

Jordan, Clarence, and Doulos, Bill Lane. *Cotton Patch Parables of Liberation*. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald, 1976. 160 pp. Paperback, \$1.95.

The major portion of this book consists of Jordan's Cotton Patch Version of the Parables and his expositions of them as excerpted from his lectures, sermons, and writings in his own inimitable Cotton Patch style. Jordan's style is vigorous, incisive, and flavored with Southern idioms. His comments also modernize the parables and make them very practical, especially to his Southern audience. Doulos, a friend of Jordan (who died in 1969), and the Koinonia Farm fill in to round out the discussion for the chapters. Jordan's contribution given in italics is by far the more colorful and pungent. Those who like the Cotton Patch Versions will enjoy this volume also.

Andrews University

SAKAE KUBO

Patte, Daniel. *What is Structural Exegesis?* Guides to Biblical Scholarship: New Testament Series. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976. vi + 90 pp. Paperback, \$2.95.

This guide helps the uninitiated to understand the most recent method being used to understand the Bible—the structural method. In the first chapter the author attempts to justify the method on the principle that “an exegesis is legitimate only when the preunderstanding implied in the methods is identical with (or at least closely related to) the preunderstanding demanded by the interpreter's culture” (p. 7). Traditional historical exegesis only partly meets this principle, since the view of man expressed is that man is a creator of significations; i.e., when man communicates, he determines the meaning of what he wishes to say. Structural exegesis is attuned to “the preunderstanding demanded by the interpreter's culture” because it recognizes that significations are imposed upon man; i.e., that the meaning of language is determined by its structure and has a plurality of meaning on several levels. These structural meanings were passively assimilated by the author. What is assumed is that contemporary preunderstanding accepts man as a creator of significations, but more so as one on whom significations are imposed.

The first two chapters are very informative and clearly written, the second one showing how structural exegesis developed out of structuralism. Patte first shows how the meaning of a text is determined by the author's intentionality (structures of enunciation) as well as his culture (cultural structures, constraints which characterize a specific culture) and his being (deep structures which characterize man qua man). The first two are studied by traditional methods, the last through structural exegesis. The two deep structures illustrated in later chapters are narrative and mythical structure. Structuralism began with the analysis of language, but this model was applied by analogy to anthropology first by Levi-Strauss. Then it was applied to other fields, such as biblical exegesis. From the study of languages (linguistics), structuralism was applied to the study of signs (semiology), i.e., other modes of communication such as cultural phenomena.

The third chapter goes into detail in explaining narrative structure with

its various components—sequence, syntagm, statement, actantial model, function, actant. Patte illustrates narrative structure by use of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Admittedly there are only limited results, but this analysis of the narrative serves as a prelude to the analysis in terms of mythical structure.

In the fourth chapter, mythical structure is explained and its use illustrated. In studying myths, Levi-Strauss concluded that "the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction," and that "mythical thought always progresses from the awareness of oppositions toward their resolution" (p. 56). These fundamental metaphysical oppositions graduate into secondary oppositions which reflect every aspect of culture. The myth seeks to transcend the oppositions and disclose wholeness. But this mythical structure is also at work in non-mythical texts, including the Bible. And this is illustrated by Gal 1:1-10 and the parable of the Good Samaritan.

It is not possible in this review to present the kind of detail that is necessary for a full understanding of the method. Perhaps too much detail is presented which confuses the reader and makes the system appear to be overly complicated. Whether the method will prove fruitful remains to be seen. No doubt the future will see much more of the results of this method.

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Robinson, John A. T. *Can We Trust the New Testament?* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977. 142 pp. Paperback, \$1.95.

The ordinary reader will find it difficult to believe that the man who wrote *Honest to God* is also the writer of this book. Robinson's answer to the question in the title is a very definite, Yes. As in the case of most of Robinson's books, this also is addressed to laymen and is written in the simple and clear style for which the author is well known. The reader should know also that Robinson is a well-respected NT scholar in his own right.

He explains first the four attitudes that people take toward what can be believed about the NT: the cynicism of the foolish, the fundamentalism of the fearful, the skepticism of the wise, and the conservatism of the committed. He then deals with the original language, manuscripts, and modern versions to show that while some insignificant errors may creep in through these, in essence the NT can be trusted. He also deals with textual criticism, source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism. He is much more conservative than might be expected in the kind of results at which he would arrive in the use of these methods, and he is in no way persuaded that the words and acts of Jesus are irrecoverable.

His most interesting chapter deals with what he calls "The Generation Gap," that period between the time of Jesus and the writing of the documents of the NT. He deals with this in a more detailed and scholarly way in his book, *The Redating of the New Testament*. He dates the entire NT, including the Pastoral Epistles, the Catholic Epistles, and Revelation between A.D. 47 and just before A.D. 70. In NT non-conservative scholarly circles, this is most revolutionary.