

it was heretical from the very beginning; and if it did, time should not alter its acceptability in the form of Ebionism. Could this same kind of observation be made with other groups such as enthusiastic Christianity or apocalyptic Christianity? Perhaps these types in our time must be classified as heretical.

In the concluding chapter entitled "The Authority of the New Testament" Dunn deals with the implications of the diversity uncovered. The center that integrates all the diversity is the unity between the historical Jesus and the exalted Christ. The presence of different forms of Christianity raises the question of the value of the canon. Dunn sees that all books in the NT "can claim to be justifiable interpretations of the Christ event" (p. 386). And the fact that the canon with all its diversity testifies to the unifying center confirms its continuing function. The canon recognizes this diversity, marks out the limits of acceptable diversity, and approves the development of Christian faith and practice.

However, this concluding chapter would have been more helpful if the author had been more specific in showing what Christian manifestations today, if any, would go beyond the limits of acceptable diversity or development. Even with the qualifications he sets forth, one gets the feeling that "anything goes."

The author has given us a good treatment of the subject with good bibliographies for each chapter. There is much with which one can agree and much with which to disagree. The book will provoke discussion in the wide range of areas it treats.

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Ellis, E. Earle. *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978. xvii + 289 pp. Paperback, \$15.00.

Ellis's work is always characterized by painstaking observation and collection of data, and this collection of essays is no exception. The essays center around two main themes: The role of pneumatics in the missionary enterprise of the early church and the formation of a Christian theology of the OT.

In actuality, the essays on the first topic go far beyond the role of pneumatics and include a broad reconstruction of the early church and its leadership. According to Ellis, from an early time Paul (as well as the other apostles) was surrounded by a group of co-workers who were pneumatics *par excellence*. *Pneumatikos* was a technical term used for those with the gift of inspired utterance who were led by a plurality of good spirits associated with angels. The work of these pneumatics was a fusion of the work of the OT

prophet and wise man and is described in Col 1:25-28. Not only did this group prophesy; it also had the gift of interpretation of Scripture. Thus the Pauline co-workers as a group formed a school of exegesis whose members participated in the composition of Paul's letters and were also the recipients of certain letters such as 2 Thessalonians.

Closely connected with this reconstruction of the role of the pneumatics is Ellis's view that early Christianity was divided into two parties, the Hebrews and the Hellenists. These represented a strict and a more liberal attitude toward Jewish law and ritual. Jews and Jewish Christians of both types could be found in Palestine and in the Diaspora. The strict party was called the "Hebrews" (cf. Acts 6) or "those of the circumcision" (cf. Gal 2:12). While Paul and most of his co-workers were from the liberal party, Col 4:11 shows that some of the co-workers were from the strict party, thus giving Paul's ministry an ecumenical flavor. Paul's opponents, on the other hand, were members of an aberrant party of the Hebrews—conservative, ritualistic Jews with pneumatic evidences who came from an Essene-type background. They were sometimes morally liberalistic, and carried out a widespread counter-mission to Paul. The same opponents loom in the background of 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians (which addresses only one type of opponent), Colossians and even the Pastorals (which are considered Pauline) and a letter such as Jude.

While certain of Ellis's conclusions are suggestive, this reconstruction as a whole is far from convincing. While the use of *pneumatikos* in 1 Cor 14:37, where the term is juxtaposed with "prophet," might support Ellis's view of the pneumatics, in 1 Cor 2:15 and 3:1 and in Gal. 6:1 it is much more likely that *pneumatikoi* refers to all Christians who are led by the Spirit. Nor is Ellis's evidence that the pneumatic co-workers formed an exegetical school convincing. Even less convincing is his picture of Paul's opponents, for it ignores major differences in the characteristics of the groups which Paul combats. Where is the evidence for strict, Essene-type Jews who were also morally lax outside of Ellis's reconstruction of the Pauline letters? Nor is it likely that the "Hebrews" of Acts 6 can be lifted from that context and identified with "those of the circumcision" in Acts and Paul. In fact, even Ellis must admit that in Rom 4:12 "those of the circumcision" must refer simply to Jews rather than to a particular brand of Jews or Jewish Christians. Is it not most natural, then, to apply the term to Jews elsewhere unless the context demands otherwise? Of the six occurrences of the expression in the NT (Acts 10:45; 11:2; Rom 4:12; Gal 2:12; Col 4:11; and Titus 1:10), with the possible exception of Titus 1:10, the most natural conclusion is that it refers simply to Jews, and if this is true a major foundation stone in Ellis's reconstruction is removed.

The essays in the second part of the book, which Ellis says center around the formation of a Christian theology of the OT in the early church, actually

have a somewhat narrower focus. They attempt to show that the midrash scheme of interpretation of the OT is used in the NT. According to Ellis, much of the non-LXX language of OT citations reveals that implicit midrash is operative, and examples of explicit midrash can be seen in passages such as 1 Cor 1-4, Rom 1-4, 9-11; Jude, and the speeches of Acts 1-15. Ellis's main concern in pointing to the use of midrash in the NT is to show that the NT writers do not use the OT arbitrarily but use it according to a consistent method. He is especially concerned to affirm that this is true with regard to the *testimonia*.

There is much excellent material in these essays that will contribute to the continuing study of the NT use of the OT, but most of Ellis's examples of midrash in the NT have sufficient significant variations from the standard midrash form in Jewish literature to raise questions about his conclusions. Even Ellis's own equivocations point to such questions. At various places in the argument he must make statements such as "This hypothesis is not without problems" (p. 187), and "The results of the study are not as conclusive as one might wish" (p. 197).

The final essay focuses on "new directions" in form criticism. In it Ellis questions the two-document hypothesis and the existence of a long period of oral transmission of the Jesus traditions prior to Mark. He sympathizes with the views of Riesenfeld, Gerhardsson, and Schürmann, and goes even further to suggest that some of the gospel traditions were transmitted in written form in the time of Jesus and that some of the exegetical patterns in the Gospels, such as the midrash form exhibited in the parable of the wicked tenants, were among the earliest transmitted "forms" of Jesus' teaching.

That much more of the gospel material goes directly to Jesus than the so-called "radical" form critics admit is undoubtedly true, but Ellis offers little more than conjecture for his specific view. He does not provide an adequate methodology for distinguishing between the midrashic activity of Jesus and that of the early Christian prophets, whom he has already (in the first part of the book) said use the same method, nor does he adequately come to terms with differences between the gospel accounts and the development to which they point.

Thus while Ellis mounts an impressive collection of data from both primary and secondary sources which should not be ignored by any serious student of early Christianity, his interpretations are more stimulating than they are convincing.

The work includes indexes to names and to passages from Scripture and other ancient literature. The printing is excellent; only one error was noted. "2 Cor. 6,6-16" on p. 213, par. 2, line 2, should read "1 Cor. 6,6-16."