

scholarship; they are certainly important for understanding contemporary American research on the Fourth Gospel.

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JOHN P. MEIER, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church and Morality in the First Gospel* (Theological Inquiries; New York/Ramsey/Toronto: Paulist, 1979). Pp. viii + 270. Paper \$5.95.

This is Fr. Meier's second book on the Gospel of Matthew (see *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel* [AnBib 71; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1971]) and represents a summary as well as an expansion of the views expressed in his first work. As such, this second volume is a very welcome addition.

The rationale for this particular volume is provided by M. in the introductory section and consists of two foci. First of all, the work is presented explicitly against the background of J. D. Kingsbury's *Matthew: Structure, Christology and Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975). Thus, M. will argue against Kingsbury that the title Son of Man is as central to Matthew's christology as that of Son of God and that the bond between Christ and his church is the characteristic mark of Matthew's christology. Secondly, the recent CTSA report on *Human Sexuality* (New York: Paulist, 1977) constitutes the other focus. Disturbed by the treatment given the NT data in that report, M. sees the need for a more rigorous consideration of such data. The present volume, therefore, is also conceived as an attempt to understand Matthew's morality within the above-mentioned overall context of his theology of Christ and the Church. Such concerns, it may be observed, account for the subtitle of the work.

The volume is divided into three main parts. Part I provides a very basic introduction to the literary, historical, and theological background of the Gospel. Part II seeks to show that the special characteristic of Matthew's Gospel is the nexus between Christ and the church. Part III provides a detailed examination of Matt 5:17-48.

M.'s basic position in part I is that Matthew was probably a learned Gentile Christian writing in Syria in the 80s. By that time, he argues, this particular Christian community had changed drastically in composition (from a Jewish Christian to a Gentile Christian constituency) and was faced with rather severe problems resulting from this transformation.

As such, Matthew's role emerges as one of "remodeling," i.e., of providing a new view of salvation-history designed to deal with these problems. Thus, on the one hand, he uses apocalyptic motifs to present the death-resurrection of Jesus as the turning point in salvation-history. Such an event is presented as bringing the believer into a new age, free of the barriers of nation, race, and the Mosaic Law. On the other hand, he also posits a coming judgment by Jesus as the Son of Man that awaits the church as a whole. All believers will be judged on the fundamental criterion of having lived according to the teachings of the earthly Jesus. Thus, in effect, Jesus Christ, the church, and morality become mutually dependent themes in this new view of salvation-history.

In part II M. proceeds to trace and define the relationships that exist among these three themes by means of a “mini”-commentary on the entire Gospel. His conclusions are as follows: (1) Jesus is *the* teacher of morality; (2) he not only embodies and grounds the life that he teaches, but also enables others to imitate him by means of his death-resurrection; (3) Jesus entrusts the church with the commission to teach and interpret his commands; (4) the title Son of Man crystallizes all these interlocking christological and ecclesiological dimensions. Finally, in part III, the general contours of Christian morality are made much more specific by a detailed consideration of Matt 5:17-20, 21-48.

I believe that M. has successfully attained his two major goals. First of all, he establishes conclusively that: (1) the title Son of Man is, indeed, central to the Gospel, and (2) the nexus between Christ and the church is the characteristic feature of Matthean christology. Secondly, he places Matthew's moral teaching firmly within this larger framework of the Gospel. Furthermore, he does so with a style that is very clear, concise, and easy to follow. The use of the commentary method is particularly good: M. does show a feeling for context that makes his arguments much more persuasive.

I would simply express two minor reservations. First, it is somewhat difficult to determine the particular audience which M. is addressing. On the one hand, parts II and III would be beyond the capacity of most undergraduates. On the other, the volume lacks that sustained detailed exposition and critical apparatus that would be *de rigueur* in a volume meant for scholars only. On the whole, therefore, I would see the volume as being particularly helpful for beginning graduate students, although the thesis itself would certainly be of interest and benefit to the scholar. Secondly, the commentary-method can also have disadvantages, e.g., it tends to become in and of itself a bit diffuse and repetitious. Nevertheless, the book presents a solidly established and clearly presented thesis and is, as mentioned above, a very welcome addition.

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EBERHARD NESTLE, ERWIN NESTLE, KURT ALAND, MATTHEW BLACK, CARLO M. MARTINI, BRUCE M. METZGER, ALLEN WIKGREN (eds.), *Novum Testamentum graece* (26th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979). Pp. 78* + 780. DM 18.

The long-awaited 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum graece* (N-A²⁶) has appeared and will undoubtedly become the new “received text” of the NT. This edition supersedes both the N-A²⁵ (1963) and the *UBSGNT*³ (1975) editions and represents a combination of certain features of each as well as improvements upon them.

The working of the text of the NT in N-A²⁶ is identical to that of *UBSGNT*³ as established by its editors K. Aland, M. Black, C. M. Martini, B. M. Metzger and A. Wikgren. Since that text has already been discussed (e.g., in reviews of B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [*CBQ* 37 [1975] 134-36 by E. J. Epp and *Bib* 55 [1974] 452-55 by G. D. Fee]), this review will focus on other features of



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