

BOOK REVIEWS

Brown, Raymond E., and Meier, John P. *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity*. New York: Paulist Press, 1982. x + 242 pp. Paperback, \$4.95.

This volume consists of three sections. In the first one, Brown sets out a typology for understanding early Christianity; in the second, Meier reconstructs the history of Christianity at Antioch; and in the third, Brown reconstructs the history of Christianity at Rome.

Meier understands that Christianity came to Antioch with Barnabas, who was a Jerusalem person with close ties to Peter. When Paul and Peter had their confrontation at Antioch, Peter won the day and Paul had to leave, never to come back. The dispute between Peter and Paul, however, left the Antiochene church facing the possibility of a schism, and a serious identity crisis. Matthew, "the Christian Scribe" of the second generation, stepped into the breach and created a "liberal-conservative" synthesis that established a new moral and institutional authority personified in "the supreme Rabbi" of the church (B. H. Streeter's phrase): Simon Peter (p. 64). As Meier sees it, Peter had been the stabilizing middle point between Barnabas and Paul in the earlier dispute. Matthew gives to Peter general and universal significance as "*the* human authority for the church as a whole" (p. 67; italics his). Peter becomes in the Antiochene tradition "the bridge-figure, the moderate center, to be the norm for the whole church" (*ibid.*).

Meier sees the third generation of the Antiochene church reflected in the Letters of Ignatius, who stands on the Matthean tradition when he combines in the bishop both office and charisma. For Ignatius, the "one bishop" was the solution to the problem of diversity which had its roots in the days of Peter and Paul and which Matthew had not been able to solve.

In the Introduction to the volume, Brown suggests a way of understanding early Christian dynamics which does not use "Jewish" and "Gentile" as basic categories. He offers an alternative to the well-worn Procrustean bed consisting of first, Aramaic-speaking Palestinian Jews; then, Greek-speaking Palestinian Jews; next, Greek-speaking Diaspora Jews and Gentile proselytes; and finally, Gentile converts. According to Brown, what needs to be given weight is a Christian's relation to Judaism and the Temple. On this score, he sees that both Jews and Gentiles may hold any of four basic positions. His typology identifies (1) those who insisted on full compliance with the Mosaic law, including circumcision;

(2) those who held on to some Jewish observances, but did not insist on circumcision; (3) those who did not require observance of any Jewish laws, but who could voluntarily participate in Temple rituals; and finally, (4) those who did not require observance of any Jewish laws and saw no abiding significance in the Temple rituals. The opponents of Paul in Galatians and in Philippians 3 represent the first group. James and Barnabas would represent the second group. Paul would belong to the third group, and the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of John reflect the views of those in the fourth group. Outside these types, holding the middle between the second and third groups, stand the Jerusalem apostles, especially Peter.

In his section on Roman Christianity, Brown argues that Christianity came to Rome in the early 40s, and that Peter had nothing to do with this. When Peter arrived in the late 50s, after his ministry in Antioch (and in northern Asia Minor), Roman Christianity was already constituted as a church with close ties to James and Jerusalem Christianity. In his Letter to the Romans, Paul is trying to make a good impression on Christians who have heard of his derogatory remarks about the Jerusalem apostles in his Letter to the Galatians. Defeats at Antioch and Galatia have forced him to modify his attitude toward the law and the significance of Judaism. In contrast to the Paul of Galatians, who paraded his apocalyptic disdain for all present realities, the more mature Paul of Romans, Brown feels, adopted a more *heilsgeschichtliche* approach to the Jewish past and came closer to the view of the second group mentioned above. But when Paul arrived in Rome, elements of the first group trailed him and established a following in opposition to him at Rome.

In 1 Peter and Hebrews, Brown finds the evidence for his reconstruction of second-generation Roman Christianity. He connects 1 Peter with Paul's Romans on three items: the use of cultic language, the insistence on obedience to civil authorities, and an increasing articulation of church structure. The author of Hebrews, who belongs to Brown's "Group Four," argued against Christians belonging to Brown's "Group Two," but did not carry the day at Rome, even if his letter was not rejected outright. The third generation of the Roman church, Brown proposes, is revealed in the work of Clement, whose respect for authority as embodied in the levitical system and in the Roman Empire still reflects the Jerusalem roots of Roman Christianity. But unlike 1 Peter, where the cultic system is spiritualized, Clement espoused the "more-than-spiritual survival of the levitical ideals," so that vicariously through him the Christianity that had remained loyal to the Temple eventually triumphed (p. 171).

As an exercise in the art of creating hypotheses, *Antioch and Rome* exhibits two well-trained scholars conversant with the literature advocating a general theory more or less held by both. The overall impression is that

Antioch was the place where Peter triumphed over Paul by holding the middle ground between Paul and James, and that Rome was the place where a more mature Paul moved closer to Peter's position and where both of these apostles together became martyrs at the hands of extremists to the right of James. The authors, to their credit, admit all along that they are "surmising," "suspecting," "proposing," and "conjecturing." And, indeed, they are.

In the case of both Brown and Meier, the most hypothetical element in their reconstruction is the second generation. The linking of Matthew to Antioch, and of Hebrews to Rome, is not quite convincing. And Meier's reconstruction of the first generation at Antioch from two verses in Galatians is, to say the least, quite audacious. Even while agreeing with Meier about Paul's defeat, Brown is more cautious on the question of Paul's later ties to Antioch. But Brown, on the other hand, wishing to find in Romans and in 1 Peter antecedents for the prominence given to church structure in 1 Clement, compares Romans and 1 Peter on this motif (pp. 138-139) by bringing in the pastorals as evidence!

In his typology, Brown has made a significant suggestion, worthy of further exploration. If it is well received, the way in which early Christians are to be classified within these coordinates will, I am sure, remain the subject of much debate.

If (a well-used word throughout the book) the objective of the authors is to encourage greater tolerance within modern Christianity by recognizing diversity within primitive Christianity, then the point is well made and valid. If, on the other hand, the objective is to say that in the universalizing of apostolic succession, an ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the preservation of the levitical ideals, Clement and Ignatius preserved what is central to the gospel and created a Christianity that could survive—as if survival were the ultimate criterion—, then the point is neither made nor valid.

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HEROLD WEISS

Craigie, Peter C. *Psalms 1-50*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 19. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983. 378 pp. \$19.95.

This commentary on the first third of the Psalter is one of a number of volumes that have already appeared in this new commentary series. The other two commentaries on the Psalter are by other authors, one of them having already appeared.

The present volume begins with a rather brief introduction to the Psalter. This introduction is mainly of interest because eight of the thirty