

Oscar Cullmann: *The Early Church*. Edited by A. J. B. Higgins. London (SCM Press) 1956. 217 S. geb. 25 sh.

Ten essays of wide interest are collected in this book, which will be valued not only in Britain and America, even though all have previously appeared in either French or German or both. It is worth enumerating the titles: 1. The Necessity and Function of Higher Criticism. 2. The Origin of Christmas. 3. The Plurality of the Gospels as a theological Problem in Antiquity. 4. The Tradition. 5. The Kingship of Christ and the Church in the New Testament. 6. The Return of Christ. 7. The proleptic Deliverance of the Body according to the New Testament. 8. 'He who comes after me' (John 1, 27). 9. Samaria and the Origins of the Christian Mission. 10. Early Christianity and Civilization.

These miscellaneous matters are given a unity by the combination of dogmatic and historical enquiry with which C. approaches his subject. It is the essential merit of this (as of all his writings) that he cannot isolate one side of his interest from the other: he is both historian and theologian. Of course there are dangers in this; sometimes his language provokes the wish that he had allowed less place to his modern dogmatic questions, especially in chapter 3 where Irenaeus' justification of the fourfold Gospel receives very unsympathetic criticism. To us it seems nonsense, but in that age such arguments counted. The "theologically correct reasons for the fourfold Gospel", offered on pp. 52—54, would have seemed pathetically unimpressive in the second-century controversy. But this puts the question which, in one form or another, haunts the book: Can the historian and the theologian lie down together? 'Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust.' In the discussion of Tradition the tension becomes acute. C. goes far to meet Roman Catholic arguments and successfully answers the charge that he handles the New Testament as a theologian and the history of the church as a rationalist. His essay incisively brings out the real issue: what became of the authority exercised over the Church by the Apostles after they had died? But his reply that it died with them, except insofar as it passed to their writings, provokes the retort that at least to the Christians of the second and third centuries it did not seem quite so simple, whatever may be the teaching of the modern Roman Church. We still need a discussion of these problems as they appeared to the ancient Church rather than as they look to modern dogmatics. The best analysis remains that of C. H. Turner's essay, *Apostolic Succession*, in the volume edited by H. B. Swete, *Essays on the early History of the Church and Ministry* (1918).

Perhaps those who provoke the sharpest disagreement are those to whom we are most indebted. No one can read this book without being made to think deeply about the early Church as a theological problem and to realize that it is much easier to be destructive than to be constructive. It remains to add that the translations are good, and that C.'s dedication to Floyd V. Filson, the translator of 'Christus und die Zeit' and of 'Petrus', will give much pleasure to English readers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Cambridge

H. Chadwick

Franz Georg Maier: *Augustin und das antike Rom* (= Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft, Heft: 39). Stuttgart und Köln (Kohlhammer) 1955. 221 S. kart. DM 18.—.

Das vorliegende Buch ist die umgearbeitete und stark gekürzte Fassung einer Tübinger Preisarbeit. Der Verfasser versteht, wie er im I. Kapitel ausführt, seine Aufgabe in doppeltem Sinne. Einmal ist Rom als der römische Staat in seiner Schichte gemeint, zum andern als die Romidee, als „überzeitliche Form menschlicher Lebenshaltung und politischer Weltordnung“. Beide Gesichtspunkte waren in der Tat für Augustin, als er die Schrift *De civitate dei* schrieb, aktuell. Denn