

between Apocalypse and other Johannine writings needs no demonstration" (p. 60). The literary genre is not apocalyptic but prophecy,—prophecy, however, in the sense that it gives witness to the effects among us of the first coming of Jesus, a coming which "was only the culminating and concluding moment of a revelation of God which had its beginning at the act of creation" (p. 29; cf. pp. 21-36). The recurring themes which C. finds in Revelation are those of creation and fall (of both man and the angels); God's saving intervention in the history of Israel and Israel's subsequent lapse into political messianism (as a result of which Judaism appears in Revelation as both the prostitute of chap. 17 and the beast from the earth of chap. 13); and, of course, the redemptive death of Christ, which, as Revelation makes clear at 13:8, has been going on "before the foundation of the world" (pp. 152-53).

There are some fine sections in this book, especially C.'s interpretation of Rev 8:1,5; 11:19; and 15:8 as allusions to the end of the Jewish cult. This latter point is argued persuasively and would indeed forge a strong link between Revelation and the Fourth Gospel. Curiously, C. appears not to be familiar with Austin Farrer's *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), which, with its own very carefully constructed presentation of the liturgical background to Revelation, offers an alternative to C.'s work.

There are also real problems with this book, inconsistencies which give the reader pause when weighing its merits. C. says, at first, that the seven letters (an integral part of Revelation for C.) "are not real letters" (p. 102). But then, a few pages later, he says that they are probably "real" in part: "It also appears clear from the actual list of names that are given with precise geographical identification, that John has something to say to these particular communities" (p. 110). More disconcerting is his statement about numbers: "A distinction is made between perfect numbers (*even*) and imperfect numbers (*uneven*). . . . Ten and multiples of ten are considered an indication of an indefinite and not yet perfected reality" (p. 44, italics mine). Is ten an even number? Then it should be perfect. Is *seven* not an uneven number? Yet for C. seven represents at some points perfection (pp. 94-95, 284) and at others, imperfection (p. 168). What is one to make of such apparent contradictions? The suspicion is created that we are in the presence of a not too adroit juggling act.

Very clearly it will not be easy for anyone to evaluate this book. Much will depend upon the individual reader's conviction that C. has, or has not, interpreted the pervasive symbolism of Revelation correctly. Nevertheless the work deserves a careful, attentive reading, if for no other reason than that its conclusions radically alter the perspective from which one reads this perennially enigmatic book of the NT.

*J. Edgar Bruns, Archbishop Antoine Blanc Memorial, New Orleans, LA 70116*

R. ALAN CULPEPPER, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Foundations and Facets: New Testament; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). Pp. xii + 266. \$19.95.

The present volume represents a major shift in critical perspective and exegetical approach for the author. In his dissertation published in 1975 (*The Johannine*

*School: An Evaluation of the Johannine-School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools* [SBLDS 26; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1975]), Culpepper pursued what can best be described as a combination of a history-of-religions approach and a historical approach to the Johannine literature, viz., an investigation of the essential components of ancient schools or school-like communities as well as an analysis of the origin, nature, and history of the Johannine school, properly defined.

With the present volume C. adopts a thoroughgoing literary approach to the study of the Fourth Gospel narrative. As such, the work reflects the recent widespread discontent with the more traditional exegetical methods of biblical criticism and follows the direction of much recent Marcan scholarship. It should be emphasized, however, that in so doing C.'s purpose is not to abandon completely or replace existing methods but to correct and balance them. The emphasis, therefore, is, as the subtitle clearly indicates, on the Gospel as a whole: how the story is told, why it is told as it is, and its effect upon the reader.

Although well versed in the work of many contemporary literary critics, C.'s main theoretical model is a communications model derived from the work of Seymour Chatman. At a very basic level, the model sees every story as presupposing a teller, the story itself, and an audience. The chapters of the volume are then organized around these essential elements: chap. 2 focuses on the teller—the narrator and point of view; chap. 7 examines the audience—the implied reader; chaps. 3 through 6 analyze various components of the story—narrative time, plot, characterization, and implicit commentary. Each chapter follows the same basic line of presentation. A beginning section provides an introduction to and a discussion of the technical terms and concepts used with respect to the component in question in the light of recent critical theory. This initial exposition is then followed by an analysis of the Fourth Gospel narrative from the particular literary perspective in question.

The volume is intended to be introductory in character and scope. In the conclusion to his introduction, C. himself describes it as a "tentative step in a new direction" (p. 11). Thus, for example, the author is careful to explain what the different terms and concepts of literary analysis mean and entail. Similarly, his summary of the critical discussion is always lean, clear, and to the point. Finally, his analysis of the text is direct and unobtrusive, bypassing for the most part references to and evaluations of previous exegetical positions on any one verse or passage.

In that same introduction the author expresses the hope that his effort will be judged on the basis of "its capacity to expose new considerations, explain features of the gospel, and stimulate greater appreciation for its literary design" (p. 11). I believe that on all counts the work may be judged a success. First of all, although many of these literary elements in question have received attention in traditional Johannine scholarship, such attention has generally been of a partial or peripheral nature. I am thinking here of such elements as plot and implicit commentary (misunderstanding, irony, symbolism). At the same time, other literary elements have been generally disregarded if not entirely bypassed. I would list among these the role of the narrator, point of view, and characterization. C.'s effort to focus on such aspects of the text in a direct and sustained manner is justified and welcome.

In conclusion, in terms of its stated aim (to focus on the literary design of the text) and explicit character (introductory), I find the volume to be very helpful and suggestive. In terms of its given rationale (a balance to the more traditional approaches), it is quite sober and judicious. In terms of presentation, development and argumentation, it is lucid and readable.

*Fernando F. Segovia, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN 37240*

WILLIAM R. FARMER, *Jesus and the Gospel: Tradition, Scripture, and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982). Pp. xiv + 300. \$21.95.

Twenty years ago William R. Farmer made his mark upon the world of biblical scholarship by boldly challenging the widely held two-source theory in his study, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Review of the Problem of the Literary Relationships Between Matthew, Mark and Luke* (New York: Macmillan, 1964). In place of Marcan priority and the Q-hypothesis, F. argued in favor of the Griesbach solution to the synoptic problem, viz., that Matthew was written first; Luke used Matthew; and Mark, written last, used both Matthew and Luke.

In the present volume F. seeks to widen the scope of study for the synoptic problem by linking the Griesbach solution to the emergence of the NT canon. A major effect of this broadened approach, however, is to keep F.'s discussion of the synoptic problem on a general, abstract level. For instance, in a section entitled "Canonical Criticism of Mark" (pp. 165-76), F. presents Mark as a careful conflation of Matthew and Luke designed to make them acceptable by omitting the contradictions between them (e.g., the beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, and the nativity and resurrection narratives). But specific texts in Mark defy this "reconciling" role. For example, the disciples in Mark are portrayed more negatively than in either Matthew or Luke (cf., e.g., Mark 4:13/Matt 13:18/Luke 8:11; Mark 8:14-21/Matt 16:5-12/Luke 12:1). Or again, whereas Matthew refers to God as Father 45 times and Luke 17 times, Mark "reduces" these uses to just 4 (cf. J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1901] 32).

A complaint leveled against *The Synoptic Problem* (which focused on Mark) was that F. ignored the distinct theologies of the individual gospels (see T. A. Burkill, *Christian Century* 81 [1964] 1430). In the present study, F. concentrates on Matthew as the first written gospel, which functions as the logical link between the OT and NT. Its author is hailed as "the gospel genre pioneer." But few of the consensus points developed by Matthean scholars in the last two decades find their way into F.'s discussion.

Other criticisms brought against F. in his earlier work are also valid here. Regarding the synoptic problem, F. continues "straining after what is called the 'truth' of the matter" when only a hypothesis or theory is possible (see J. Fitzmyer, *To Advance the Gospel* [New York: Crossroad, 1981] 4). This is highlighted by the fact that, while F. repeatedly refers to the two-document *hypothesis*, he never uses the



---

#### Copyright and Use:

**As an ATLAS user, you may print, download, or send articles for individual use according to fair use as defined by U.S. and international copyright law and as otherwise authorized under your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement.**

**No content may be copied or emailed to multiple sites or publicly posted without the copyright holder(s)' express written permission. Any use, decompiling, reproduction, or distribution of this journal in excess of fair use provisions may be a violation of copyright law.**

This journal is made available to you through the ATLAS collection with permission from the copyright holder(s). The copyright holder for an entire issue of a journal typically is the journal owner, who also may own the copyright in each article. However, for certain articles, the author of the article may maintain the copyright in the article. Please contact the copyright holder(s) to request permission to use an article or specific work for any use not covered by the fair use provisions of the copyright laws or covered by your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement. For information regarding the copyright holder(s), please refer to the copyright information in the journal, if available, or contact ATLA to request contact information for the copyright holder(s).

#### About ATLAS:

The ATLA Serials (ATLAS®) collection contains electronic versions of previously published religion and theology journals reproduced with permission. The ATLAS collection is owned and managed by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and received initial funding from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The design and final form of this electronic document is the property of the American Theological Library Association.