

Gospel according to Matthew. 1971.  
Edward Schweizer, *Matthew's Church*. 1974.

Robert Morgan translated from German into English for the first time the papers by von Dobschütz, Michel, Luz, Schweizer, and the first part of Strecker's study. Professor Stanton provides brief notes about contributors, a select bibliography, a short index of subjects, and an index of Matthaean references, as well as an 18-page introduction. He suggests that important historical, exegetical and hermeneutical questions have been raised about the first Gospel in the last 20 years, and selects seminal studies in these areas. In discussing each of them, he draws attention to other works which support, develop or criticise the theses advanced. The papers are placed in historical order and illustrate the development of redaction-criticism. The editor half apologises for failing to include studies on Matthew's use of the Old Testament, his attitude to the Law, and the relationship of his community to contemporary Judaism.

A student reading these papers will gain a clear understanding of the methods, presuppositions and interests of typical New Testament scholarly work since the 1950s. Professor Stanton believes that in future progress will be made by setting questions in a wider context of Jewish-Christian relations in the first two centuries. This is probably true, and the volumes edited by E.P. Sanders *Jewish and Christian Self-definition SCM*, 1971, 1981, 1982 provide a useful starting point. However, this will give a surer grounding only for historical questions. In addition, what seems to be necessary is a much broader awareness of developments outside of Biblical Studies altogether. A claustrophobic atmosphere pervades the volume. Exegetical and hermeneutical questions need to be set in the context of discussions by philosophers and literary critics, whose concern is not with the New Testament but from whom New Testament critics can learn. Theology need no longer be conducted in the ghetto. It can take advantage of being a university subject.

MARGARET PAMMENT

**VISIONARIES AND THEIR APOCALYPSES, edited by Paul Hanson. *SPCK and Fortress*. 1983. pp 162**

This volume is one of a new series entitled 'Issues in Religion and Theology' which will bring together scholarly essays which have proved significant in dealing with important topics. Such collections are worth having if the contents are not easily accessible elsewhere and if they are fairly cheap. Most of the essays in this book are written by American scholars and are readily available. For instance, Norman Perrin's article on 'Apocalyptic Christianity' which comes from his New Testament Introduction. The two contributions by Michael Stone are taken from his recent book 'Scripture, Sects and Visions'.

Most of the essays deal with the standard problems of what the genre of apocalyptic consists of and of how it arose (from prophecy, wisdom, Persian dualism etc.) The most interesting essay I

found came from a non-biblical perspective. J.Z. Smith looks at apocalyptic from a wider standpoint, that of comparative religion. He sees the motifs in apocalyptic within the archaic religions of the Near East and in fact typical of all modes of Hellenistic religiosity. After studying both Babylonian and Egyptian texts he concludes that apocalypticism 'is wisdom lacking a royal court and patron and therefore it surfaces during the period of Late Antiquity not as a response to religious persecution but as an expression of the trauma of the cessation of native kingship' (115). Another interesting essay is John Collins' 'Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death'. The difference for him between prophecy and apocalyptic is not so much in the idea of 'definitive end' or 'the distinction of two

periods' but in its notion of the transcendence of death. What is interesting about Collins' article is that he does try to draw some theological conclusions from what he has written. That does not seem to occupy most of the authors, and yet the editor in his introduction, written for this volume, ends his survey of apocalyptic with some suggestions about the future shape of apocalyptic studies, and here he hints at the need for some theological answers. What can we expect from the future? This is, after all, a very apocalyptic question. Well, he hopes for more scholarly studies, i.e. better critical texts and better attempts to state what the essential nature of apocalyptic is. But surely we might expect a little more light on the theological significance of apocalyptic as we wait for the end. He is aware that his subject is quite a dangerous one for millions of people. He says soberly 'We have noted that the mood of the times has contributed to the current interest in our subject'. Having gained a surprisingly

large audience do the scholars then have anything to say to it? If they do not respond there are plenty of what Hanson calls sensationalising pseudo-scholars 'who seek only to exploit popular curiosity for personal attention...' (13). Hanson tells scholars who may have 'a loathing for such exploitation' to meet the challenge of taking common readers seriously enough to offer them responsible scholarship on this important and relevant material in an idiom they can understand'. On the whole, the common reader, whoever he or she is, may find the idiom of this book too inaccessible. As an example of what might be achieved I would turn to J. Beker who is not included here. Having written his large scholarly book on Paul, he turned to a more common audience in *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel* and tried to show what difference an apocalyptic approach to life makes, as we wait for the end. Perhaps this is what the editor is looking for.

DAVID SANDERS O.P.

**ALAN OF LILLE: THE FRONTIERS OF THEOLOGY IN THE LATER TWELFTH CENTURY** by G.R. Evans. *C.U.P.*, Pp. 249. £25.00

Alan of Lille was one of the most wide-ranging writers of the later twelfth century. Today he is remembered most often as a poet and allegorist; but Dr Evans prefers to see Alan as a theologian. Her new book builds on ideas about Alan she has already put forward in a number of articles, sections of which are incorporated in this study. She examines Alan's concern with the limits of human language: the need for the ordinary rules of logic and grammar to be transformed in theological use. She goes on to discuss Alan's attempt to provide a set of rules specifically for theology. A lucid section is devoted to Alan's practical theology. Evans illustrates his use of set-topics both in the theory and practice of preaching, and argues for his originality in bringing together, in a single volume, material for the defenders of orthodoxy against its four main twelfth-century adversaries—the Cathars, the Waldensians, the Jews and the Moslems.

Finally, Evans examines the *Anticlaudianus*, Alan's allegorical verse epic. She argues that it should be considered a daring piece of theology because it tells of the creation of a man who is perfect and overcomes vice, and yet is not, like Christ, also God. Her view is difficult to accept, since it seems to overlook the fact that the *Anticlaudianus*, as Alan stresses in his preface, is an allegory. It is intended, neither directly to repeat Scripture, nor to contradict it, but rather to furnish a myth which the proficient interpreter will understand as consistent with Christian truth. The daring of the *Anticlaudianus* is not theological but imaginative.

Evans's treatment has some large gaps. Neither the *De Planctu Naturae* (an allegorical prosimetrum widely read in the Middle Ages) nor the *Summa quoniam homines* (Alan's most sustained piece of systematic theology) is discussed except in passing. Indeed, Evans says very little at