

Canaanite religion are adopted in the commentary and some special suggestions of Dahood (pp. 46 and 147). I thought Mays might have been helped by Dahood's explanation of 'Adam' in 6, 7 as meaning 'land' or 'country' (p. 100).

All three volumes fall within the range of any intelligent reader. They stand at the opposite end to the handbook kind of com-

mentary which can only be used as a halting reference book. These volumes can be read fluently straight through. Experts may complain at the absence of evidence for particular readings and translations adopted, but the main purpose of discussing what the prophet means is finely attained.

ÆLRED BAKER, O.S.B.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN I-XII, by Raymond E. Brown. The Anchor Bible. *Doubleday & Co.*, 1966. 538 pp. 38s.

SAINT JOHN, by John Marsh. *Penguin Books*, 1968. 700 pp. 10s. 6d.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST JOHN, by J. N. Sanders and B. A. Mastin. *Adam & Charles Black*, 1968. 480 pp. 55s.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST JOHN, by Rudolf Schnackenburg. Vol. I: Introduction and 1, 1-4, 54. *Burns & Oates*, 1968. (First published in German, 1965.) 636 pp. 115s.

In an area where there are already so many commentaries it is inevitable that new ones will have to prove themselves against severe standards. Of the above books, I think only the Sanders and Mastin fails to do this satisfactorily. It is a competent work of the sort that one always *might* find something useful in, but it does not seem to be in any way particularly striking.

The other three interest me especially because of what I might call their different degrees of literary imagination. There does seem to be a law of inverse proportion operating in which increase of scholarly knowledge of background (and even of linguistic style and processes of composition) is accompanied by a decrease in 'feel' for the book as a whole. Where John is concerned this perhaps shows itself most clearly when typology and symbolism are being discussed. For there is in the last analysis no method of *proving* a type or a symbol: recognizing symbol is a similar activity to creating it, and is not done by rule. A commentator must display his scholarly caution, of course, but eventually he ought to recognize that the 'kind of book' that John is writing positively demands an imaginative openness to symbol.

It is for this reason that occasional remarks of these commentators on typology are very revealing for the quality of their commentaries as a whole. When Sanders says that there is no more reason for discerning a meaning in the Samaritan woman's *five* husbands than there is for discerning meaning in Cana's *six* waterpots,

I cannot help feeling that he has got himself too close in to see! The same happens in Schnackenburg's dogmatic remark against Boismard on the verse: 'After two days he came again to Cana of Galilee'. Schnackenburg writes: 'The time given so exactly can scarcely have a symbolical meaning. . . . No doubt Hosea 6, 2 says "after two days he brings us to life"; but this is still not the two days of John 4, 43.' Surely a mind truly attuned to the literary impact of the whole work could not be so sure, so confident that allegory must be ruled out.

Brown is much more flexible here, and must, I think, be adjudged the most balanced of these commentaries. But the one that appeals most to me is Marsh. He is often far too bold about accepting a typological explanation without further discussion, but I suppose this is to be expected in a book which is aiming at presenting St John to a wider public than will normally read biblical commentaries. And, in any case, what one gains in exchange is invaluable. For one gains a sense of the book as a whole: and this is not only useful for the immediate reader but a vitally necessary correction at the scholarly level. Schnackenburg's scholarship is in some sense too weighty, in that the gospel never quite escapes being a 'subject of study'.

One would therefore recommend Schnackenburg only to scholars (and here it is a *must*); Brown to serious students as well; Marsh to everybody.

TIMOTHY MCDERMOTT, O.P.

THE TESTAMENT OF JESUS, by Ernst Käsemann. *SCM Press*, 1968. (German original, 1966.) 87 pp. 25s.

Another book recently published on John I find repulsive. This is the recent translation of the great German scholar Käsemann's 1966

Schaffer Lectures on chapter 17 of St John. The author anticipates this reaction: the lectures, he writes, 'may perhaps appear

offensive. . . . Anglo-Saxons are especially fond of the gospel of John and radical criticism at this point may offend'. Käsemann's thesis is that the gospel is actually a work of Gnostic tendency moving towards heresy, and got into the Church canon by a sort of providential mistake. There is much illuminating interpretation in the working out of this thesis, but what a world of insensitiveness and polemic one has to enter! Here I think is a book which

shows up by contrast the real excellences of German scholarship in a work such as Schnackenburg's. One may crave a little more 'Anglo-Saxon' literary imagination when reading Schnackenburg's monumental work, but one cannot accuse him of the sort of cul-de-sac exploration that seems to me to mar the small work of Käsemann.

TIMOTHY MCDERMOTT, O.P.

THE TITLES OF JESUS IN CHRISTOLOGY, by Ferdinand Hahn. *Lutterworth Press*, 1969. London. 415 pp. 75s.

'If anywhere in Christological titles, in regard to the "Son of Man", it may be considered that Jesus himself made use of this predicate': this is a specimen sentence from the work to be reviewed. If one estimates 15 such sentences to a page and about 300 pages of reading text, it will take you 4,500 times as long to read the whole book as it does for you to puzzle out that sentence. Well, no, not quite as long, since on quite a number of occasions puzzling out one sentence will give you a clue to the ones immediately before and after. Still, it will be quite a struggle.

Another thing you will have to consider is why you wish to read the book. There are books about Shakespeare concerned with the plays as works of art, and with reading, attending and understanding them as such; and there are books designed rather to explore how Shakespeare came to be written, from where he borrowed his ideas and plots, what certain sentences would have meant not precisely to him and his contemporary audience but to other authors and other audiences if they had occurred in other plays. Such work is often extremely interesting in its own right, and sometimes throws up information which is useful in actually understanding Shakespeare. So it is with books about the New Testament. Hahn's book is a really excellent work for those who wish to know what certain titles given to Christ (*viz.* Son of Man, Lord, Christ, Son of

David, Son of God) might have meant before Jesus' time, to Jesus himself, or to certain early circles in the Church. And occasionally this is of use in determining how the gospel-writers were using them; but the book is not explicitly about that. One must therefore avoid thinking that reading this book will make clear the gospels' view of Christ; it will on the contrary often make it more obscure. Only on condition that one knows where to fit such a book into a balanced study of the gospels, will its deep and thorough-going scholarship satisfy one rather than frustrate one. And even on occasion amuse one, as happened to me on reading the following comment on Mark 8, 27-33 (note the verse-numbers: 27-33): 'If we eliminate vv. 30, 31, 32a, b as also vv. 27b-29, the question naturally arises whether completely disconnected fragments do not remain.'

But then, if you are ready for such scholarship, would it not be better to learn German and buy a copy of the original work? For even in order to read the English translation you may well have to learn German and have a copy of the original by you. How else will you discover that the sentence with which this review opened really means: 'If there is any Christological title that Jesus himself may be considered to have used, it is that of "Son of Man" '?

TIMOTHY MCDERMOTT, O.P.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHURCH, by Patrick Verbraken. *Gill*, Dublin, 1968. 171 pp. 7s. 6d.
CETTE EGLISE QUE J'AIME, by Y. Congar, O.P. *Les Editions du Cerf*, Paris, 1968. 124 pp. N.P.
ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, AND APOSTOLIC. Studies in the nature and role of the Church in the modern world. Edited by Herbert Vorgrimler. *Sheed and Ward*, London, 1968. 236 pp. 42s.
THE AGONY OF THE CHURCH, by Theo Westow. *Sheed and Ward*, London, 1968. 232 pp. 32s. 6d.
CHRISTIANITY IN WORLD PERSPECTIVE, by Kenneth Cragg. *Lutterworth Press*, London, 1968. 227 pp. 30s.

First-rate reading matter on the Church is becoming less and less difficult to obtain in England—books on ecclesiology in the narrow sense, on Church structures and authority, on Church reform. To this rapidly growing pool

these present volumes must be welcomed, though with varying degrees of enthusiasm. To begin with perhaps the less significant—the two paperbacks by Verbraken and Congar.

Fr Verbraken's book is a survey of the first