

beginning I was the Word. I was with God and I was divine. It was I who was with God in the beginning.' The narrative continues normally through the quadri-Gospel material to the ascension (Acts 1: 7-14). Following this, there is a section entitled 'The Holy Spirit in Them' (pp. 172-80), continuing the story in Acts, including Pentecost, persecution of the apostles, death of Stephen, and conversion of Paul, finally coming to an end with a catena of quotations from Ephesians, 1 John, Revelation, 1 Timothy and Matthew.

An index lists all passages used, in the order in which they appear in the book, by page and line. It is claimed that nothing has been omitted from the Gospel accounts (except the genealogies), and nothing has been added. It is admitted, however, that Laubach has 'edited' verses 'in the interest of clarity or vividness'; in such cases, he says, 'I have relied on the wording of one of the other established versions'. The text used is Goodspeed's excellent translation; occasionally the 'editing' is done with a heavy hand. 'The disciple whom Jesus loved', for example, is identified as John the son of Zebedee (pp. 169-71); Luke 2: 14 (p. 17) and John 3: 21 (p. 28) are only two of the many passages where Goodspeed's rendering has been changed. Luke 4: 13 is translated by Goodspeed, 'When the devil had tried every kind of temptation he left him till another time'. Laubach adapts this to read, 'Then the Devil left me to watch for a better chance . . .' (p. 24). One would say that where Laubach has departed from Goodspeed it has generally been for worse, not for better.

ROBERT G. BRATCHER

The New Testament in Current Study, by Reginald H. Fuller. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962, pp. 147; \$2.95.

Recently a missionary translator asked for a book which would keep him abreast of current New Testament studies. The volume to hand, by the British born and trained professor at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, does an excellent job of reviewing 'the main issues of debate over the past two decades' and providing 'a critical assessment of present trends'. In the brief compass of this small book the author develops the subject under the following headings: 'The New Testament and Mythology'; 'For and Against Bultmann'; 'The New Quest of the Historical Jesus'; 'Pauline Studies'; 'Synoptic Studies'; 'The Lucan Writings' and 'The Johannine Problem', with a closing chapter on 'Diagnosis and Prospect'.

It is naturally impossible that all the various ramifications of current New Testament studies be traced in a book of this size; but the Index of Authors lists 141 names (not all, to be sure, of contemporary scholars), so that the reader is presented with a good review of the main trends of modern New Testament scholarship. Inevitably, for better or worse, Rudolf Bultmann dominates the present era. His essay in 1941, *Neues Testament und Mythologie*, marks the turning point in New Testament studies; and from p. 2 of the book to its very end, Bultmann's name comes up in discussion more often than that of anyone else. Actually we are now living in a post-Bultmannian era, the author tells us; at times, it would appear, Bultmann himself is not quite Bultmannian, at least not to the entire satisfaction of some of his most ardent disciples.

The author is not content passively to list the different positions taken in current studies, but accompanies his reviews with trenchant comments of various trends, often in critical terms.

In the last chapter Fuller cites several current trends which, in his opinion, promise to meet with general acceptance. The last one he mentions has tremendous implications not only for technical New Testament studies as such, but for the whole understanding of the Christian faith and the Church in the light of the New Testament. For, says Fuller, 'It is becoming increasingly clear that the New Testament covers three phases in the emergence of Christianity: the ministry of Jesus, the apostolic and the sub-apostolic ages. . . . It should become increasingly apparent that the sub-apostolic age . . . was the legitimate response to the apostolic age, in which what was implicit in the earlier period is now made explicit in the later. This would mean, ultimately, that the second-century achievements of catholicism—the creed, canon, episcopate and liturgy—are the unfolding of what was implicit in the apostolic kerygma' (pp. 137 f.). Here, then, a question is posed that inevitably every reader, minister and translator of the New Testament must face: what is the nature, locus and content of God's revelation, and how is it related to the Scripture?

Fuller's final brief statement of unresolved problems (pp. 139–42) ends with a paragraph of reassurance to the *idiōtēs*, who might become somewhat perturbed over what seem to him to be the machinations of experts in so violently handling the New Testament. Whether this word of consolation is adequate and altogether convincing is somewhat debatable. None the less, any New Testament student who wants to know what are the main areas of research and dispute in modern New Testament studies will do well to read this book.

ROBERT G. BRATCHER

The World of the Old Testament, by Cyrus H. Gordon. London: Phoenix House, 1960, pp. 312; 30s. 0d.

This book is a revised edition of the author's *Introduction to Old Testament Times* published in 1953, and reflects his interest in the literary and cultural background of the Near East which lies behind the Old Testament.

A comparison between this book and such a standard work as Oesterley and Robinson's *History of Israel*, published in 1932, shows what a radical transformation has taken place in the world of Old Testament studies during the past thirty years. The earlier work appeared too soon for the inclusion of any reference to Ugarit and its literature, while Dr Gordon's book not only devotes a whole chapter to Ugarit but makes constant references in other parts of the book to Ugaritic parallels to Hebrew thought. At the same time the Mesopotamian and Egyptian contributions to the world of the ancient Near East are by no means overlooked. There is here a far greater willingness to recognize the influence of the Homeric world on that of the Bible than has hitherto been generally acknowledged.

The book will be of more use to those who wish to know something about the influences from outside Israel itself which helped to shape the situation in