesus of History' Controversy" provide a critical analysis of certain aspects of contemporary NT scholarship and suggest directions that it must take in the future. The last two, "Thoughts on the Present Controversy about Scriptural Interpretation" and "Theologians and Laity," are concerned with issues of importance to the life of the church and reveal Käsemann's concern for the well-being of Christianity. The remaining articles are expositions of significant aspects of NT theology dealt with either thematically ("On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic," "The Righteousness of God in Paul," "Paul and Early Catholicism") or exegetically ("The Structure and Purpose of the Prologue to John's Gospel," "Worship in Everyday Life: a note on Romans 12," "Principles of the Interpretation of Romans 13"). More than half the essays are about Paul.

Throughout, Käsemann's brilliance and powers of expression are clearly evident. Some of the credit certainly belongs to W. J. Montague, the translator who also prepared the earlier *Essays on New Testament Themes*. Examples of lucid phraseology abound and add considerably to the reader's satisfaction. A more substantive benefit grows out of Käsemann's intimate knowledge of Continental theology and the contemporary situation of the church. Even though some of the articles, such as the discussion on "New Testament Questions of Today," were written some time ago and are now therefore somewhat out of date, they nonetheless delineate fundamental problems out of which current debate has grown. Not all the articles were originally directed toward scholars. A few were prepared with the non-scholar in mind: e.g., a lecture given at a YMCA Conference. The insight and power of Käsemann's appeal to the layman reflect his fifteen years as a parish pastor. He repeatedly makes clear his deep concern for Christianity today, which he feels "is dying of its own failures in everyday life" (p. 297). In his view the current is now running against us, "where for one thousand nine hundred years it seemed to be running for us. . . ." (p. 278). Heathen religion, on the other hand, is "everywhere celebrating its own resurrection" (p. 298). This mixing of technical and non-technical essays may prove something of a problem to the average layman, for the technical articles frequently assume considerable knowledge on the part of the reader. This problem is evident in Käsemann's description of "Blind Alleys in the 'Jesus of History' Controversy" where he directs some rather sharp criticism

toward both Jeremias and Bultmann. While it is of interest to see how the author has moved from the position of his former teacher, the average layman will probably find the dialogue somewhat confusing.

While Käsemann is more optimistic about the possibility of retrieving authentic information about Jesus and the earliest community from the NT and positive about the importance of doing so, he is nonetheless more skeptical than most Anglo-Saxon or French-speaking scholars. This is unfortunate in my opinion, for he has great skill in the area of historical reconstruction, and his interpretation of the evidence leads him to place at a later date sayings and events which may well belong to a much earlier time. In accord with prevailing German scholarship, Käsemann accepts only seven letters of Paul as authentic. While this conclusion is perhaps "safe" in that possibly later material is excluded, it suffers from the reverse danger of leaving out too much. The obvious result is a distorted picture of Pauline theology and the situation in the early church.

In a similar vein, Käsemann charges that neither Anglo-Saxon nor French-speaking scholars have ever really come to terms with the question of the "Jesus of History" and that they are unfair to the German form critics (pp. 11-12). He does not seem to allow the possibility that these scholars have, in fact, given consideration to this question, but have arrived at different conclusions as to the nature of this problem and its urgency. A similar variance of approach is seen in his criticism of Jeremias referred to above. In many places it appears that Käsemann and Jeremias are working on the basis of different assumptions and toward different goals, so that argument and counterargument do not meet each other as they should.

In his preface Käsemann explains that in his view "disputation" is an "indispensable element in theology" and that "disagreement" in the field of critical scholarship is in fact the "outward form of gratitude" (p. ix). In his essays Käsemann has provided the basis of much disputation, disagreement and constructive scholarship. For this all partners in the search for understanding can be grateful.

Walla Walla College  
College Place, Washington

MALCOLM MAXWELL

Kingsbury, Jack Dean. *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13*. Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1969. xii + 180 pp. \$ 5.95.

This book, a revised doctoral dissertation from Basel, is a further contribution to the growing list of works in the exciting area of redaction-criticism. In harmony with this method Kingsbury examines Mt 13 on the premise that as Jesus used parables to meet the requirements of his own situation, so Matthew employs parables that had come down to him to meet the demands of the situation of the church to which he belonged. This material is then studied to determine what can be learned about Matthew's own "age and theology" (p. 10).