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Edge of Contingency: French Catholic Reaction to Scientific Change from Darwin to Duhem (Book Review)

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for him in a critical hour, he strengthened his brethren and became a rock of stability and a focus of unity. (p. 48)

Chapter two is concerned with the role that Stephen and other Hellenists played in the early church. Numerous references to the Hellenists in the New Testament writings are examined and a view of this movement in the early church is proposed. The study is especially helpful for those who desire to gain an understanding of the influence of Apollos and Alexandrian Christianity.

The third chapter deals with James and the Church of Jerusalem. Often underestimated, James was a figure of great significance in the early church. When one reads the New Testament record, he finds conflicts between the Hellenists and the Hebrews. Bruce's careful analysis of the relevant material helps one gain a much clearer understanding not only of the form this conflict

took, but also of the effect this had in the later periods of church history.

In the final chapter the author leads his readers through a study of John's influence in the church. He discusses the questions of the authorship of the Gospel of John and of the book of Revelation. Were there two Johns? Relevant material from the Bible and from the church fathers is considered and a responsible answer is proposed.

Bruce's *Peter, Stephen, James and John* is a concise yet enlightening study which will provide new insight into one's reading of the entire New Testament. Bruce's style is exciting and, above all, clear. The book is not intended for the scholar who is a specialist in the field, but for the inquiring Christian who wants to gain a deeper understanding of the Bible. Once again Bruce does not disappoint his readers.

The Edge of Contingency: French Catholic Reaction to Scientific Change from Darwin to Duhem, by Harry W. Paul. Gainseville, Florida: University Presses of Florida, 1979. 213 pages, \$15.00. Reviewed by Russell Maatman, Professor of Chemistry.

Modern natural science came into being in the seventeenth century as a result of a scientific revolution. Although there were other fundamental changes in scientific thinking in the next two centuries, it is generally held that the next scientific revolution was the revolution in physics which occurred in the twentieth century. Prior to this second revolution, mostly in the last part of the nineteenth century, the growth of science and technology was phenomenal. These great changes in the world of thought and the effects of these changes on our culture continue to be analyzed by historians and philosophers of science. With respect to these changes this book examines the controversy which took place within one culture—the French Catholic community—during one period of time, the last half of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century.

The relation between natural science and the Catholic faith was discussed vigorously in an intellectual climate in which Darwinism spread, some Catholic philosophers attempted to revive Thomism, and many accepted the concept of modern miracles, such as those which were held to have taken place at Lourdes. Paul documents in Chapter 2 the Catholic philosophical objection to Darwinism. In the eyes of many the evolutionary idea was an abomination because, they held, being cannot be derived from nothing. Furthermore, Darwinism was often equated to

materialism and positivism. Paul shows in Chapter 3 that in spite of these objections Darwinism was eventually accepted by much of the French Catholic scholarly community. An early leader of the trend in this direction was D. Cochin, who wrote *L' evolution et la vie* in 1886. Cochin maintained that Darwinism did not exclude the idea of creation. Cochin suggested that there could have been three creations, one each for ponderable matter, the living germ, and the intelligent soul. He insisted that evolution was a part of God's plan; therefore positivistic science, which insisted that scientific activity was to be carried out without any reference to God, was in error.

Paul's analysis of the debate over Darwinism can be compared with that of Neal Gillespie in his book, *Charles Darwin and the Problem of Creation* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1979). Gillespie shows that Darwin debated vigorously with those who accepted evolution but clung to divine purpose. Paul does not seem to show well enough the difference between Darwinism and what Gillespie terms "providential evolution." Perhaps some of the problem stems from Paul's style; he emphasizes the details of debates involving a large number of people over a span of many years, while summary statements are, when given, often not clear.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the work of Albert de Lapparent, a geologist who began his work in the philosophy of science in 1905. Lapparent held that

man's fall made work necessary. The conditions and situations which then came into being were the following: labor was divided; crafts arose; empirical rules governing the crafts were formed; abstract ideas, with attention given to mass, time, space, and force, were derived from the rules (consequently, there arose interest in abstract ideas instead of natural objects); laws of movement were formulated; there was a contemplation of creation; order was perceived and, in fact, order was equated to science. Lapparent attempted to build a system which would allow for scientific progress. But Lapparent's efforts to keep so much of what had been held earlier were not to prevail in the debate.

Paul considers in Chapter 5 the scientific philosophy of the modern believer as exemplified by the views of Pierre Duhem, a philosopher of science. Duhem, who lived in the first part of this century, had ideas which were advanced beyond those of most of his contemporaries. Paul says of Duhem, "He persistently maintained that his scientific theories were autonomous, having no foundation in either religion or metaphysics" (p. 137). Duhem was vigorous in separating what Paul calls the religious and the scientific spheres. He worked to "save the phenomena" by translating physical data into mathematical equations. But Duhem did in the last analysis admit that as

physical theory improved it would get closer to describing reality. Paul looks upon Duhem's work as a definite break with the past.

In the last chapter, Chapter 6, Paul discusses the late-nineteenth century attempts, led by Pope Leo XIII, to revive Thomism for the purpose of solving intellectual problems which had arisen. Paul concludes that a generation of effort in this direction did not bring about unity either among Catholic thinkers or between the scientific and the religious spheres. The science of that day simply could not use a ready-made philosophy, says Paul, especially when that philosophy came from a pre-scientific era.

At the end of the book the hope that remains is expressed by a quotation from the writings of Emile Boutroux: "Strife tempers [religion and science] both alike; and, if reason prevails, from their two distinct principles . . . will spring a form of life ever ampler, richer, deeper, freer, as well as more beautiful and more intelligible" (p. 194). Paul leaves the impression that he accepts this statement.

In general, Paul does not seem to analyze the views of others from an adequately Christian perspective. But the book is a valuable mine of information on French scientific-religious thought of the period between 1850 and World War I.