

century. Authority for this group consisted of the common-law precedents which defined the limits within which Englishmen could act as free individuals.

Thus Cragg moves from a discussion of the various competing concepts of authority to delineate the growing concern for freedom in early Stuart England. Not only has he shown a sympathetic understanding of this complex period in English history, but he has also made the study of its intellectual and religious movements both easier and more pleasant for those who follow in his footsteps. In addition, many of the issues raised in the early 17th century have returned to haunt the world of the 20th century. In that context, the debate on the relationship between authority and freedom is as relevant today as when the Stuarts ruled England during the 17th century.

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Cullmann, Oscar. *The Johannine Circle*. Trans. John Bowden. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976. xii + 124 pp. \$6.95.

The present volume represents an excellent translation of the German original that appeared in 1975 under the more descriptive title, which may be translated as *The Johannine Circle: Its Place in Late Judaism Among the Disciples of Jesus, and in Primitive Christianity* (Tübingen, 1975).

In general, the book may be characterized as Cullmann's attempt to defend some of his old views on Johannine matters, and at the same time to position himself vis-à-vis the arguments advanced by E. Käsemann and J. L. Martyn concerning the Johannine milieu. He follows Käsemann and recognizes the distinctiveness of the Gospel of John as due to its origin within a distinctive Christian circle (Cullmann prefers "circle" to "school," "sect," or *ecclesiola*). But there his agreement with Käsemann ends. The Johannine circle in no way finds itself at odds with the Christian mainstream. The Fourth Gospel does not represent a "naive docetism." It is, rather, a missionary document that proclaims Jesus as the Christ within a *heilsgeschichtliche* framework. Cullmann agrees with Martyn in that the Gospel reflects upon two historical moments at the same time. But whereas Martyn has argued that the stories in the Gospel describe both the experience of Jesus (an *einmalig* event) and the experience of the Johannine community (a contemporary event) simultaneously, Cullmann on the other hand argues that the evangelist has superimposed the Christ who is present in the church upon the incarnate Jesus. Thus, in contrast to Luke, who sets apart the Jesus who worked on earth in the flesh from the Christ who works through his apostles, John seeks to consider Jesus after the flesh and the present Christ together in one and the same perspective" (p. 14).

In order to defend this position Cullmann constructs a revised edition of the history of early Christianity, giving special attention to the formation of the Johannine community. His argument is rather simple: Among those who followed Jesus there were some who came from "marginal, heterodox Judaism." Because of their position within Judaism these followers of Jesus never fared well within the group of disciples of Jesus who came from "mainstream, orthodox Judaism." One of these marginal Jews was a disciple of John the Baptist who became known as "the other disciple" of Jesus. In time

he established a mission to the Samaritans and created a group with his followers and new converts who considered him as the authority behind their new faith. Before he died around A.D. 60 this "other disciple," who had not been one of the twelve but had witnessed some of the events in Jesus' life, wrote a gospel for his disciples. This circle kept his gospel, and enlarged it in terms of its own struggles with heterodox and mainstream Judaism. Their founder now became known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." As we have it, the Gospel of John comes from the final redaction made by the disciples of the beloved disciple around A.D. 100. Unfortunately Cullmann rather cavalierly refers to "the three great Johannine scholars of recent times, F. M. Braun, R. E. Brown, and R. Schnackenburg," only to dismiss them because they identify the beloved disciple with John the son of Zebedee who wrote the Gospel (p. 83). But in fact, with the exception of the suggestion that the beloved disciple comes from "marginal Judaism," the rest of Cullmann's thesis had already been proposed in basic outline by Schnackenburg some years ago ("On the Origin of the Fourth Gospel," in *Jesus and Man's Hope* [Pittsburgh, Pa., 1970] pp. 239-240).

Besides the Fourth Gospel, the Johannine circle also produced the Epistles, the Apocalypse, and the Epistle to the Hebrews. As the group developed and gained better contacts with mainstream Christianity, Ignatius came out of this tradition to become bishop in Antioch. The Johannine circle lived most probably in Syria; if not there, perhaps in Transjordan.

Cullmann's argument is built on a triangular relationship tying together heterodox Jewish converts to Christianity, to the Hellenists in Jerusalem, and to the Johannine circle. Their common denominator is interest in a mission to Samaria and opposition to the Jerusalem temple.

The picture proposed by Cullmann is indeed quite neat and simple, but its very simplicity is what does not allow it to stand under scrutiny. The reconstruction of Samaritan theology is still in its infancy stages; therefore to pinpoint a Christian Samaritan mission is not as easy as may first appear. Also problematic is the differentiation made between mainstream and marginal Judaism during Jesus' lifetime. This seems to be an attempt to resurrect the ghost of "Normative Judaism" once given life by G. F. Moore. That the twelve disciples came out of mainstream Judaism seems to me impossible of being proved. Besides, to think that all those who opposed the Jerusalem temple were themselves agreed on everything else is again an oversimplification.

Even if Cullmann's well laid out argument proves defective, he gives some insightful suggestions concerning the religious phenomenon in 1st-century Palestine and its vicinity. Cullmann's erudition is again on display and the reader is certainly challenged and taught by it.

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Goppelt, Leonhard. *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*. 2 vols. Erster Teil: *Jesu Wirken in seiner theologischen Bedeutung*; Zweiter Teil: *Vielfalt und Einheit des apostolischen Christuszeugnisses*. Ed. J. Roloff. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975-1976. 669 pp. DM 28 each.

NT theology has in the last decade entered its most productive period in its