

ED. L. MILLER, *Salvation-History in the Prologue of John: The Significance of John 1:3-4* (NovTSup 60; Leiden/New York/Copenhagen: Brill, 1989). Pp. [ix] + 119. HfI 60, \$30.

This volume is quite traditional in several respects. First of all, it represents a traditional exercise in both textual and redaction criticism, with a primary focus on the very difficult question regarding the proper punctuation, division, and interpretation of 1:3-4. Secondly, the volume also adopts a rather traditional view of the Gospel's origins and historical reliability: the Beloved Disciple passed on to his disciples traditions based on his eyewitness accounts of Jesus, one of whom incorporated these traditions into the original Gospel, the Fourth Gospel "proper." Finally, the volume further reflects a traditional theological position, largely formulated in opposition to R. Bultmann: any Christian theology must justify itself not only on the biblical witness as a whole but also on concrete texts that give expression to such a theology. "Salvation-history"—as espoused by O. Cullmann, under whom Miller studied and to whom the volume is dedicated—is such a theology and can indeed be found in the Fourth Gospel. These three foci are very much interrelated: the reading of John 1:3-4 that is adopted yields an early christological hymn with a very clear theology of "salvation-history," quite in keeping with the theological standpoint of the Gospel as a whole.

This reading is set within a very specific view of the growth of the Johannine tradition, all of which is attributed to the same individual. Four stages are distinguished in all: (1) a Fourth Gospel "proper" (1:19-20:31)—with some exceptions, M. resists all discussion of sources, strata, or redactions in favor of the fundamental unity of the work; (2) an expanded version of this Gospel, issued upon the death of the Beloved Disciple and with John 21 as a conclusion; (3) 1 John, though it is not specified whether the Letter comes after the first or the second edition of the Gospel (the specific location of 2 and 3 John in this compositional history is left quite open as well); (4) the Prologue to the Gospel (1:1-18), partly modelled after 1 John 1:1-4. However, contrary to the Gospel as a whole, this final piece, described as a literary and theological unity in "essential relationship" to the Gospel, is assigned a complex redactional history: (1) a foundational christological hymn (1:1a-b,3-5); (2) early additions consisting of short Johannine pieces and quotations (1:9-14,16-18); (3) attachment to the Gospel, with an eventual dislocation of the latter's beginning (1:6-8) and some overlapping (1:15); (4) some minor interpolations (1:1c,2), also found throughout the Gospel. The volume is specifically concerned, therefore, with the hymn that serves as the very core of the Prologue.

First of all, John 1:1a-b,3-5 is described as a complete christological hymn with four stanzas (1:1a-b,3,4,5). Secondly, the *crux interpretum* of 1:3-4 is resolved as follows: (1) Following both the stronger textual tradition and the principle of *lectio difficilior*, the relative clause, *ho gegonen* (= "what came to be"), marks the beginning of 1:4. (2) Following minority opinion, a comma is placed not after the relative clause itself but rather after the prepositional phrase that follows, *en autō* (= "what came to be in him"). (3) Again following minority opinion, the verb *ginomai* refers at this point not to the created world (as in 1:3) but rather to the historical incarnation of

the Logos (=“what appeared in him was life”). Finally, the hymn as a whole is said to yield a clear theology of “salvation-history” in the development of its four stanzas: preexistent relationship of Logos to God; creative relationship to the world; incarnate, saving relationship to human beings; and victorious relationship to evil.

The best part of this work by far is the extensive and detailed discussion regarding the textual and interpretive problems associated with 1:3-4. This is really the heart of the work, and it is very carefully formulated and developed; the author has done an excellent job in this regard. At the same time, I would express some reservations. The proposed solution I do not find persuasive: the use of the clause, “what appeared in him,” to refer to the incarnation of the Logos appears to me as a rather forced and uncharacteristic circumlocution. I also find the proposed redactional view of the Prologue, involving four different literary layers altogether, unconvincing and curiously contrary to the author’s own attitude regarding the viability of such redactional approaches to the Gospel in general. In this regard I further find the view that the Prologue, given its compositional history, cannot have a “pervasive structure” not only quite unnecessary but also curiously contrary to the author’s own position regarding the literary unity of the Prologue. Finally, I find the placement of the theological discussion, refreshingly honest in thrust, within the context of Bultmann and Cullmann to be rather *passé* at this point. On the whole, I believe the volume would have benefited from a closer dialogue with more recent developments in the discipline.

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STEPHEN D. MOORE, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven/London: Yale University, 1989). Pp. xxii + 226. \$25.

“Methodological introductions to the new literary criticism of the Bible have abounded, but extended metacritical surveys of extant work in the field are exceedingly rare” (p. xviii). This is the challenge Stephen Moore sets for himself in this book, at which he succeeds admirably. M.’s book is the best survey available of where the literary criticism of the Gospels has been and where it might be headed.

The book falls into two parts. The first part, “Gospel Criticism as Narrative Criticism,” traces the mutation of redaction criticism into composition criticism into what has come to be called narrative criticism. The major focus of this part of the book is *story*, for it has been narrative elements such as plot and character that have preoccupied narrative critics. M. helpfully situates narrative criticism of the Gospels in the larger world of literary criticism by observing that the term “narrative criticism” is the unique coinage of biblical critics, referring to a version of formalist criticism deeply indebted to the New Criticism, which would appear anachronistic and tame to many secular literary critics.

The second part of the book, “Gospel Criticism as Reading,” takes *the reader* as its major focus. Actually, the reader bridges both parts of the book, inasmuch as narrative critics have often already embraced a vocabulary of “the reader in the text” with which to talk about authorial intention or the meaning of a text. But outside of



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