

## *Some Recent Books on the Gospels*

**Donald Guthrie**

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The purpose of this article is to give in brief compass some discussion of the more significant literature bearing on the Gospels which has been published during the past ten years and to attempt to analyse any discernible trends during this period. One general impression is that the period of scepticism is beginning to yield to a more historically based approach. Nevertheless, most writers on the Gospels proceed from presuppositions which differ from those used by conservative critics and this will be particularly noted in the following study.

### **I. SYNOPTIC TRENDS**

The baffling problem of the relation between the first three Gospels has never been satisfactorily solved. At most only approximations are possible. Nevertheless, it is always hoped that someone may be able to throw new light upon it. The Roman Catholic author B. de Solages (*A Greek Synopsis of the Gospels*, 1959) has produced an elaborate mathematical study on the assumption that it should be possible to put comparisons of parallel accounts on a strictly statistical basis to determine whether or not there is literary dependence. The author comes to the conclusion that the two-source theory (Mark and Q) is justified on such a basis. While there is no doubt that de Solages has arranged his Synoptic parallels with more scientific precision than has previously been done it is not at once apparent that his conclusions are correct. Not enough has yet been done on a precise examination of oral methods of transmission to make literary dependence certain. It should be noted that the major problem in all Synoptic studies is the lack of sufficient data to form an adequate comparison. The period during which the earliest traditions were transmitted has been described, not inaptly, as a twilight period. A recent attempt to throw more light upon it has been made by B. Gerhardsson (*Memory and Manuscript*, 1961), who has examined the Rabbinical method of oral transmission of traditions and has concluded that much greater exactness was achieved by this method than has generally been supposed. He infers that what was true of the teaching of the Rabbis must also have been true of our Lord. It is here, however, that the main weakness of his thesis appears, for it is not at once apparent that Jesus adopted the normal teaching methods of the traditional Rabbi. Moreover, Gerhardsson's evidence is drawn from sources later in date than the time of Jesus or the earliest period of the Church. Nevertheless this book has done valuable service in drawing attention to the significance of oral transmission which has been almost completely overshadowed during the present century. Even if no precise parallels may be found for the teaching method of Jesus it is a reasonable assumption that He did not ignore the need for some safeguards in the preservation of the material. He promised the aid of the Spirit in memorization of His teaching and no proposed solution to the Synoptic

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problem will be satisfactory which leaves this dominating consideration out of account.

Most books on the Synoptic Gospels during our period adopt the widely accepted two-source or four-source theory. A thoroughgoing and radical source critical study of these Gospels has been published by W. E. Bundy (*Jesus and first three Gospels*, 1955), who does not hesitate to apply his critical principles in assigning much of the material to editorial processes. In this

case the assumption is that in all parallel accounts one version must be an edited form of the other and therefore historically less reliable. Following in somewhat the same tradition is F. W. Beare's *The Earliest Records of Jesus*, 1962, which although less radical, nevertheless concentrates attention on literary parallels using Huck-Lietzmann's *Synopsis of the First Three Gospels* as a basis. Both of these books tend to lessen the authenticity of the Synoptic accounts in the interests of literary criticism. If the literary principles which have been used are valid this result is of course unavoidable, but the basis of assessment may be challenged. In his book *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (1963), N. B. Stonehouse gives a definitely conservative consideration to the current problems and is particularly valuable for his discussion of Matthew's part in Synoptic origins.

A useful *Synopsis of the Gospels* (1964), edited by H. F. D. Sparks, has just been published, which not only incorporates John's Gospel but is arranged on the English R.V. as being closest to the Greek text. It will provide another tool for those who wish to gain a closer picture of the sequence of events in the Gospels and who are unfamiliar with the Greek text. Inevitably any editor who arranges a harmony must make choices regarding order of events which may not be acceptable to all, and for that reason there are bound to be variations between Gospel harmonies. Nevertheless a harmony of some kind is indispensable for the serious student of the Gospels. For those looking for a tool to aid them in sorting out the various data in the Synoptic problem, X. Leon-Dufour's *Concordance of the Synoptic Gospels in seven colours* (1956) will provide a fascinating example. By the aid of various coloured charts it is possible to see at a glance the proportion and distribution of common material in the various Gospels and of the material peculiar to each. Nevertheless, the real usefulness of the charts depends on the amount of work which the investigator puts into his Synoptic studies.

It was during the period under discussion that the second part of W. L. Knox's *Sources of the Synoptic Gospels* (1957) was posthumously published. Although Knox adhered to the generally accepted theories for Gospel sources, he introduced a considerable amount of originality. For instance, he conceived that part of the Q material originally existed in the form of tracts, which in itself, if true, would tend to weaken the Q hypothesis altogether. It is certainly not impossible that some of the teaching of Jesus was written down before the Gospels themselves were produced, but there is no means of being certain. Another posthumous book which contains studies on the Gospels is T. W. Manson's *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (1962), which comprises a selection of Manson's previous articles. Of these the most significant is that in which he discusses the available materials for a life of Jesus. He rejects the scepticism of the extreme form critical schools of thought and considers that there is enough data to

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provide a basis for the writing of a historical account of the deeds and sayings of Jesus. More will be said on this matter when form criticism is discussed below. It is noteworthy to find such criticism coming from such a scholar as T. W. Manson, but the whole collection of essays shows clearly his critical moderation.

## II. TRENDS IN FORM CRITICISM

Although it is many years since Rudolph Bultmann first produced his study of the Synoptic Gospels based on the form critical method, it is only recently that a translation has been

available to English readers under the title of *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (translated by J. Marsh, 1963). Similarly an English translation of one of Bultmann's essays on form criticism, together with one by K. Kundsinn, has been made available under the title of *Form Criticism* (translated by F. C. Grant, 1962). The demand for English translations of these works draws attention to the continued influence not only of Bultmann himself, but of his method of criticism. Although Bultmann must be regarded as the leading representative of the more extreme school of form critics in that he does not attach historical significance to much of the material, if indeed it can be said that he attaches historical significance at all, his approach has had wider repercussions than his own school of thought. Many more moderate form critics have been led to modify their own position in view of the scepticism which has resulted from Bultmann's approach. But the latter's extremism has not lacked considerable support, though it is important to note various studies even from Bultmann's own camp which look like something of a reaction against him. Perhaps the most notable is G. Bornkamm, whose recent work *Jesus of Nazareth* (English translation, 1960), certainly attaches more importance to history than Bultmann has done. At the same time Bornkamm is very far from regarding it as at all possible to reconstruct a life of Jesus, at least in the sense in which the older liberal schools of thought present it as an example to follow. He realizes, however, more acutely than Bultmann has done that the Christ of faith cannot altogether be divorced from history.

In the same tradition is J. M. Robinson's *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1959) which is a concise summary of the course of the debate among the post-Bultmannians and is in full sympathy with that movement. There are three suggested criteria for the determining of genuine logia. Any saying which reflects the post-Easter situation is rejected. Similarly any parallels to contemporary ideas can be discounted. On the positive side any saying with Aramaic features is more likely than not to be authentic. It will be noted that the new quest is therefore still mainly negative.

There have been several studies which have sought to clarify this issue of the Jesus of history, which may be said to be the crucial consideration raised by form criticism. If the material circulated in isolated units of tradition the records are at once loosened from firm historical sequence and it is but a short step from this to deny any interest in the Jesus of history on the part of the early Church. The resultant historical scepticism invites criticism and it is not surprising that some books in opposition to it or else suggesting considerable modification have appeared. In his series of essays published under the title *Jesus in the Twentieth Century* (1960), H. G. Wood has one essay containing a

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good critique of Bultmann's position, showing the influence upon him of such earlier critics as Wrede. In many ways Bultmann's theories are the product of the earlier radical criticism whose barrenness led him to seek a better method. The radical criticism of the old liberals may be dead, but its influence lives on in another guise in Bultmann. In denying altogether the old liberal Jesus, Bultmann and his school have gone to the other extreme and created a notion of the Christ which may be conducive to twentieth century philosophy, but which is foreign to the faith of the early Christians. His exegesis proceeds from the presupposition that the early Church, and therefore the Gospel writers, encrusted the genuine material with mythological forms. It is therefore all too easy for Bultmann to jettison anything which does not agree with his position.

R. H. Fuller, in his book *The New Testament in Current Study* (1962), devotes three chapters to Bultmann and the post-Bultmannian reactions. While not without some sympathy for Bultmann's motives, Fuller nevertheless points out the salient weaknesses of his position. He rejects Bultmann's idea that Christ's resurrection occurs first in the believer's existence, insisting on its factual basis. There is no doubt that Bultmann's existentializing of the resurrection is the major criticism of his approach, on the basis of which his other presuppositions follow. Fuller gives a useful critique of the viewpoint of Bornkamm, Käsemann and J. M. Robinson, and also devotes chapters to survey the recent trends in Synoptic and Johannine scholarship.

A comprehensive series of essays on the Bultmannian discussion has recently been published, edited by H. Ristow and K. Matthiae, entitled *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus* (1962). A notable contribution is that of H. Schürmann, who argues that Jesus Himself must have given some instruction to the disciples regarding the content of what they were to proclaim when He sent them on their mission to the villages, and in the post-Resurrection period they must have remembered this. It is only too evident that the Easter event according to the Bultmannian position is altogether too divorced from what preceded it and Schürmann's contrary opinion is therefore welcome.

There have been various attempts to produce some account of the life and teaching of Jesus from a moderate form critical point of view, of which G. Hebert's *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History* (1962) and H. Zahnt's *The Historical Jesus* (1963) may be mentioned. On the other hand E. Stauffer's *Jesus and His Story* (1960) is an attempt to write a chronological account rather after the style of the earlier lives of Jesus, although calling on fresh evidence from non-canonical sources. Most scholars class Stauffer's attempt with the old liberal quests and this is probably right, but his book is a valuable reminder of the need for a historical basis for any life of Christ. Another book which discusses the whole matter in more general terms is H. E. W. Turner's *Historicity and the Gospels* (1963), which criticizes Bultmann's position from the point of view of the understanding of history. There is also a useful monograph containing a conservative assessment of Bultmann by P. E. Hughes, entitled *Scripture and Myth* (1956).<sup>1</sup>

The whole debate is of vital importance for a true approach to the Gospels, for if Bultmann is right exegesis of the Gospels becomes impossible and gives place to speculation. It is not surprising that an increasing number of scholars are beginning to wonder whether a true approach to Christianity can ever lie

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along that track. But those who have rejected Bultmann's presuppositions throughout have never had any serious doubt about their real outcome.

### III. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

In spite of the generally accepted assumption that Matthew's Gospel was written for Jewish Christians, P. Nepper-Christensen has produced a study, *Das Matthäusevangelium—ein judenchristliches Evangelium?* (1958), in which he attempts to prove that the Gospel was designed for Gentile Christians, thus accounting for the fact that it became the most popular

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/article\\_myth\\_hughes.html](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_myth_hughes.html).

of the Gospels in the early Church. But there are parts of the Gospel which are so Jewish as to support most naturally the traditional assumption. E. P. Blair, in his book *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew* (1960) is not unsympathetic to Nepper-Christensen's thesis, although he cannot go all the way with him. He regards the author as a Hellenist of the same stamp as Stephen. Blair's book is devoted to the study of the special Christology in Matthew's Gospel, paying special attention to his doctrine of salvation.

In a book entitled *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (1963), G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H. J. Held have each produced detailed essays on aspects of the theology of Matthew. All three authors assume that the special Matthaean characteristics are indications of Matthew's theology. The Gospel, in this view, is not a testimony to the theology of Jesus. The influence of Bultmann is not far to seek in these studies, although the interest has shifted from the forms of the tradition to the redactional processes. The result is an over-emphasis on Matthew's editorial intentions and a lessening of the historical background. The danger of this kind of approach is that exegesis becomes the servant of speculation. Another book which examines Matthew's redactional methods from much the same point of view is G. Strecker's *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit* (1962), which gives special attention to Matthew's use of testimony passages as an indication of his theologizing purpose.

#### IV. MARK'S GOSPEL

Critical studies have for some time concentrated on this Gospel. It supplies the main focus of interest for form criticism. This is largely because it is the foundation stone of source criticism. If Mark is basic to Matthew and Luke it becomes a matter of great interest to discover the origins of this Gospel. Can it be regarded as an authentic historical basis?

The more radical school of form criticism would answer in the negative and J. M. Robinson's *The Problem of History in Mark* (1957) is characteristic of this approach. It is an example of the inevitable historical scepticism which follows the theory of the circulation of unit narrative material. If, of course, Bultmann's philosophical presuppositions are accepted this presents no problem, for faith is not really concerned whether Mark's Gospel is historical or not. But for those who believe that faith must be historically based and who regard the foundation of the Christian faith as being the historical Jesus, Robinson's approach is wholly unsatisfactory. It may be true that the narrative materials have come through the agency of the Christian Church but this is an entirely

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different proposition from contending that the Church coloured the material and therefore historicity is impossible to verify. It has been pointed out above that Robinson's later book contends for a new quest for the historical Jesus, revealing a slight shift of position, no doubt because of the unsatisfactory character of an historically sceptical attitude.

Two writers have produced major works on Mark which have regarded Mark as a theologian rather than as a historian. T. A. Burkill's book *Mysterious Revelation: An examination of the Philosophy of Mark's Gospel* (1963) is a full treatment of a theme which this author has dealt with in various articles and other books on this Gospel. It is really a modified presentation of the older and much criticized view of W. Wrede's *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (1901), which has invoked sufficient revived interest to be reprinted in 1963. This theory maintains that Jesus never revealed His Messianic claim and that Mark attributed the

injunctions to silence to Jesus to explain later why Jesus had said nothing about it, in spite of the fact that the Church generally believed that He was the Messiah. Burkill finds these injunctions to silence, which are prominent in Mark and also occur in the other Synoptic Gospels, as the key for the understanding of Mark's philosophy of history. It will be clear at once that Mark's Gospel cannot on this theory be treated as an authentic report. Its importance lies in its presentation of a certain type of theology. Another writer who examines the theological tendencies of Mark is W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus* (1959). This shift of emphasis from form criticism to the editor is characteristic of the most recent approach to Gospel criticism, but it raises many problems. If the Gospel writers were theologians rather than historians it is of utmost importance to determine the source of their theology. Did it arise from their own ingenuity or did they receive it as authentic apostolic teaching? Moreover, how far is it a legitimate development from the genuine teaching of Jesus? It is one thing to regard each Evangelist as a theologian in his own right, but it is quite another to explain the emergence of these independent theologians. Unless this can be done the way lies open to ascribe any material which the proposer might suggest to the creation of the Evangelist rather than to the genuine tradition.

A radical example of the same tendency is E. Trocmé's *La Formation de l'évangile selon Marc* (1963). The writer propounds the theory that the author of the earliest edition of Mark (Mk i.-xiii.) was opposed to the orthodox Jewish Christian party of Jerusalem, but that a later redactor added a passion narrative from an entirely different source and made adjustments in the earlier edition. But the speculative character of this theory is seen from the fact that no evidence exists for the separate circulation of Mark i.-xiii. Moreover Trocmé maintains a distinction between the sensational miracle stories from Galilee and the moralistic sayings from Jerusalem, and considers the former to contain exoteric traditions. Taken at its face value the Gospel of Mark would never support such speculations.

## V. LUKE'S GOSPEL

In common with the other Synoptic Gospels Luke has found advocates of the theory of the author's theologizing purpose. The most notable is H.

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Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (1960), who examines the editorial motives of Luke and works out from these his characteristic theology. Conzelmann claims that the major factor in Luke's approach is the assumption that Christ is the middle point of Time and is the connecting link between the Church and the past. There is much truth in this approach, but Conzelmann treats the whole theme from the point of view that the notion is Luke's.

On the structure of the whole Gospel, A. Q. Morton and G. H. C. Macgregor's *The Structure of Luke and Acts* (1964) calls for some comment, since these authors use a statistical method to establish their propositions. Morton's appeal to electronic computers to settle New Testament problems was widely advertised by his article in *The Observer* in November 1963, and in this book, in collaboration with Macgregor, he has maintained that the Proto-Luke theory can be supported by a mathematical calculation of text-lengths. Provided an investigator is first convinced of the validity of the Proto-Luke hypothesis the evidence cited would appear corroborative, but it would not necessarily have the same force for those who on other grounds see no necessity for the hypothesis. In any case, the discussion on Luke's

Gospel is really subsidiary to the examination of Acts and leads by analogy to the postulation of a Proto-Acts.

## VI. JOHN'S GOSPEL

It is in studies on this Gospel that most change has recently come. J. A. T. Robinson, in an essay first published in *Studia Evangelica* (1959) and since reprinted with other essays by the same author under the collected title of *Twelve New Testament Studies* (1962), has described it as a new look on the Fourth Gospel. In this essay he is critical of the older view that John's Gospel is late and can largely be dismissed from discussions of primitive Christianity. While Robinson does not commit himself to apostolic origin he maintains that many of the supposed obstacles to such a view are now removed. He feels however that background and purpose are more important than authorship. While not all scholars are as convinced as Robinson that greater reliance than formerly should be placed on John and while Robinson himself does not go far enough, this trend is worth noting for there seems every likelihood of further changes of emphasis in this direction.

A significant pointer is the important book by C. H. Dodd entitled *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (1963). In his former book, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (1953), Dodd had concentrated on the background material, giving most attention to Philonic and Hermetic influences although not neglecting the Rabbinic. His heavy drawing upon the *Hermetica* as an aid for interpreting the Gospel seemed to many scholars overdone, especially as no certainty could be established that the parallels to which he appealed belonged to the same milieu of thought as the Fourth Gospel, most of the evidence relating to a considerably later time. Moreover, Dodd's approach required the postulation of an author who possessed more than a passing acquaintance with Hellenistic thought. It has frequently been claimed that Qumran discoveries have considerably lessened the Hellenistic interpretation of John's Gospel, but even apart from this Dodd's exegesis left the impression that it should have been possible to understand John's Gospel in a simpler manner, giving more credit

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to our Lord for the teaching ascribed to him in this Gospel. His second book shows a rather different approach. In this he examines the contribution of the Synoptic tradition to the Johannine background and finds a surprising number of instances in which Synoptic sayings are paralleled in John. This means that there is a greater proportion of historical material in John than had often been supposed and than Dodd himself had implied in his previous book. John seems to be coming back into his own after a long period in the critical wilderness, at least as far as his contribution to the earliest period of Church history is concerned. Perhaps the most notable feature of Dodd's recent book is that it shows a lessening of the gap which has so long been alleged in certain schools of critical thought between the teaching forms attributed to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and those in the Fourth Gospel. He finds, for instance, some parabolic teaching in John comparable to that in the Synoptic Gospels. Nevertheless although Dodd has drawn attention to these valuable contacts between John and the Synoptics, he still maintains that the author was a man in whom was fused Rabbinic and Hellenistic thought. The connection between the Johannine discourses and the actual teaching of Jesus would still seem to be rather tenuous if Dodd is right. But it is intelligible to suppose that Jesus Himself had a sufficiently wide approach to account for the phenomena on which Dodd bases his theory.

During the last decade C. K. Barrett has produced an important commentary, *The Gospel according to St. John* (1956), based on the Greek text. His approach to the Gospel follows the conventional assumption that the author was not apostolic. He nevertheless finds some genuine apostolic influence. Behind the Farewell discourses he sees a series of homilies on the sayings of Jesus rather than the words of Jesus Himself. The reader is listening in to some early reflections. Similarly Barrett finds a good deal of symbolism behind the narrative sections. Thus the miracle of the water turned into wine at Cana receives a symbolic rather than a natural interpretation. In this his approach is akin to that of Dodd in his former book. It will be seen, therefore, that in the work of both these scholars, John's Gospel is regarded more as an interpretation of what Jesus said than as a record of His teaching, in spite of the fact that John's Gospel is not in the form of a collection of reflections. Barrett's commentary contains many valuable exegetical notes and will be serviceable for a long time for that reason. But it belongs to a different category from the older commentators like Westcott whose scholarly defence of apostolic authorship has never been completely refuted and whose exegesis is still fruitful, and it is also out of step with the most recent Johannine studies in maintaining John's literary dependence upon the Synoptic Gospels, and in maintaining a predominantly Hellenistic milieu.

The commentary by R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel: a Commentary* (1956), is not so much a detailed exposition as a general explanation. In this respect it is somewhat disappointing. No-one acquainted with Lightfoot's other books, mainly devoted to the advocacy of form criticism of a rather sceptical kind, will expect him to treat the Gospel of John as historical. In fact, he gives a good deal of emphasis to the interpretive element, although he claims considerably more historical credence for John's account than Bultmann and Bauer, whose earlier radical theories had posited Gnostic elements behind the Gospel.

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Speaking generally Lightfoot's position approximates to that of Dodd, although he does not devote much attention to Hellenistic literature.

There have been studies of special aspects of this Gospel which warrant some discussion. The theory that the Gospel is based on a lectionary cycle is advocated by A. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* (1960). She suggests that the key to an understanding of the design of the Gospel is to be found in the recurrent references to Jewish festivals. It is further supposed that the events of the Gospel are intended to illustrate the Old Testament passages set in the triennial Jewish lectionary calendar. Actually John's Gospel will not quite fit into a three-year cycle and consequently a three-and-a-half-year cycle is proposed, which somewhat weakens the force of the argument. Nevertheless, this study draws attention to an important aspect of early Christian history which is all too often overlooked. When the Christian Church assumed the Jewish Scriptures as its own authoritative Scriptures it is a reasonable conjecture that something of the existing lectionary system would have been taken over at the same time. The main problem is the lack of sufficient data to determine the precise character of the contemporary Jewish lectionaries. Some of the material used to support this theory is conjectural, as has been pointed out by J. R. Porter in an article in *Promise and Fulfilment* (edited F. F. Bruce, 1963). There is also a criticism of this lectionary hypothesis in L. Morris's *The New Testament and Jewish Lectionaries* (1964).<sup>2</sup> One result which would follow

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/lectionaries\\_morris.pdf](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/lectionaries_morris.pdf)

if the theory were valid would be a disregard for historical time, for the author of the Gospel would clearly have had his eye mainly on lectionary time.

A theory which claims support from statistics is that advocated by G. H. C. Macgregor and A. Q. Morton, *The Structure of the Fourth Gospel* (1961). The basic assumption is that certain stylistic indications, such as paragraph lengths, are a scientific means of identifying sources. Since these authors find differences of sentence length within the Gospels, two sources are proposed which are denoted by J1 and J2. The former is the basic material of the Gospel, the latter is the additional material. Moreover, the additional material is claimed to have been added to the basic material at exactly equal intervals. The whole structure of the Gospel therefore requires as its final editor a man whose mind was dominated by almost mathematical precision. A further claim is made that it is possible to establish disarrangements within the present order of material by statistical methods. But most scholars will be suspicious of such methods until it can be demonstrated that differences of sentence length or paragraph length are a valid guide to difference of authorship. In the meantime the general impression given by the Gospel is one of unity rather than diversity.

Various studies have appeared which bear directly on the teaching of the Gospel, among which may be mentioned the following. T. F. Glasson's study *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (1963) draws attention to an important aspect of the background of the Gospel. The author shows the special importance of the Exodus typology, a theme which has been in recent years developed in relation to other New Testament books (e.g. 1 Peter). There is no doubt that the Christian Church recognized itself as the New Israel and many of the parallels to Israel's history under Moses were seen as illustrations of spiritual experiences under Christ. There is no doubt also that Jesus had such analogies in mind

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when making Old Testament allusions such as Moses lifting up the serpent as a type of Himself.

The problem of John's relationship to the Synoptic Gospels has already been touched upon when discussing Dodd's most recent book, but a special study has appeared on John's relation to Luke. Unlike Dodd, who although admitting a core of Synoptic traditions behind this Gospel, nevertheless denies John's dependence on the written Synoptics, J. A. Bailey, in *The Traditions common to the Gospels of Luke and John* (1963), maintains a theory of dependence, indeed he assumes it as being indisputable. Although it is maintained by other Johannine scholars, as for instance C. K. Barrett, there is increasing inclination to regard John as independent of the written Gospels. Bailey's book is not convincing. It should be noted, however, that he also argues for certain traditions from which both Luke and John draw.

A study of the eschatological and ecclesiastical teaching of the Gospel has been published in English by A. Correll entitled *Consummatum Est* (1958), which appeared eight years previously in Swedish. The most significant feature about this book is the author's claim to find sacramental teaching in various parts of the Gospel not usually associated with it. In this his approach is similar to that of Oscar Cullmann. Moreover, Correll does not, as many recent scholars have done, reject the futurist eschatology in John. B. Gartner has made a special study of *John 6 and the Jewish Passover* (1959) and maintains that the construction of the passage in John vi. has been influenced by the form of the Jewish Passover service, especially

in the sequence of events (feeding of the multitude and Jesus walking on the sea) followed by questions and interpretation. He brings forward some suggestive evidence.

A useful little book bearing on this Gospel is A. J. B. Higgins's *The Historicity of the Fourth Gospel* (1960), in which the author advances various reasons for a more favourable estimation of John's Gospel than has generally been the case. The book does not contend for apostolic authorship, although the possibility is admitted that some of the materials used may have had some ultimate connection with John the apostle. Higgins concludes that John is independent of the Synoptic Gospels, although he is familiar with similar traditions. This kind of theory is in contrast to the older rigid source critical assumption that any kind of similarity must point to literary dependence.

Two books written by Roman Catholic writers may next be mentioned. M. E. Boismard's little book *St. John's Prologue* (1957) is an exegetical and theological study of John i. 1-18. It is an example of the increasing interest being shown by certain schools of Roman Catholic scholars in Biblical exposition and this is undoubtedly a significant development. Boismard discusses among other matters the structure of the prologue and finds parallels with the wisdom literature and the Old Testament poetic and prophetic writings. He pays much more attention to the contribution of Palestinian Judaism than to that of Alexandrian Judaism, although he does not reject the latter. The other book to be mentioned is more ambitious. It is F.-M. Braun's *Jean le Theologien et son Evangile dans l'Eglise Ancienne* (1959). This is a discussion of various introductory questions relative to the Gospel. Braun maintains that the Gospel, the Johannine Epistles and the Apocalypse were all written by the same author over a relatively brief interval of time, and treats the Gospel as the latest of the New

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Testament books. In the second part of his book he makes a detailed and careful survey of the early Christian approach to the Gospel in the different geographical areas of Egypt, Rome and Asia Minor and its surroundings. The third part of the book is devoted to the identification of authorship and after examining such issues as the theory of the two Johns, the hypothesis of John's early martyrdom and the tomb of John at Ephesus, Braun concludes that John the apostle was author and that he died after a long residence in Ephesus. There is rather more emphasis on traditions than many Protestants would admit. The author's conclusions, which although contrary to the prevailing opinion in most critical circles, are decidedly conservative, warrant careful consideration by those who are inclined to deny that John the apostle had anything to do with the Gospel.

Some studies of a more theological character must be next mentioned. D. E. Holwerda has produced a critique of Bultmann's present eschatology entitled *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in the Gospel of John* (1959). This is an attempt to enter into an exegetical dialogue with Bultmann. The author shows that the difficulties which face such an attempt in other areas of New Testament thought, owing to the fact that Bultmann's exegesis is dominated by his demythologization presuppositions, are less acute in John. In this Gospel Bultmann finds the key to his theology and believes that the Evangelist's presuppositions support his own contentions. Holwerda proceeds from a study of the relationship of the Johannine teaching concerning the Holy Spirit and his eschatology to a specific critique of Bultmann's eschatological position. The author's own position is that both future and present aspects of eschatology occur in John and this is surely a sounder method of exegesis than Bultmann's excision of the offending futuristic passages or Dodd's exclusion of them from

the essential theology of the Gospel. It is valuable in an age which has been so largely dominated by 'realized' or 'inaugurated' eschatology to have a study which is based on a synthesis of both present and future aspects.

E. M. Sidebottom, in *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel* (1961), concentrates on the Christology of the Gospel because he believes that this is the most significant aspect of Johannine theology. The author approaches the subject by studying in detail the various names under which Christ is presented in this Gospel, particularly Logos, Son of Man, Son of God and the Way, the Truth and the Life. Sidebottom believes that there is less difference between the Synoptics and John than is often imagined, although he admits areas of discrepancy. This trend is significant in view of the earlier heightening of the so-called contradictions. It is becoming increasingly recognized that neither the Synoptic tradition nor John is fully intelligible without the other.

From this survey of Johannine literature it will be seen that this Gospel has commanded much attention during the last decade. It would be a fair assessment of the trends to say that in spite of continued literature from more radical schools of thought an increasing aptitude to place more reliance on John is unmistakable. In many ways the older conservative position of Westcott and his school is being shown to be nearer the truth than many scholars have realized.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The preceding survey has necessarily been selective. Other important books

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have been published dealing with background material such as Judaism and the Qumran Scrolls, but space will not permit mention of these. It should be noted that the Qumran Scrolls have made little positive contribution to New Testament studies. They have contributed to Johannine studies insofar as they support the view that some of the concepts which for long have been regarded as belonging to a Greek environment are now seen to have influenced an essentially Palestinian milieu. The lessening of emphasis on Hellenistic concepts in expositions of Johannine thought may in some measure be attributed to the evidence of these scrolls. There have been valuable studies on the text of the Gospels, especially again affecting John in the discovery of the Bodmer papyrus. No doubt the next decade will see many more important contributions to Gospel criticism.