

DONALD GUTHRIE. *New Testament Introduction: The Gospels and Acts*. Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1965. 380 pages, \$5.95.

The final volume of Guthrie's trilogy reviewing the entire New Testament is welcomed by many who have come to appreciate the British professor's wide grasp of secondary literature and gift for lucid expression. An "introduction" to the New Testament may be a technical work for the specialist or a survey of the field. Guthrie fits the latter category, but his lack of superficiality dictates review. It is characteristic of this age of literary saturation that the author has adopted the bibliographical approach to his subject of treating issues in terms of modern proponents of various theories. Consequently, a treatment of a New Testament book in Guthrie reads like a well-written law case, citing, criticizing, and distinguishing its authorities. This can result in the false impression that answers are to be found through books about the New Testament instead of through the primary evidence of the New Testament and the early Christian period. On the other hand, this approach is particularly helpful in dispelling any illusions which persist concerning a supposed consensus of New Testament experts.

While generally conservative in his own conclusions, Guthrie is unerringly fair to all points of view, and faithfully records strengths and weaknesses of every position, including his own. His methods are characterized by a suspicion of *a priori* assumptions, a cautious respect for ancient testimony (see pp. 195-6) as superior to inconclusive literary analysis, and a disdain of the probative value of recurrent arguments from silence. He is candid enough to label theories as such on the basis of evidence and in the face of professional popularity. All this is not to argue perfection for the author. This final volume is too quick to identify Matthew's *logia* with the present Gospel. Goodspeed's *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist* (1959), contending that Matthew is certainly the Gospel's author, is not discussed, and failure to mention the most cogent of his arguments is a glaring omission. One would also expect to find in a competent introduction the citations to actual evidence on the Theophilus question rather than footnoting of merely secondary discussions. But on the whole, Guthrie is a competent, up-to-date, and reasonably comprehensive analyst of the authorship and background of New Testament literature.