

problem areas in Old Testament theology, and then much more detailed excursuses setting out the history of scholarly debate, with normal footnotes. This attempt to do everything in a unilinear, integrated form reduces what could have been a masterly one-man encyclopedia to a jungle of names, dates, and titles which only the most intrepid will venture into. Happily this will not reduce its value as a classified bibliography, a task which it will fulfil admirably for years to come.

JOHN BARTON

ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE OLD TESTAMENT, edited by Bernhard Lang. *S.P.C.K./Fortress Press, London/Philadelphia, 1985. Pp 175. Paperback. No price given.*

This is volume 8 in the 'Issues in Religion and Theology' series, which performs a valuable service in collecting together significant essays on particular themes.

The present volume deals with an especially influential area of concern in contemporary Old Testament studies, namely the dialogue between social anthropologists and Old Testament specialists which has gained considerable impetus over the past two decades.

Here are to be found essays by a distinguished group of scholars, including Edmund Leach, Mary Douglas, and Isaac Schapera. All have appeared in English elsewhere, but are very handily collected within one cover here. The range of concerns is broad, from John Rogerson's incisive re-examination of the Hebrew conception of corporate personality to Lang's own study of the social organization of peasant poverty in biblical Israel, and yet a pleasing series of interconnections between essays makes this a surprisingly coherent collection.

In his useful introductory chapter 'Anthropology as a New Model for Biblical Studies' (not previously published), Bernhard Lang (one of the liveliest of the younger generation of German Old Testament scholars, who has himself studied Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics) sketches the main areas and methods of investigation and the developments that have occurred over the past twenty years, showing how the application of these insights to the study of the Old Testament world has greatly contributed to our understanding of its religion, as well as its social and cultural setting. Lang writes, 'I venture to predict that what may now look like the fringe activity of a few anthropologists interested in the Bible and biblical scholars dissatisfied with more traditional ways of exegesis will develop into a recognized, established approach.... Biblical scholars as well as students will need to acquire some anthropological experience, if only by admitting other kinds of books to their shelves'.

PAUL JOYCE

SIR EDWYN HOSKYN AS A BIBLICAL THEOLOGIAN by Richard E. Parsons, C. Hurst & Co., London, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1986, pp. 151, £15.

When I went up to read theology at Cambridge in 1937, Hoskyns was but recently dead. His memory was vivid and his reputation was still contentious. He had been one of the scholar-preachers who gave voice to their Christian convictions and had therefore been treated with coolness by other scholars who were more reserved and seldom went beyond academic convictions. From those who had known him, and especially from Noel Davey, his pupil and collaborator, I began to learn his methods. By these I and others were profoundly influenced. Some of us could say things in a Barthian manner—and he had translated Barth's *Romans*—though without much Barthian understanding on our part. We eagerly adopted *Wörterbuch* studies as displayed in *The Riddle* and the splendid *Cambridge Sermons*. And when the commentary on *John* came out in 1940 I had it as a

prize, and for the first time discovered that the Fourth Gospel could have a coherent meaning. I went to the Hoskyns tradition not for technical learning but for method in study and for the possibility of an interpretation that was also a confession of faith.

Methods in study have greatly changed in fifty years. The *Wörterbuch* style of word study has been severely criticized, though it may still be used with discretion. The discovery that the repetition of biblical concepts does not lead to church renewal has diminished the former popularity of 'Biblical Theology'. And the aim of justifying confessional positions—in Hoskyns' case an Anglican form of liberal Catholicism—by judicious reading of scripture lacks integrity. Hence I cannot agree with Mr. Parsons that 'a patient study of Hoskyns' provides some of the clues to the unresolved questions' in theology today. I cannot now re-read the famous commentary on John with patience and profit—as I still can the commentary by R.H. Lightfoot which was published later and yet is more antique in style than Hoskyns.

And yet Mr. Parsons' well-written book, which gained him a higher degree of the University of London, is to be commended. It begins by describing the historical background of Hoskyns' work in the inter-action of Liberal Catholic, Liberal Protestant and Modernist parties in Britain and his knowledge of movements of thought among German theologians. The main part of the book examines the earlier stage of his work, the creation of *The Riddle of the New Testament*, and finally the Barthian style of the Commentary on John and its place within the modern expansion of Johannine studies. That indeed is a very competitive movement, and no doubt it is right that Hoskyns should not go unnoticed when there are six other fine commentaries all demanding attention.

K. GRAYSTON

WHY IS THERE A NEW TESTAMENT? by Joseph F. Kelly. *Geoffrey Chapman*. 1986. p/b £8.96. Pp. 200.

'This book is about how the New testament came into being in the life of the early church' (p. 15). It is aimed at the non-specialist and presents, where possible, a consensus view of history, while taking account of scholarly debate. It is a clear and sensible narrative, which concentrates on the first four centuries of the Christian era, depicting in what circumstances writings which came to form the New Testament were written, what other Christian writings existed, when, where and how selections were made and a canon gradually defined, how manuscripts were produced and what manuscript evidence survives from which a critical text may be compiled, what was translated, when and where, and finally, the influence of N.T. writings on the lives of ordinary people in the early church, seen through their spirituality and their iconography. The dialectical relationship between writing and community is always kept in view. Black and white photographs illustrate points from the text, and a bibliography leads interested readers to further studies. There is also a glossary of technical terms. While providing a reliable introduction to the subject, the book successfully engages the reader in its concerns.

MARGARET DAVIES