

development.

Not that the author fails to emphasise and document afresh the familiar themes of late medieval and Reformation study. Justification in Augustine, Karlstadt and Luther; the *moderation* of Luther's 95 Theses; the centrality of Justification in the Reformation; the *time* of Luther's "breakthrough" and the *Türmererlebnis* (although we would have welcomed a reference to Gordon Rupp's crushing review of Iserloh in J.T.S.); Luther and Mysticism; Luther and Neoplatonism; Luther's *Anfechtung*; Luther's "Righteousness of God" leading to the *Theologia Crucis*. There are useful pages on the humanist movement (as the "essential catalyst" for the Reformation, rather than its "cause"), on God's *potentia absoluta/ordinata* with the necessarily implied distinction of *necessitas coactionis/consequentiae*, on the *opus proprium/alienum Dei*, and much else.

Nor can the general soundness of the author's judgements—historical or theological—be impugned. The vindication of Luther's own "theology of the cross", with its far-reaching implications, proceeds apace, and may well lead in the fulness of time to that Catholic-Protestant *rapprochement* for which the Church and the Christian world is (or should be) yearning. Where this book disappoints is in constructive theological exposition. The mountainous learning leads to a final chapter ("The origins and Significance of the Theology of the Cross") of six pages, which tells us hardly anything we had not absorbed long ago from the standard works of Philip Watson, Gordon Rupp, Ebeling and the rest. *Parturiunt montes*——. It is to be hoped that the forthcoming three-volume *magnum opus* will give us something far more momentous doctrinally and theologically.

B. DREWERY

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK. Martin Hengel. Translated by John Bowden. SCM Press. 1985. £8.50. Pp. xiv + 206.

Professor Hengel's latest book is a collection of three separate essays which originally appeared in German in various publications. It includes, also, a much earlier paper by a classical philologist, Wolfgang Schadewalt, introduced here by his widow, on 'The Reliability of the Synoptic Tradition'. Like many of his classical colleagues, Schadewalt chides New Testament scholars for their scepticism on historical questions; but while one applauds his proposal that they should not neglect to use common sense, his appeal to 'the smell of truth' does nothing to solve the critical problems, and his contribution does not seem to offer any significantly new approach.

Professor Hengel's own contributions are more constructive. In his first essay he argues, in contrast to much recent work on Mark, for the reliability of the tradition which links the Gospel with Peter and with Rome, and maintains that there is little sign of the concerns of the community in the content of the Gospel. On the basis of Mark 13, he argues that the Gospel can be dated to the year A.D. 69, before the destruction of the Temple, since the predictions of catastrophe do not reflect what actually took place.

The second essay is concerned with 'Literary, Theological and Historical Problems in the Gospel of Mark', and these three themes are held together. Professor Hengel rejects those views of the Gospel which neglect historical questions, but he rejects also views which deny Mark literary expertise or theological reflection. He maintains that Mark is a writer of great literary skill who presents the Gospel as a dramatic narrative, but at the same time he insists that Mark's careful handling of the material is combined with fidelity to the tradition and history. He protests against the 'either-or' approach, which has led scholars to suppose 'that they had to decide between preaching and historical narration' (p. 41).

The final essay is concerned with the titles of the Gospels, and attacks the common assumption that the Gospels were originally circulated without titles: they must, Hengel argues, have been distinguished from an early stage by a reference to the assumed author, and the traditions which associate particular individuals with particular Gospels can be

traced back to the last thirty years of the first century A.D.

Though Professor Hengel's arguments represent a 'conservative' approach to historical questions, they are by no means a mere repetition of old positions. His work demonstrates a great deal of the 'common sense' for which Schadewalt appeals, and his insistence that one should adopt a 'both-and' approach rather than an 'either-or' one is likely to be welcomed in this country at least. Professor Hengel is surely right to urge that in reading Mark we do not need to opt for either historical tradition *or* theological proclamation. Paradoxically, however, the more one is persuaded by Hengel's arguments for 'historical reminiscence', the less basis there is for his thesis that Mark's Gospel rests on the authority of Peter and on Peter's own understanding of the Gospel: for are not the references to Peter simply part of the historical reminiscence?

On the question of dating, it is surprising that the discussion of Mark 13 deals in detail with the opening verses, but not with the latter part of the chapter; when the chapter is considered as a whole, the thesis that Jerusalem has not yet been destroyed seems less impressive. Moreover, the argument that the chapter does not reflect the actual events of A.D. 70 conflicts with Professor Hengel's belief that Mark is writing in Rome, and so 'knows very little of actual events' in Palestine. It is also surprising to find on p. 7 a bold reference to 'the fact that it is now established that Mark is the earliest Gospel'; the work of W.R. Farmer (whether one agrees with him or not!) surely deserves a reference in a book which is elsewhere so well documented.

Nevertheless, these careful studies are a welcome reminder that Mark's Gospel deserves to be studied in relation to Christian origins, and that historical questions cannot be abandoned. It is to be hoped that they will not be misunderstood as supporting an uncritical appeal to the historical. For Professor Hengel is concerned to recognise literary and theological factors as well as historical, and though some readers will believe that he has laid undue stress on the 'reliability' of Mark, he balances this with a recognition of the role played by theological reflection: the debate will centre on the question as to whether Hengel has got this balance right—and to that question, the answers are likely to be as many and as varied as his readers.

MORNA D. HOOKER

FEMINIST INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE edited by Letty M. Russell. *Basil Blackwell*. 1985. h/b £17.50, p/b £7.95

The feminist writing in this volume seeks to counter the suggestion that the Bible is to be dismissed as a hopelessly patriarchal expression of religious sensibility by discovering within its books intimations of female liberation which can become a source of inspiration for Christian and Jewish communities. The essays are divided into three parts. The first traces an awakening of feminist consciousness, the second exemplifies feminist interpretations of Biblical texts, and the third examines feminist critical principles. So Christian and Jewish feminists are viewed as prophets, highlighting forgotten traditions in their announcement of judgement on the patriarchy of contemporary culture (chapter 4), and destabilising the ideologies that support the social order (chapter 9). The Bible is understood 'not as mythic archetype but as a historical prototype' which provides a sense both of on-going history and of Christian or Jewish identity (p. 136).

Readers will find this a lucid introduction to the subject, which sheds as much light upon the difficulties of the project as upon its achievements.

MEG DAVIES