

Porter S E & Evans C A (eds) 1995 — The Johannine Writings (A Sheffield Reader)

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press (The Biblical Seminar 32). 267 pages. Price: US \$17,95

Reviewer: Prof J Eugene Botha

This book forms part of an effort by Sheffield Academic Press to collect the best articles published on a given topic in the first 50 issues of *The Journal of the Study of the New Testament*, from 1978-1993.

The idea is to publish a whole series of these readers on various topics. This volume contains seven articles on the Gospel of John: B Lindars: *Discourse and Tradition: The use of the sayings of Jesus in the discourses in the Fourth Gospel*; B Byrne: *The Faith of the beloved disciple and the community in John 20*; R Bauckham: *The beloved disciple as ideal author*; B H Grigsby: *The cross as expiatory sacrifice in the Fourth Gospel*; M C de Boer: *Narrative criticism, historical criticism and the Gospel of John*; A H B Logan: *John and the Gnostics*; W E Sproston: *Witnesses to what was 'απ' αρχης: 1 John's contribution to our knowledge of the tradition in the Fourth Gospel*.

In addition to these articles there are 6 articles on the revelation of John: J J Gunther: *The Elder John, author of Revelation*; D E Aune: *The prophetic circle of John of Patmos and the exegesis of Revelation 22:16*; L W Hurtado: *Revelation 4-5 in the light of Jewish apocalyptic analogies*; M G Reddish: *Martyr Christology in the Apocalypse*; P Barnett: *Polemical parallelism: Some further reflections on the apocalypse*; F Downing: *Pliny's prosecutions of Christians: Revelation and 1 Peter*. This volume also has a list of abbreviations, as well as an index of authors and a Scripture index.

It is certainly not the place to review the various articles chosen here, but perhaps a few words about the idea and approach are necessary. The editors mention in the preface that they have chosen the articles on the following grounds: 'Some articles are truly ground breaking, pushing their respective enquiry into new paths and introducing new critical questions into the debate. Others are assessments of the critical terrain of a particular topic, providing useful and insightful analyses that others can and have built upon. Other are included because they are major contributions to an on-going discussion' (7). If one takes this into consideration, then the editors have certainly chosen the articles in the volume well. There is indeed a wide variety and each article can introduce readers to some discussion or debate in the literature. It is also useful in the sense that one can obtain some kind of picture of the basic issues and trends in research over the past two decades. As such this kind of approach would be useful for scholars and students alike, since it would provide an easy and useful exposure to critical debate. This volume is called *The Johannine Writings*, rather misleading title since it deals basically with the Gospel of John and Revelation, and very indirectly with the letters. Nowhere is it explained why articles on the Johannine letters are not also included here. Nevertheless, this series is a welcome addition to the excellent publishing programme at Sheffield Academic Press and this volume is highly recommended to both scholars and students of the Johannine writings, and even those whose field of expertise lies outside the Johannine corpus will be able to use this volume to gain an overview of the research in this area.
