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CHRISTIANITY IN THE MAKING, VOL 1, JESUS REMEMBERED: A REVIEW

James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2003, 1019pp., ISBN 0-8028-3931-2)

About the author and his methodology

James Douglas Grant Dunn born 21 October 1939 was a British New Testament scholar who was for many years the Lightfoot Professor of Divinity in the Department of Theology at the University of Durham. He worked broadly within the Protestant tradition. He was the President of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, an international body for New Testament study and a Fellow of the British Academy. Dunn maintained his tradition of defending the oral tradition for the transmission of the New Testament especially the Gospel against the suffocation with the literary hypothesis. His publications such as *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013) and *Christianity in the Making: Vol. 1, Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans 2003) testifies largely to this approach. Also, he has been largely involved in the concerns of the Questers as expressed in some of his works: *The Evidence for Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1985), *A New Perspective on Jesus: What The Quest For The Historical Jesus Missed*. Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005). He has also been involved in the questions of Christianity's origins as evidenced in his three-volume work: *Christianity in the Making: Vols 1 - 3* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (2003 - 2008). And lastly Dunn is especially associated with the 'New Perspective on Paul,' along with N. T. Wright. In 2007 he Published as a book *The New Perspective On Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.) He was a minister of the Church of Scotland and a Methodist local preacher. In short, He was one of those few New Testament scholars that enjoyed a spring time of publications that span from 1970 - 2015. He died on June 26, 2020 (aged 80 years).

Methodologically, reading James Dunn could be so uninteresting for a non-biblical scholar because the style of his language and method is ad demonstrativum and as such he dialogues and communicates only with experts. However, James Dunn is always very objective in his analysis and proof of texts. He has a vast knowledge and authoritative command of his area of specialisation namely, the New Testament, on the questions of the Gospels, Jesus and Paul.

A summary of the contents of the work

James Dunn's work, *Jesus Remembered* is a work of nineteen chapters divided into five different parts as follows: Part I: Faith and the Historical Jesus; Part II: From the Gospels to Jesus; Part III: The Mission of Jesus; Part IV: The Question of Jesus' Self-understanding and Part V: The Climax of Jesus' Mission. As a brief resume, Part I traces the history of the Quest as a conflict between faith and history. Part II deals extensively with the question of the sources for the investigation of the Historical Jesus. Part III treats of the main features of Jesus' Mission, his Message, his hearers and his call to discipleship as they are presented in the synoptics. Part IV seeks answer to two main questions: "Who did they think Jesus was?" and

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"How did Jesus see his own role?" An attempt to unravel Jesus' self-understanding. Part V which I consider the most interesting treats the questions around Jesus' final days: The Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The final chapter, chapter 19 is a kind of the author's summary of the entire book and he titles it: Jesus Remembered just like the title of the book itself.

Part I: Faith and the Historical Jesus

This is a compact history of the Quest. It is a history that indicates that the terminus ad quo of the Quest is "The (Re-)Awakening of Historical Awareness. The author indicates that the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation had an effect in the perceptions of Jesus that necessitated the Quest. This led to the tension between faith and history. This tension is treated separately in chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

The flight from Dogma (Faith) which is the consequence of the two events of Renaissance and Reformation (some refer to this as the period of the Enlightenment c. 1650 - 1780) gives the spring board for the Quest. "It is from this period that most would date the beginning of the 'quest of the historical Jesus' (p.25). This period came with it the questions of scientific criticism from where the now dominant historical-critical method developed. All biblical stories were placed under scrutiny and criticism. Miracles and Revelations as recorded in the bible could not pass the test of scientific criticism. The source hypotheses were developed and John's gospel was placed under criticism so that even today, it is not considered by the Questers as a source for the Historical Jesus. The biblical concepts of eschatology, faith and grace were all placed under criticism. This was a period in which human reason attempted to comprehend divine wisdom and where it failed to comprehend, it was regarded as a fantasy, a construct, unreal and untrue. This is the beginning of the Quest.

It acknowledges some of the advantages of this stage (the flight from dogma) for the advancement of the Quest: the importance of the gap between Jesus and his followers, Paul in particular (Reimarus, Harnack); the problem of miracle and the importance of taking the intention of the miracle narratives seriously (Strauss); the necessity to check tradition against its original sources and therefore to recover these sources (Liberals and neo-Liberals); the importance of some experiential rapport between the interpreter and the text (Schleiermacher) and of taking seriously the ethical outcome of beliefs (Liberals); the danger of modernising Jesus and of failing to recognise his otherness, with particular reference to his eschatological preaching (Schweitzer); the importance of recognising that faith played an important part in shaping the tradition from its earliest stages (Kahler); the need to take account of the social context of Jesus and of the movement he initiated (Theissen, Horsley); the necessity to extend the search for sources of Jesus' teaching beyond the boundaries of the canon (Koester, Crossan, p.65).

The flight from dogma was just one side of the coin. The other was the flight from history treated in Chapter 5. Beginning from Gotthold Lessing (1729 - 1781) and the development of the historical critical method, there was an attempt to reconstruct the historical Jesus from the point of view of an invulnerable area of faith. With the historical scientific methods and its features of probability, analogy and correlation, this method proved a major problem for those who maintain some faith stand-point and this led to the flight from history. Kahler noted that "we do not possess any sources for a 'life of Jesus' which a historian can accept as reliable and adequate. Historical scholarship leaves us with 'mere probabilities.' The sources contain

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nothing capable of sustaining a biography of Jesus" (p. 72). A position reaffirmed by Karl Barth: "in history as such there is nothing so far as the eye can see which can provide a basis for faith" (p. 73). From here Barth developed his Kerygmatic theology. Rudolf Bultmann (1884 - 1976) following Barth will develop an existentialist hermeneutic: "Faith does not depend and should not be made to depend on history" (p. 77). This brought an end to the Quest.

Ernst Käsemann in 1953 reawaken interest in the Historical Jesus. For him failure to appreciate the historical peculiarity of the man from Nazareth, to whom the eschatological event was bound, ran the danger of dissolving the event itself into a myth, the danger of Docetism. And so, James Dunn list the Second Questers as Käsemann, Bornkamm, Fuchs, Theissen, Merz, Meier, Gnilka and Becker. And what is today regarded as the Third Quest is more like a critique of the second questers which sought to reconstruct their picture of Jesus out of what distinguished Jesus from his historical context and set him over against his Jewish milieu (p. 87). E. P. Sander, C. Evans, and Wright fall under this category. Unfortunately, just like the Enlightenment brought with it a wave of change of mentality, postmodernism with its new appreciation of the relativity of all things and processes, called into question the scientific claim to universal objectivity (p. 93). This brings us to what the author refers to as the flight from history.

The loss of confidence in historical method in postmodern circles completes this flight from history. And so far as the Quest of the historical Jesus is concerned, its results, particularly when the various Jesuses of the neo-Liberal Quest are included, simply confirm the failure of traditional historical methodology. The simple and rather devastating fact has been that Gospels researchers and Questers of the historical Jesus have failed to produce agreed results. Scholars do not seem to be able to agree on much beyond a few basic facts and generalisations; on specific texts and issues there has been no consensus. The lengthy debate from the 1960s onwards about appropriate criteria for recognition of the actual words of Jesus has not been able to produce much agreement about the criteria, let alone their application. All this demonstrated the inadequacies of the traditional historical method and reconfirms the 'impossibility' verdict passed on the old quest. From historical context to the world of the text, from historical author to contemporary reader, from intended meaning to the experience of reading, from stable meaning to the endless interplay of interpretation, the flight from history became so complete.

James Dunn asks: "In such circumstances, can the 'quest of the historical Jesus' ever hope to succeed?" In the next chapter, he proposes that if the Quest must succeed there must be a dialogue between faith, hermeneutics and history, a dialogue which according to him is ongoing. In my opinion, it is in contribution to such ongoing dialogue that this work is valued (pp. 99 - 136). It must be clear that "the original impulse behind these records was, to put the point more accurately, sayings of Jesus as heard and received, and actions of Jesus as witnessed and retained in memory and as reflected on thereafter" (p. 129).

He states his main theses in pp. 130-131. According to him, what we have in the earliest retellings of what is now the Synoptics are the memories of the first disciples - not Jesus himself, but the remembered Jesus. The Synoptic tradition provides evidence not so much for what Jesus did or said per se but for what Jesus was remembered as doing or saying by his first disciples, or as we might say, for the impact of what he did and said on his first disciples.

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The suggestion that the remembered Jesus was wholly insignificant, unfascinating and unintriguing and as having no real impact prior to his death and resurrection is simple incredible (p. 132). The teachings and events of Jesus did not suddenly become significant in the light of Easter. The synoptic tradition bears witness to a continuity between pre-Easter memory and Post-Easter proclamation, a continuity of faith.

James Dunn is orthodox in his criticism and does not accept the insinuation of the neo-Liberalism which want to make claims for the Gospel of Thomas (GTh) and the Q as authentic. He makes his investigation within the confines of the Synoptic tradition. He says: "...it is already clear that the disciple-response which created the Synoptic tradition and from which mainstream Christianity emerged is that with which we primarily have to do. Whatever we may think regarding Gnostic Christianity as a legitimate (or otherwise) response to Jesus, the fact is that Q was not retained within mainstream Christianity except as integrated within the Gospel format initiated by Mark, and Thomas was rejected by the emerging great Church (p. 134).

His inquiry is inspired by the united concern of the Questers - "that the foundational documents of the Christian tradition should still be heard to speak meaningfully to the present day, that Christian education should not be some hole-in-the-corner enterprise hidden away from the rest of the educational process, that theology should be seen to have a legitimate position in the academic concourse and still important contributions to make to human knowledge and well-being" (p.136). At the same time, according to the author, any attempt to present a Jesus stripped of the garments of faith is doomed to failure, given the character of the Jesus tradition from the first. The challenge, then, is whether a Jesus presented by faith and through faith can still be heard outside the churches, in the forums of the world's discourses (p. 136).

Part II: From the Gospels to Jesus

After having examined the antecedents, James Dunn, sets in Part II to establish the justifications for the current work. He does this by way of the examination of the sources, the tradition and the historical contexts from which to reconstruct a Remembered Jesus. Given the mistake of earlier Questers, these questions cannot be overlooked. He picks these up one after the other: Sources, Tradition and Historical Context.

About the Sources, he gives a detail of many sources in some degree of importance. In this regard, the external sources for Jesus are found in Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius and Jewish Rabbinic Literature. Common to these external sources is the historical fact that Jesus existed. Even though he noted that some of these sources especially Josephus and Tacitus have come under criticism, they serve to refute authors like G. A Wells, who in *The Jesus Myth* (1999) reruns the thesis that Jesus never existed and that the Jesus tradition is a wholesale invention (pp. 141-142). The earliest references to Jesus would include that of Paul in 1Cor 15:3 and Gal 1:18-20 show that Jesus was well known in the 30s to 60s (pp. 142- 143). Mark dated 65 - 75 CE is another important source for it contains traditions about Jesus which have circulated in the generation prior to its date of composition (p.143 - 146). Q is another important source both as a Document and as a Community which could be dated 80 - 95 (pp. 147 - 159). Then Matthew and Luke (pp. 160 - 161). The Gospel of Thomas which the author will later make frequent references (pp. 161 - 165). The Gospel of John seem to be the least considered in the study of the historical Jesus since Baur's dismissal of it as a historical source. However,

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following C. H. Dodd's strong case for the recognition of John as a source of early tradition, James Dunn will include John in his list of sources (pp. 165 - 167). Last of all, the author considers Other Gospels such as 'Dialogue Gospel', 'Cross Gospel', Gospel of Peter and Secret Mark (pp. 167 - 172).

About Tradition, the author will spend a considerable amount of space here because this source is the crux of his thesis: Jesus remembered. Here he considers many sub-themes: Jesus the Founder of Christianity; The Influence of Prophecy; Oral Tradition; The Synoptic Tradition as Oral Tradition — Narratives; The Synoptic Tradition as Oral Tradition — Teachings; Oral Transmission. By sociological logic it could be certain that if the Gospels tell us anything, they tell us that the first Christians felt the need to explain themselves by telling stories about Jesus, what he said and what he did (p. 176). It is important to understand the role of teachers and tradition, witnessing and remembering, prophecy as well as the Apostles as custodians in that epoch. Thus, any prophecy claiming to be from the exalted Christ would have to be tested by what was already known to be the sort of thing Jesus had said (p. 191). This shows glaringly in Gal 1-2, when Paul found it necessary to go up to Jerusalem to lay his gospel before the leading apostles 'lest somehow I was running or had ran in vain' (cf. Gal 2,2). The crux of the author's argument is found in Oral Tradition. Adopting Kenneth Bailey's hypothesis of informal, controlled oral tradition, James Dunn tries to explain the oral transmission of Jesus Tradition in the villages of Palestine until the first Jewish revolt (66-73 AD). This oral tradition unlike the proposal of Bultmann and Gerhardson would have been flexible but with recognisable versions of the same story with constant themes. Also, the community would be concerned enough to exercise some control over its tradition and the degree of control exercised would vary both in regard to form and in regard to the relative importance of the tradition for its own identity, and the element in the story regarded as its core or key to its meaning would be its most firmly fixed element (p. 209). With such a hypothesis James Dunn's next task was to verify it. He says: "The crucial question, of course, is whether such an understanding of oral tradition provides an explanatory model for the Jesus tradition, and whether one can find the marks of such 'informal, controlled oral tradition' in the Synoptic tradition itself. I believe it does and think we can" (p.210). Thus, using parallel columns, the author demonstrates this throughout the narrative and teaching materials of the Synoptic Tradition. The details of such finding are so enormous and foundational for Dunn's thesis (pp. 210 - 253).

About Historical Context. From his detail study and analysis of the geographical, social, political and religious context of Jesus' time, James Dunn concludes that: "a boy brought up in Nazareth in lower Galilee in the early years of the First Century CE is properly described as a "Jew" (p. 315). This is in contraposition to that of his contemporary J. P. Meier who considers Jesus as a "Marginal Jew" as reflected in the title of his voluminous work.

Summarising the findings here, Dunn stresses that he does not envisage "getting back to Jesus" himself. All that one has are the impressions which Jesus made, the remembered Jesus (p. 329). The shape and verbal variations of most of the Synoptic tradition are better explained by an oral hypothesis than exclusively in terms of literary dependence (p. 336).

Part III: The Mission of Jesus

In chapters 11 - 14, James Dunn attempts to demonstrate this hypothesis through an investigation on the mission of Jesus. Thus, beginning from the baptism of John and Jesus'



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Preaching of the Kingdom, as well as the question to whom Jesus intended his message and the character of discipleship, the author seeks to show how and why Jesus was remembered. This part takes a considerable amount of space because the author seeks to counter the thesis of Post-Easter as the impetus for the reconstruction of the life of Jesus (pp. 339 - 614).

The author states clearly: "Two facts in the life of Jesus command almost universal assent. They bracket the three years for which Jesus is most remembered, his life's work, his mission. One is Jesus' baptism by John. The other is his death by crucifixion. Because they rank so high on the 'almost impossible to doubt or deny' scale of historical 'facts', they are obvious starting points for an attempt to clarify the what and why of Jesus' mission" (p. 339).

Clearly, Jesus' mission is located within the context of John the Baptist. Even though some argue that Jesus' mission was a continuation of John's as well as the possibility that John could have been the expected messiah-prophet, Dunn sees no sufficient data in his sources to support such thesis. Even though John placed himself in a tradition of prophets and apocalyptic warning of Israel as evident in Dan 12, it is Jesus who is remembered as the "one who is to come" and not John. Dunn will later argue that Jesus is more than a prophet (p. 666).

In his large discourse on Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom, the author looks at the centrality of the kingdom of God in Jesus' proclamation. He begins with an understanding of the kingdom. He says that monotheism and election are two of Israel's most fundamental conviction. The understanding of Yahweh as king over all is obviously an expression of Israel's monotheistic faith and creation theology and to say that God is one is to recognise that he is the sole ruler of all creation. With this sense it is easier to understanding the concept of "the kingdom of God" in Jesus. He treats the problematics of the kingdom "has drawn near", "it will come" and "it has come."

He treats the call to the kingdom and the character of discipleship. Jesus makes use of parables to drive home his message. At least this is how he is remembered according to Dunn. These are called today "parables of the kingdom." The call to the kingdom is an invitation that consist in three steps: Repent, Believe and follow me. The urgency of the call is also an important point in Jesus' preaching. The call is directed to Israel as seen in the choice of the twelve apostles, the metaphors of "flock of Yahweh," inheriting the land, the new covenant, the assembly of Yahweh and the new temple. But did Jesus extend his call to the diaspora? Even though this is not clear, he argues that Jesus' call to the poor and sinners clearly indicates the universality of the call and invitation of Jesus. Among other categories, that of being subjects of the king, children of the father, hungering for what is right, love, forgiveness and living in the light of the kingdom were the character desirable of the disciples of Jesus.

Part IV: The Question of Jesus' Self-Understanding

This part has only two chapters 15 and 16. The first attempts to answer the questions: Who Did They Think Jesus Was? Who Was Jesus? This leads the author to a study and analysis of the various roles Jesus was associated with and for which he declined according to the Synoptic presentation. This includes: Royal Messiah, Priestly Messiah, The Prophet, 'A Doer

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of Extraordinary Deeds' and Teacher (pp. 615 - 704). An investigation into these questions shows that while not claiming any of these titles for himself Jesus' words and deeds reveal that he transcended a combination of all these. He is remembered as declaring himself to be God's son and often addressed God as "Abba" - Father. Jesus thought of himself as God's son and sensed his sonship as something distinctive in its intimacy and immediacy. He likened his mission to that of a son and both in continuity with and in distinction from the earlier missions of the prophets as servants.

The second answers the question: How Did Jesus See His Own Role? Here the author looks at the questions of Jesus as an Eschatological Agent (p. 705), God's Son (p. 708) and the Son of Man (p. 724). The most extensive of this is the son of man where the author treats: the Issues, the Evidence and the Hypotheses around this title. After "the kingdom of God/heaven" there is no phrase so common on the Jesus tradition as "the son of man." German Scholarship which dominated the first two-thirds of the 20th had argued if this term could be traced to Jesus himself. For them, Dan 7:13 had influenced Mark 13:26//Mark 14:62 and that Psalm 110:1 was amalgamated with Dan 7:13 into Mark 14:62 after Easter. The entire arguments on this term was not something palatable for Dunn. For him the ongoing "Son of man" debate is one of the great embarrassment for modern historical scholarship, since it has been unable to produce any major consensus. He notes that the phrase appears 86 times in the NT: 69 times in the Synoptics, 13 in John and 4 elsewhere. In all four gospels, the phrase appears in effect only on the lips of Jesus (p.737). Dunn concludes that if we cannot be confident that Jesus used the phrase "the Son of Man" in his speech, and quite regularly, then there is almost no feature of the Jesus tradition of which we can confidently assert that Jesus spoke in this way (pp. 759-760).

Part V: The Climax of Jesus' Mission

James Dunn takes his investigation to its close in the next three chapters that form his fifth part of the work. In Chapters 17 and 18, he takes interest in what is now generally referred to as 'the climax of Jesus' mission,' that is 'Crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato' and 'et Resurrexit.' Dunn states that the sources which deal with the subject are in complete agreement: the climax of Jesus' mission was a (final) visit to Jerusalem, and he was executed there, probably at Passover 30 CE. There is here a very nice resume of the climax and last days of Jesus. He investigates into the controversies that triggered Jesus arrest, the motivation of Judas, the last supper, the arrest of Jesus and the flight of the Apostles, the role of Pilate, his death and burial. From his investigation he makes some observations: "The tradition of Jesus' crucifixion and death, as attested by those who witnessed it, is firm enough in outline. But the tradition was evidently formed from the first to bring out scriptural allusions and to give the whole a spiritually edifying character. That was how Jesus' death was remembered from the beginning — as fulfilling scriptural types and as providing a good model of martyr-like piety and concern for others" (p. 781).

The author also treats the question: why was Jesus executed? He notes that to be 'historical' the historical Jesus must have been crucifiable. The temple protest and temple saying, Jesus attempt at bypassing the temple cultic hierarchy as shown in his forgiveness and Jesus disregard for ritual purity all led to the Jewish hostility. "It was not so much that Jesus usurped the exclusive prerogative of God to forgive sins which caused offence, as that he usurped the role which God had assigned to the priest and the cult in the established religion

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of the people" (p.788). Also, according to Dunn, a more likely cause of irritation to the religious authorities were reports of Jesus' disregard for purity ritual. The symbolic action in the temple and the statements about its destruction were likely only to confirm long germinating suspicions and to persuade the policy-makers that Jesus should be silenced as soon as possible.

There are also other revealing questions that the author seeks answers. For instance, why did Jesus go up to Jerusalem? Did Jesus anticipate his death? And did Jesus hope for vindication after his death? It makes for an interesting reading to see how this author analyses the strengths and weak points of previous authors who sought answers to these questions. For instance, K. H. Tan argues that Jesus went up to Jerusalem to restore Jerusalem to Yahweh's kingship; Wright, to enact Yahweh's return to Zion; Theissen, Merz and Chilton, to replace the Jerusalem Cult. (pp. 790 -796). Responding to the second, the author searches through all the moments from the OT to events and sayings of Jesus where some anticipations of his death where either implicit or explicit (pp. 796 - 805).

According to James Dunn, evidences collated from Dan 7: 13,14, Mk 14:24 and Is 53 indicates that Jesus surely did not see his death as defeat and disaster rather he saw his expected death as a prelude to the consummation of God's purpose, the birth-pangs of the age to come, perhaps even the means by which the kingdom would come. And if so, presumably he expected to be vindicated after death and to share the continued joys of that kingdom (p. 820). This for me seems to be contradicted in the next two pages when he states: If Jesus hoped for resurrection it was presumably to share in the general and final resurrection of the dead (p. 822). Thus, for Dunn, whereas Jesus may have hope for a vindication, he didn't hope for a resurrection. In my opinion this is surely a hypothesis.

Finally, the author investigates into the question of the resurrection. He notes that the resurrection tradition falls into two groups: the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances. He investigates the various arguments for and against these traditions. The absence of archaeological evidence to counter the empty tomb explanation of the resurrection for Dunn is still the best evidence for the resurrection: "nothing would have so punctured the claims made by Peter and the others than a counter-testimony as to what had happened to Jesus' body — whether undisturbed after proper burial, decomposed beyond recognition, or otherwise disposed of. The priestly Sadducees, of course, did not believe in resurrection. The more reason for them to provide an alternative explanation of what had happened to Jesus' body to squash the doctrine itself more effectively. An empty tomb gave their opponents, Pharisees as well as Christians, too much scope for their belief in resurrection (Acts 23:6-9)" (p. 837).

Dunn also looks at the various resurrection appearance traditions in his sources. Dunn asserts that we can be entirely confident that the tradition of Jesus' appearances were formulated as tradition within months of Jesus' death. Luke and Paul agree in signalling that the period of resurrection appearances came to an end after forty days (Luke) and 'last of all to me' says Paul (pp. 855-856).

Chapter 19 serves as a resume and a restatement of the author's theses. "(1) The only realistic objective for any 'quest of the historical Jesus' is Jesus remembered. (2) The Jesus tradition of the Gospels confirms that there was a concern within earliest Christianity to

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remember Jesus. (3) The Jesus tradition shows us how Jesus was remembered; its character strongly suggests again and again a tradition given its essential shape by regular use and reuse in oral mode. (4) This suggests in turn that that essential shape was given by the original and immediate impact made by Jesus as that was first put into words by and among those involved as eyewitnesses of what Jesus said and did. In that key sense, the Jesus tradition is Jesus remembered" (p. 882).

A critique of the attitude and method of the author

Can a further Quest hope to succeed? This forms one of the major questions for which Dunn wants to defend by means of his double theses. He proposes two major theses and seeks out to defend them. The records about Jesus is to be seen from the point of view of 'the impact of what Jesus did and said on his disciples.' The community preserved and retold these stories in its oral form modifying them to reflect the community's identity. This for him explains the often found 'apparent' disparity in the stories. However, behind these disparity, one can always find the most common elements, and in any case these common elements reflect the reality of the impact. By this thesis of oral retellings, the several of the peculiarities of each make better sense as free retellings of the tradition which retain the main point in more or less same words but vary in their details, rather than as literary editing. This for Dunn better explains the Matthew and Luke dependence on Mark. The author makes a wide use of comparisons, parallel diagrams and tables. This makes the author's arguments convincing to the reader.

A critical commentary, his work (aspects) and other works. Comparative analysis

In the opening chapters, James Dunn, relays the problem of the Quest as well as the current situation of the Quest for the Historical Jesus. In the four periods of the Quest: Old Quest, No Quest, New Quest and Third Quest, the author identifies a lingering controversy and dichotomy between faith and history. Having identified this problem, the author intends to overcome this in his own study and as such what seems his distinctive feature. The author garners the lessons to be learned from the Quest for the historical Jesus and meets the hermeneutical challenges to a historical and theological assessment of the Jesus tradition. Dunn seeks to provide a fresh perspective that focuses both on the impact made by Jesus and on the traditions about Jesus as "oral" tradition - hence the title Jesus Remembered. The author attempts to offer a fresh analysis of the details of that tradition. In his analysis, he emphasises its "characteristic" features, that is, its similarities rather than its dissimilarities. This approach facilitates his major thesis of oral transmission (performance) of the Jesus tradition. Dunn's treatments of the source question (particularly Q and the non-canonical Gospels) and of Jesus the Jew in his Galilean context is also worthy of note and provides one of the strong points for his entire thesis.

While other works on the Historical Jesus will dare not treat the question of the Resurrection, here is found in my opinion the author's scorecard. As a Christian but more so as a scholar the author does not shy away from nor does he exclude such a delicate theme in his analysis. What is more, the objective way by which he treats such a theme. On this he concludes: "Christians have continued to affirm the resurrection of Jesus, as I do, not because they know what it means. Rather, they do so because, like the affirmation of Jesus as God's Son, 'the resurrection of Jesus' has proved the most satisfactory and enduring of a variety of options, all of them inadequate in one degree or other as human speech, to sum up the impact made by Jesus, the Christian perception of his significance. They do so



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because as a metaphor, 'resurrection' is perceived as referring to something otherwise inexpressible, as expressing the otherwise inchoate insight that this life, including Jesus' life, is not a complete story in itself but can be grasped only as part of a larger story in which God is the principal actor and in which Jesus is somehow still involved. In short, 'the resurrection of Jesus' is not so much a criterion of faith as a paradigm for hope" (p. 879).

Value of the work and its credibility to the reader

Critically, Dunn's work is credible. His elaborate and explanatory footnotes make the work scientific and worthwhile. With a chronological assessment of the Jesus Tradition as found in the Synoptics, that is, the detailed analysis of the Baptist tradition, the Kingdom motif, the call to and character of discipleship, what Jesus' audiences thought of him, what he thought of himself, why he was crucified, and how and why belief in Jesus' resurrection began, Dunn engages wholeheartedly in the contemporary debate, providing many important insights and offering a thoroughly convincing account of how Jesus was remembered from the first, and why he was remembered. His wide range of bibliography gives the reader ample resources for a further investigation on the issues raised.

Concluding remarks and recommendation

In the end, Dunn's work can be appraised as a comprehensive overview study of the so-called Historical Jesus from his own perspective of the Remembered Jesus. It can serve as a reference text for anyone interested in knowing about the current state of The Quest. Its wide range of bibliography testifies to its solid scholarship. However, its volume, language and logical flow of arguments makes it a book only for the serious and interested reader. The above remark is reinforced by Dunn's dialogue partner's recommendation of the work, John P. Meier: "I highly recommend "Jesus Remembered" to all those interested in a thoughtful and methodologically sophisticated approach to the major questions that plague and stimulate historical-Jesus research today."

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