

noted, e.g., that whereas the other gospels place considerable emphasis on the Spirit and his work, Matthew says little. In fact, he is said to be "strangely alone" and "clearly the odd man out" (p. 114). It is not that Matthew ignores exorcisms, miracles, and wonders so much as that he subordinates these through an emphasis on the significance of Christ's words. Matthew's gospel is seen to be "pre-eminently the gospel of Jesus' words" (p. 119). This gospel insists upon a practical type of Christianity, a Christianity that is lived out in the "hurly-burly of life" (p. 119).

While Johnsson has provided an interesting, helpful, and nicely written work, perhaps the most commendable aspect of his endeavor is the concern to make the gains of contemporary scholarship more broadly available. It is hoped not only that there will be further contributions from his pen, but also that his example will encourage others to make a similar effort.

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Kee, Howard C. *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977. xiii + 225 pp. \$13.95.

This book represents Kee's major contribution to NT studies to date. It has been written in order to engage his colleagues in the use of a new method for biblical research, called the "social-cultural-historical" method (p. ix). Basically it consists of reinforcing the literary criticism of the past with the insights provided by sociology of knowledge. In the fullest sense the method is "holistic" rather than atomistic.

The atomistic approach was tied to the well-established practice of writing commentaries on the biblical text. By their very nature, commentaries were bound to become a disjointed series of observations on words and phrases. With the rise of historicism and linguistic science in the nineteenth century, the comments became more and more pedantic displays of grasp on trivia. The development of form criticism as a method for Gospel research did nothing to change the atomistic approach. But redaction criticism allowed the gospels for the first time to speak as literary units with a voice of their own. It would seem that the days of commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels are numbered. On Matthew and Luke none of any significance has been written for a long time. On Mark, Vincent Taylor's (1959) set the high-water mark of the form-critical approach.

Kee's book is one in the new format of "Studies in the Gospel of. . ." The intent of the book is clearly to do what the commentaries were supposed to do: to interpret the text either theologically or historically. Kee opts for the historical, since that is to be done first in order later to "distinguish those implications which are typical and proper components of the meaning from those which are not" (p. 177). Here he is following E. D. Hirsch's advice.

The results of Kee's historical work are arrived at by means of painstaking work, solidly substantiated and clearly set forth. According to him, Mark was produced by an apocalyptic community in the years prior to the fall of Jerusalem. This community was located in southern Syria, from where it sent forth itinerant charismatics to the villages of the surrounding countryside in order to heal the sick and preach the vindication of Jesus as triumphant Son of Man in the immediate future. The Gospel was originally written in Greek within a community that fed itself spiritually from the LXX. The main purpose in writing was to set forth clearly how Jesus' life and death took place according to God's plan as foretold in Scripture, and to urge people to join the community of those who are waiting for the vindication of God's plan in the parousia.

In his recognition that the origins of Mark have to do with the fall of Jerusalem rather than the imprisonment of Peter in Rome at the time of the Neronian fire in that city, Kee keeps company with Norman Perrin, to whom the book is dedicated. I would agree that Mark fits better the apocalyptic mood fired up by the events around Jerusalem. Kee, however, parts company with Perrin when it comes to Mark's Christology. Perrin saw the Gospel as a theological attempt to replace a half-adequate *theios aner* Christology by a higher Christology of the cross. The aim of the evangelist, according to Perrin, was to make the miracle tradition subservient to the Passion. Kee follows Carl Holladay and rejects the notion that there ever existed a *theios aner* Christology in the early Church, as proposed by Achtemeier, Koester, and others. Mark reflects a community engaged in the Gentile mission, but it is not engaged in a Christological dispute about a *theios aner* which would have been palatable to Gentiles. The theological center is not Christological, but apocalyptic, and even the miracles have to be seen in that light.

Perrin was strongly influenced by W. Wrede's interpretation of the messianic-secret motif. For him the *Wredestrasse* had become the *Hauptstrasse*. Kee sees the Gospel reflecting more directly the "life-world structures" of an apocalyptic community, and completely rejects Wrede's interpretation of the secrecy motif, even conceding that "an understanding of the secrecy motif is rightly presented [by Wrede] as essential to an understanding of Mark" (p. 167). Wrede is charged with having failed to see that the secrecy motif is not a unit, and having included as elements of the motif parts of the Gospel that have nothing to do with secrecy about the Kingdom or Jesus' messiahship. After discarding the irrelevant materials, Kee finds five different kinds of secrecy sayings or narratives (pp. 169-172). But Kee's classification fails to convince this reviewer, and the conclusion to which he arrives as to the role of the secrecy motif is even less convincing. That the secret is that Jesus had to die with a view to the resurrection (which the evangelist fails to report) seems far-fetched. It would seem to me that the secrecy motif may be better explained in reference to the apocalyptic setting of the Gospel.

Kee's studies in Mark are full of valid insights, and his observations on the problem of the gospel as genre, and the style and structure of Mark will make his colleagues rethink seriously the issues involved. His application of the sociology-of-knowledge approach turns out at times to be quite fruitful. But I must confess that I cannot overcome a deep uneasiness when comparisons are made between "cargo cult" communities in the South Pacific of the twentieth century with Christian communities in Palestine or Syria of the first. Melanesia may have isolated, back-water communities unaffected by the currents of civilization moving freely under the auspices of the *pax americana*. Whether the same may be said of Palestine or Syria at the time of the *pax romana* has not yet been established.

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Metzger, Bruce M. *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977. xix + 498 pp. \$17.50.

The author has placed NT textual critics in his debt by this masterful treatment of the early versions of the NT made before A.D. 1000. Only one with the background and knowledge of the many languages involved and with control of the bibliographical material for this subject area could have produced a book manifesting such expertise and reliability.