

BOOK REVIEWS

Bruce, F. F. *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974. 216 pp. Paperback, \$3.45.

The prolific NT scholar F. F. Bruce here presents an analysis and evaluation of materials dealing with Jesus and Christian origins outside the NT for thinking laymen. Besides dealing with references found in the early Roman writers, he discusses both the genuine statements and Christian glosses of Josephus, the Qumran documents, the Agrapha and Apocryphal Gospels, the Gospel of Thomas (at some length), Jesus in the Koran and in Islamic Tradition, and the evidence of archaeology.

Bruce deals with these wide-ranging materials in a very interesting manner, but apparently he himself has some doubt about the nature of the contents since in the last chapter he presents an apologia for it. The reason for this is that in fact some of these materials, such as statements of Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus, the rabbis, and archaeological evidence, have been used to confirm if not to prove the historicity of Jesus, while on the other hand, the Apocryphal Gospels and the Koran have very little reliable historical matter. The Qumran documents do not refer directly to Jesus or to Christian origins. Bruce's defense is simply that "he is concerned to give an account of references to Jesus and Christian origins, factual or fictitious, outside the New Testament" (p. 203). If this is so, he has left out the greater part of the material in the apostolic and other church fathers. To justify the fictitious material, he adds that it testifies to the exceptional impact of the person of Christ. Somehow, it seems to the reviewer that there is lack of coherence in the material included in the volume and this is indicated by Bruce's uneasiness and also in the "Publisher's Note" (p. 7). Too much variegated material is thrown together. A more selective principle should have been used to bring about coherence and consistency.

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Conzelmann, Hans. *History of Primitive Christianity*. Translated by John E. Steely. Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1973. 190 pp. \$8.50.

The period from the resurrection of Jesus to A.D. 100 is the subject of this book written for non-specialists. The sources are quite limited, mainly Acts and Paul's letters. The clearest picture of this period understandably portrays the history that deals with Paul and his communities. Always, however, the author makes a critical evaluation of the sources, especially the book of Acts. Because of the limitation in sources, most chapters are necessarily short. Only three pages are devoted to "The Original Community from the Apostolic Council down to the Jewish War" and five pages to "Jewish Christianity after the Jewish War."

Given his presuppositions, the author demonstrates a disciplined methodology and a brilliant speculative mind. He sifts his material with careful discretion. He is aware of the danger but the necessity of circular reasoning in order to reconstruct the history of the period. Disagreement will come over the question of the authenticity and reliability of the sources. He considers the Twelve a later creation "as the symbolic representation of the nature of the church as God's people of the end-time" (p. 56). The Hellenists (Acts 6) precipitated the Gentile mission and through their influence and teaching not only Gentiles but Jewish Christians even before Paul's conversion no longer observed the law. Conservatives will tend to accept much more than Conzelmann does. Nevertheless, all will find much in the book that is fertile and provocative.

In several places throughout the book, the author discusses the relationship between faith and its historical forms and his perceptive statements regarding this continuing problem are much appreciated (pp. 72, 74, 123-125).

There are two helpful appendices. The first deals with persons who lived during this period and the other is a collection of sources. A short bibliography is included as well as two indexes, one of passages and another of persons and subjects.

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Dulles, Avery, S. J. *Models of the Church*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974. 216 pp. \$6.95.

Models of the Church is a balanced analysis of some of the major approaches in contemporary ecclesiology. Written from a Roman Catholic point of view it explores five "basic models of the Church that have arisen in history as a result of the differing points of view or horizons of believers and theologians of different ages and cultures." Dulles' thesis is that instead of some super model, some absolute best image, we ought to find a way of incorporating the major affirmations of each ecclesiological type without carrying over its distinctive liabilities.

Dulles devotes a chapter to each of the five models he has retained: Church as institution, as mystical communion, as sacrament, as herald, and as servant. Each model is presented with some assessment of its respective strengths and weaknesses. Then, in five additional chapters the author shows how the various models lead to diverse positions regarding acute problems in contemporary theology: eschatology, the characteristics of the true Church, ecumenism, the ministry, and divine revelation. Finally, in a reflective overview, an attempt is made to summarize the values and limitations of each model.

Dulles does not consider every model of equal worth nor that any single model can satisfactorily express the mystery of the Church. Since one's critique and choice of models already presuppose a certain understanding of the realities of faith, he suggests more objective criteria for their evaluation: their basis in Scripture and in Christian tradition, their capacity to give