

# Reviews

**MATTHEW 1–7, A COMMENTARY** by Ulrich Luz. E.T. by W.C. Linss, *T & T Clark*, Edinburgh, 1990. Pp. 460. £.24.95.

Luz's commentary, originally in the *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* series (1985), is designed for preachers and teachers. It attempts to separate older tradition from later redaction and, where possible, to distinguish nuances in the teaching of Jesus from its representation in the Matthaean context. But it does not leave the matter there. It highlights features of the interpretation of the text in subsequent Catholic and Protestant writings, and considers the text's meanings for Christian today.

Since most of Volume I of the commentary concerns the Sermon on the Mount, Luz repeatedly faces the problems that the radical nature of the teaching, given in the context of belief in the imminent eschaton, forces upon people who today have to consider the continuing effects of putting it into practice. For example, the prohibition of all oaths (5.33–37), the response to violence (5.38–42) and the admonition against judging (7.1–5) can seem naive once their long-term effects on society have to be estimated. But Luz suggests that in the present situation, since state churches have in fact become minority churches, Matthew's depiction of a minority community, which distinguishes itself from the world by its fellowship of forgiveness, could help to foster the renewal of the churches. Otherwise, he sees the churches losing credibility because of the contradiction between their proclamation and their life-style. Luz rightly refuses the easier option of interpreting the Sermon as an address simply to individuals. On the contrary, he emphasises the Sermon's insistence on the community's actively lived relationship to the world. He goes on to encourage modern churches to demonstrate their obedience to the will of their heavenly Father, not only in their own communities but also in all the secular realms of society. To do so, they will have to find political partners and argue political cases on the basis of a rational responsibility like that summarised in the golden rule (Matthew 7.12), while at the same time they will need to develop a more radically generous, alternative way of life for themselves.

Luz also faces another problem in his elucidation of the Sermon within Christian traditions, the problem of Christian anti-semitism. Here he has repeatedly to warn against the caricature of Judaism which prevails in Christian writings. He demonstrates the common concerns and their expressions in Jewish and Christian writings in the first century, although his reliance on Strack-Billerbeck occasionally leads him to make false claims for Jesus's uniqueness (e.g. p. 365 on Matthew 6.8).

In view of Luz's achievement, it may seem petty to add reservations about some of his theses. They are important, however, for an understanding of the history of the tradition. Luz accepts the hypothesis that Matthew used Mark's Gospel, a sayings source (Q), and other sources. He tries to solve the difficulties this hypothesis causes by suggesting that the Gospel of Mark used by Matthew was different from that which has come down to us, and that the version of Q used by Matthew was different from that used by Luke. He never seriously considers whether Luke used both Matthew and Mark. Moreover, he argues that the author of the first Gospel and the community in which he wrote were Jewish Christians, not Gentile Christians. This he suggests because the Jewish Scriptures were accepted as authoritative. But that was as true for Gentile Christians as it was for Jewish ones. He interprets the final command of the risen Jesus, to make disciples of all nations, as a Matthaean attempt to broaden the mission of his own community, but it can be understood differently, as a necessary link between the Jewish mission of Jesus and his original disciples, depicted in the story, and the Gentile converts by whom and for whom the Gospel was written.

MEG DAVIES

**THE GENIUS OF ST DOMINIC**, by Marie-Humbert Vicaire OP.  
*Dominican Publications, Nagpur. Pp xvi + 259. \$9.95.*

Although there is nothing entirely new in this collection, *The Genius of St Dominic* brings together articles which have not all been previously printed together—only three out of the eight chapters come from *Dominique et ses Prêcheurs*; and only two of them have ever been published before in English. So this book is welcome from several points of view, particularly as the translations are, on the whole, readable and intelligible. One article is included which may have escaped the notice of those who are familiar with Father Vicaire's writings in French, since it first appeared in German in 1983: it is a genial portrayal of St Dominic's spiritual temperament, which the author himself has described as his 'definitive study' of the saint. The focus of the book is on what may loosely be termed 'spirituality', which is perhaps a pity, as it means that the selection is somewhat unbalanced, being biassed in favour of the inspirational pieces at the expense of more substantial contributions to our knowledge. Thus, whereas Vicaire's important article on Dominican poverty is included, more strictly historical articles are omitted, such as the one of St Dominic and the Inquisition which gives a most useful outline of the genesis and development of the historically impossible belief that Dominic was the first Inquisitor. But we may hope that in due course more of Vicaire's articles may be translated into English, so that readers who do not know French can benefit more directly from the immense service which Father Vicaire has rendered to Dominican historians.

SIMON TUGWELL OP