

Book Reviews

Dialogue with Trypho. By Justin Martyr, trans. Thomas B. Falls, rev. by Thomas P. Halton, ed. by Michael Slusser. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003, 229 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Given the controversies of recent years, it is tempting for some to believe that Jewish evangelism is an innovative concept, pioneered by Southern Baptists. Justin Martyr was no Southern Baptist. He was a first-generation Christian in the second-century Roman Empire who sought to engage paganism, Hellenic philosophy, and Judaism with the truth claims of Christian theology. This new revision of his *Dialogues* serves to remind Christians of the ancient Great Commission mandate of a robust, clear, and Christocentric defense of the gospel before all people—including the Jewish people.

In the *Dialogue*, Justin seeks to persuade a prominent Jewish thinker of the reality of Christian truth claims. Reading the *Dialogue* is much like listening to a one-sided telephone conversation. All that we have are Justin's arguments. But he so thoroughly deconstructs Trypho's objections that it is not difficult at all to see both sides of the debate shaping up throughout the work. What contemporary evangelicals may be surprised to see is how little the debates over Christian theology have changed in the past two thousand years.

Justin Martyr is well known for his attempts to integrate Christian

theology with Greek philosophy, sometimes in unhelpful ways. This volume demonstrates, however, how anchored to the text of Scripture Justin could be. Justin appeals to Trypho on the basis of the Old Testament Scriptures, noting that the Christ event is the fulfillment of the new covenant promises of the fathers and the prophets. Noteworthy is Justin's hermeneutic, which is typological and Christocentric. Thus, Justin does not simply point Trypho to a few isolated messianic prophecies. Instead, he shows him how Jesus of Nazareth makes sense of all of the Old Testament. In so doing, he treats the Bible as an organic unity, and takes seriously the implications of divine authorship and the historical unfolding of the mystery of the gospel. It is all too easy for contemporary evangelicals to dismiss fathers such as Justin for being "allegorical" and "fanciful." A reading of Justin himself, however, will show that Justin's hermeneutic may be quite different from that of Walter Kaiser, but it is remarkably similar to that of the apostles Peter and Paul.

Some of Trypho's objections read like those of twentieth-century Protestant liberals. Justin responds, for instance, to Trypho's assertion that the prophet Isaiah does not foresee a "virgin birth" but a "young woman" giving birth as a sign. Clearly, this discussion did not originate with the translation of the Revised Standard Version in the mid-twentieth century. Justin expertly answers this objec-

tion, not simply with a word study of the Hebrew, but with a thoroughly theological investigation of the nature of the prophecy in redemptive history. Other objections by Trypho read like those of contemporary Jungian scholars such as Joseph Campbell. Trypho, for instance, points out common features between the Christian story and pagan mythologies—such as virginal conceptions. Centuries before C. S. Lewis, Justin claims these archetypal counterfeits actually confirm, rather than unravel, the Christian truth claims.

At other times, Trypho seems to argue like a classical dispensationalist evangelical—arguing for the restoration of a political Israelite theocracy as the touchstone of the messianic kingdom. Centuries before George Eldon Ladd, Justin employs an "already/not yet" schema of kingdom fulfillment. Indeed, Justin points to the Old Testament prophecies as themselves teaching a tension between the inauguration and consummation of Davidic promise at the end of the age. Justin carefully explores the meaning of "Israel"—a meaning that is found in union with the Jewish Messiah, not in genetic bloodlines. This does not mean, however, that Justin "spiritualizes" the Old Testament promises. Indeed, he argues cogently and forcefully for the cosmic, material, and political aspects of the redemption of the world. Thus, he considers the idea that salvation means a heavenly, disembodied existence to be "blas-

phemy” against the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Justin presents the implications of the Christian hope of bodily resurrection, and argues for a literal and premillennial understanding of the apostle John’s vision of the thousand-year reign of Christ.

Contemporary evangelicals have been plagued with a reputation for chasing after novelty. The theological fads that blow through our circles point to the shameful truth of at least part of this reputation. If evangelicals seek to engage secularism, paganism, and the objections of world religions with a wisdom that predates the Evangelical Theological Society, a new reading of Justin’s *Dialogue* is a good place to start.

Russell D. Moore

The First Edition of the New Testament. By David Trobisch. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, viii + 175 pp., \$35.00.

This little volume by Bangor Theological Seminary professor David Trobisch constitutes an attempt at a literary *coup d’état* in the circle of scholars who have argued for an evolutionary development of the New Testament canon. The “received interpretation,” handed down especially from Westcott, Zahn, and Harnack in the later nineteenth century, is that the canon was slowly but surely recognized over several centuries, culminating in Athanasius’s famous Easter Letter in AD 367 in which he listed all twenty-seven of the documents which constitute the New Testament canon. This process

was instigated at several points by conflicts, such as Marcion’s attempt to reduce the canon and Montanus’s efforts to expand it by incorporating his own prophecies. Still, the process was long and drawn-out and was marked by serious disagreements over the status of such writings as Revelation, Hebrews, and 2 Peter, as well as the question of whether to include The Shepherd of Hermas. Trobisch stands this interpretation on its head. He contends that a Canonical Edition (*Endredaktion*) was completed by the mid-second century and that this edition was exactly the same New Testament as that used by the church today.

Trobisch’s argument is very compact. Only about a hundred pages of this book feature the text—the rest of the volume is end-notes. Here is his case. Several features of early manuscripts demand the conclusion that an early canonical edition existed. Manuscripts of the New Testament are almost always divided into four sections—Gospels, Praxapostolos, Letters of Paul, the Revelation (pp. 21-38). (The General Epistles are included in the Praxapostolos and Hebrews is in the Pauline Letters.) Early manuscripts are nearly always consistent in this organization, as are the later ones. Since this organization can be found in the third and fourth centuries, it must hark back to an earlier moment.

Second, the presence of the *nominae sacra* is relevant (11-18). These abbreviations of sacred names can be found in manuscripts of each of the four sections of the New Testament, and from all periods. Trobisch argues

that this points to the existence of a specific “publisher” of the New Testament. This “publisher” must be early since these *nominae* can be found in second century mss. His third argument is that the use of the codex points in the direction of a Canonical Edition (19-21). Codices were in existence outside the New Testament, but they were very rare. Very early, though, the codex became the form of choice for New Testament publication. Trobisch contends that this is likely because the Canonical Edition was itself a codex, and later mss. sought naturally to copy the original.

Fourth, the author contends that the uniformity of the titles of the various documents in the ms. tradition points to an early standard (38-43). He notes that the phrase “*Euaggelion kata Markon*” (and *Matthaion*, etc) is not a common Greek usage, but that it is universally used in the mss. as titles of the Gospels. It is not likely that the autographs uniformly used such titles, but is more likely that an early “publisher” employed this form, and that it then became universal. The same can be said of the General Epistles, the book of Acts, Pauline letters, and Revelation.

In chapter three Trobisch delves into the heart of his argument, though he includes much rehashing of the previous material. Here he posits the notion that some “authors” may be attributed to New Testament documents primarily for editorial reasons. He makes it clear that he is not taking a specific position on the authenticity of the Gospels or of the disputed Pauline letters (60).

It does not matter either way for his argument. But neither does he consider it important to argue in favor of the authenticity of these documents. The important matter for his argument is that the editors of the Canonical Edition insisted that “the documents promoted in their collection are authentic” (60). Further, it had to be clear that the leaders of the various components of the early church were represented in this collection, i.e., the Jerusalem tradition, the Gentile churches, and the disciples and family of the Lord. Further, the importance of the codex form becomes apparent in this discussion. A codex form would have brought a higher price than a scroll or roll, while actually being cheaper to produce. This would have attracted a “publisher” who would be willing to take on such a project for profit (76). In addition, the codex form would make it easier to publish a fairly large volume, as the New Testament is. The codex form would also have facilitated the sociological function of such a text in the life of the community. This Canonical Edition became a best-seller in the second century and constituted a unifying factor in the early church.

Is Trobisch’s proposal plausible? Probably the most telling argument against it is that none of the early church historians, such as Eusebius, mentions the existence of an early canonical edition of the New Testament. That aside, the proposal has a great deal of merit. Many of Trobisch’s arguments in favor of his position are quite sensible. This proposal seems to offer the best scenario in light of the

historical data. The fact that some of the New Testament documents were disputed and that writings such as Hermas were defended as canonical by certain elements within the early church do not constitute defeaters of this proposal. It might be expected that some persons would later question the status of any canonical edition. It is not necessary to the proposal, however, to question the authenticity of some of the New Testament documents in order to make this case. It will be interesting to see if at some point in the future Trobisch follows this up with a larger work that will attempt to work out all of the details of the proposal in terms of historical criticism and early church historiography. So far, he has presented a fascinating proposal that deserves a hearing in the academy and the church.

Chad Owen Brand

Paul and the Jews. By A. Andrew Das. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003, xvi + 238 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Andrew Das, who has previously written an insightful work titled *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant*, tackles in this book Paul’s view of the Jews. In the first chapter Das provides a survey of scholarship and sets the course for the remainder of the work. Chapter two considers the situation Paul addressed in Galatia. Das rightly criticizes Mark Nanos’s suggestion that the opponents are Jews who do not believe in Christ, showing that the evidence in support of such a view is not compelling. He then

proceeds to argue that Paul locates salvation only in the atonement of Christ, so that reliance upon the law for salvation is excluded.

In chapter three the situation of Jews in Rome is considered. Claudius’s decree to expel Jews from Rome, says Das, should not be interpreted to say that no Jews were left in Rome since the Jewish community was too large for total expulsion to be practical. Still, Das maintains that the church increasingly lost contact with its synagogue roots with the conversion of Gentiles who were not God-fearers. Tensions arose, according to Das, between Gentile believers who were formerly God-fearers and attracted to Judaism and the newer Gentile believers who were unacquainted with and not disposed towards Jewish practices. Das argues here that Paul was familiar with the Roman situation, and that the church was almost exclusively Gentile, so that the tensions in Rome were not between Jewish and Gentile Christians, but Gentile believers nurtured in Judaism and the newer believers who shared the common cultural disdain for things Jewish. Space is lacking to interact in detail with Das here, but his argument for the almost exclusively Gentile character of the Roman community fails to convince. Further, one wonders why the newer Gentile converts would not also subscribe to the law if they came into the church under the influence of Gentiles who were sympathetic to and observant of some of the OT law. Typically converts subscribe to the customs and ethos of the majority when they convert. Das, on the

other hand, shows that Nanos's view that the weak in Romans 14-15 are non-Christian Jews lacks cogency, demonstrating that the arguments supporting such a view are without foundation.

Chapter four tackles Romans 9-11 and in particular the two-covenant theory, which suggests that Jews are saved through the Torah covenant while Gentiles are saved through faith in Christ. Das demonstrates that the two-covenant theory, though attractive because of modern pluralism, fails as exegesis of Paul. From Romans 9-11 and a number of other texts Das shows that Paul required Jews to believe in Christ in order to be saved. Das also rightly, in my judgment, maintains that Romans 11:26 speaks of a future salvation of Israel, showing that Israel here cannot refer to both Jewish and Gentile Christians, nor can the salvation spoken of here be confined to the salvation of a Jewish remnant throughout history. Das is less convincing in separating the future conversion of the Jews from the future coming of Jesus Christ. Seeing the salvation of the Jews as occurring at Christ's coming does not exclude the notion that they are saved through the proclaimed gospel. The future salvation of the Jews would be in some respects, if it occurs at Christ's coming, akin to Paul's own conversion on the road to Damascus.

In the fifth chapter the priority of Israel is examined. A number of texts in Paul indicate that the Jews were considered to be God's elect and special people. Das demonstrates quite convincingly and very helpfully that

the first person plurals in Galatians, however, should not be restricted to the Jews. Paul does not invariably use pronouns to segregate Jews from Gentiles, and thorough exegesis indicates that both Jews and Gentiles are in view in texts like Galatians 3:13-14; 4:3-7, 26-31. Paul, suggests Das, shifts to the second person to address the readers in a rhetorically pointed way. Further, Paul's strong words against the Jews and the pronouncement of wrath upon them in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 has engendered much discussion. Das rightly argues that the verses are authentic and cannot be dismissed as a later interpolation. The language is hyperbolic and should not be read as an indictment of all Jews. Neither does the text refer to the defeat at the hands of the Romans in A.D. 70, but refers to God's wrath in the present. Das rightly argues that this text does not rule out Israel's priority in salvation, but his own view of the text needs further elaboration and defense. Wrath in Paul usually refers to God's eschatological wrath, and hence the notion that the wrath here is proleptic does not seem convincing.

Chapter six investigates Paul's understanding of the law. Das maintains that Paul thought the law was a burden because it was impossible to obey. The new perspective rightly discerns the ethnic dimensions of Paul's polemic but has over-reacted in failing to see that Paul also criticizes the law because human beings were unable to keep it. Das proceeds to argue that the term "law" (*nomos*) in Romans consistently refers to the Mosaic law, and should not be ren-

dered "principle" or "rule" (see Rom 3:27; 7:23; 8:2). Resolving this issue is quite difficult, but Das argues well for his view.

Das, in chapter seven, reflects on the status of the Mosaic law in the life of Christians. Believers are no longer under the enslaving power of the law, but that does not mean that the law of Moses is irrelevant to them. They now observe the law of Christ (Gal 6:2), which refers to the law of Moses as it is adjusted and changed through the coming of Christ. The law of Christ focuses on love, which is paradigmatically explicated by Jesus' own way of life (though I think Das wrongly sees Romans 6 as a call to imitate Christ), and Christians observe God's commands by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Das concludes his book with a summary and reflections. The work is characterized by thoughtful and mainly convincing exegesis. We look forward to further contributions from Andrew Das in coming years.

Thomas R. Schreiner

The Works of Henry Scougal. Edited by Don Kistler. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2002, 353 pp., \$29.95.

Henry Scougal (1650-78), although he died at the age of 28 and is not well known today, has had a significant impact on the church. During his life he served as professor at Kings College, Aberdeen, Scotland (twice), pastored a church, and wrote. His best-known work is *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, which had a significant impact on many in days past,

including George Whitefield (apparently leading to his conversion). More recently John Piper basically suggests that his book *The Pleasures of God* was inspired by the reading of Scougal's book. These are stimulants enough to read Scougal.

There are various editions of *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* available but this book also contains nine other sermons, nine private meditations, five essays and a sermon preached at Scougal's funeral. These items provide further insight into the life and ministry of this particularly blessed servant of God. The sermon, "The Importance and Difficulty of the Ministerial Function," from 2 Corinthians 2:16, is particularly good. Charles Bridges references this sermon in his classic book, *The Christian Ministry*. Scougal grapples profoundly with the gravity of pastoral ministry, a topic sorely missing in our technique-oriented discussions. One quote may help to demonstrate the tone of the sermon:

But if the negligence and miscarriage of a minister hazards the souls of others, it certainly ruins his own; which made St. Chrysostom say (words so terrible that I tremble to put them into English), "If a man should speak fire, blood, and smoke; if flames could come out of his mouth instead of words; if he had a voice like thunder and an eye like lightning, he could not sufficiently represent the dreadful account that an unfaithful pastor shall make. What horror and confusion shall it cast them into at the last day to hear the blood of the Son of God plead against them, to hear our great Master say, 'It was the purchase of My blood which ye did neglect! God died for these souls, of whom ye took so little

pains!' Think not, therefore, to be saved by that blood which ye have despised, or to escape the torments whereunto many others are plunged through your faults!" By this time I hope it appears that the work of the ministry is of great weight and importance; that much depends on the right discharging of it, and that miscarrying in it is the most dangerous thing in the world. (p. 235)

This book will be very profitable reading for anyone, particularly pastors, and I recommend it warmly.

Ray Van Neste
Union University

The Uniqueness of Jesus. By Chris Wright. London: Monarch, 2001, 186 pp., \$10.99 paper.

This work is a part of the "Thinking Clearly Series" edited by Clive Calver. In it Wright examines the Christian claim of Jesus' uniqueness in an increasingly pluralistic world. He notes pluralism has always been around, but Western culture is now being forced to deal with it. Unfortunately our response has been to take the approach of the "supermarket." There is now something for everyone, so feel free to choose what you please. As long as you are happy and satisfied, nothing else really matters.

From here Wright does a very fine job of surveying the theological landscape, providing a critique of the major teams and some of their players: exclusivism (Carson, Piper); inclusivism (Pinnock, Rahner, Sanders); and pluralism (Hick, Pannikar, Race). Wright discusses each position clearly and fairly. He lays out the

options, provides a solid analysis, defines well the crucial terms, and then draws his conclusions. There is some unnecessary repetition, and chapter 6 on "The Bible and Human Religions" is a bit fuzzy, especially the section on the patriarchs and "Israel and the gods of the nations in the Old Testament."

Wright sees the great divide to be between exclusivism-inclusivism on one side and pluralism on the other (71). In identifying himself, Wright prefers to be called a "soft" or "non-restrictivist, exclusivist" (162). Wright says, "I find myself among those...who believe that among the finally saved there will be those whom God has saved through Christ who, though not knowing of Jesus, turned in some measure of repentance and faith to God, found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and will meet their Savior with surprise and joy when He welcomes them to His kingdom" (51). Such persons would be similar to those saved B.C. (before Christ) in the Old Testament. While I know of no evangelical who will accuse God of an injustice if we find this to be so when we get to heaven, this position is a tenuous one and in terms of the missionary mandate and our methods, we cannot (we must not!) assume it to be so. Wright believes his position does not harm our motivation for evangelism (51 ff.), and though he makes several good points, his argument is not convincing. We go in obedience to our Lord's command because, apart from a saving knowledge of Christ, persons are lost. Still, this is a fine and balanced treatment of a major issue for our day.

Chris Wright is to be commended for his contribution.

Daniel L. Akin
Southeastern Baptist
Theological Seminary

The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914. Edited by Andrew Porter. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, 250 pp., \$45.00 paper.

This is a volume in the *Studies in the History of Christian Missions* series. It contains papers delivered at Cambridge as a part of the Currents in World Christianity Project. The authors examine the ways in which British missionaries used their identity under the British Empire or attempted to separate themselves from the imperial authority and influence of their sending country. Although they were inevitably intertwined with this imperialism, their approaches to fulfilling their mission under its auspices differed. The missionary culture of the day is hardly considered to be monolithic. Various missions and missionaries were found to be at differing points on a continuum from paternalism to the role of a servant and the establishment of national leadership. It is concluded that overall this era of extended imperialism “was not reinforced by the missionaries but more often subverted by them.”

The volume gives emphasis to Africa but dedicates one chapter to India and one to China. Two chapters are of particular interest and value. The first is a treatment of the relationship of church, state, and mis-

sions based on reports and analysis of the historic Edinburgh Missions Conference in 1910. Second, there is a chapter dedicated to a comparison of the missionary approaches of James Hudson Taylor and Timothy Richard in China.

Brian Stanley’s assessment of the Edinburgh Conference notes, among other things, the widespread missionary approach encouraging obedience to government although recognizing the obligation of missionaries to urge governments to address and purge injustice and oppression. It also describes how perspectives on church and state can impact the strategy of the missionary and the mission organization.

The most valuable chapter is Lauren Pfister’s comparison of the missionary strategies and lives of Hudson Taylor and Timothy Richard, both of whom had immense influence in China. Some theological differences appear and guide their statements on issues such as ancestor rites and the relationship of eschatology to societal engagement. Taylor, who was “shaped by Methodist disciplines and Brethren piety,” placed his emphasis on the practical rather than theory and study. Richard, who had ties to the Baptist Missionary Society, believed it was important to engage the cultural and intellectual dimensions of the society. He saw the need to reach and engage the political, social, and cultural elites of China with the gospel and its “broad implications.” Taylor’s emphasis was toward the less educated masses. Both men were committed to preaching the gospel

to the people of China but their missiological approaches were different. Both men were influential through their writing and literature production. It is interesting that some of the largest contrasts between the two are discovered in their literature. Neither man promoted British imperialism but both were associated with what the Chinese considered to be institutions of British imperial power. This chapter more than any other is valuable in addressing the importance of theology in shaping missiology and the role of the missionary as both a proclaimer of the gospel and servant in the mission of God in “the world historical context.” The chapters by Stanley and Pfister alone make this volume beneficial to the missiologist and student of missions history.

Mark McClellan

The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two Thousand Years, from East to West. Edited by Gordon Mursell. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001, 384 pp., \$35.00.

This encyclopedic work is beautiful in its design and nearly comprehensive in its treatment of various forms of Christian spirituality. Ten chapters, each by a different author, and divided into the various traditions (e.g., Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, etc.), generally surveyed chronologically, survey approaches to spirituality. Because the book labors to be comprehensive in scope, it does not generally give much detail in dealing with the various spiritual traditions, but it is very helpful as a

survey of key persons and issues.

In spite of the effort at comprehensiveness, several notable omissions stand out. The book addresses the Shakers, but not the Adventists or Jehovah's Witnesses. There is no discussion of the Keswick movement, though it has arguably been one of the most fruitful spiritual life traditions in the last century-and-a-half. In the same vein, few Keswick teachers are even featured in this volume—nothing on Andrew Murray, Watchman Nee, or F. B. Meyer, in spite of the fact that they have been some of the best-selling devotional authors of our time. Similarly, some of the Puritans, most important in terms of devotional/spiritual writing, receive no mention at all. Richard Baxter is discussed, but Richard Sibbes is not, even though Sibbes's "Bruised Reed" is one of the most famous and influential of Puritan spiritual writings. Perhaps this is just testimony to the fact that no one can scratch everyone's itches, but these are fairly important lacunae.

Even with these omissions, this volume is a wonderful and ready resource for one who wishes a quick look at key persons, books, and issues in spiritual history. One will not always agree with the way the material is presented, but it is still a very helpful book, one that will be on my "quick access" shelf for the foreseeable future.

Chad Owen Brand

Grace: The Truth, Growth, and Different Degrees. By Christopher Love. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997, 173 pp., \$22.95.

This is a collection of fifteen sermons originally published in the seventeenth century by Christopher Love, a Puritan pastor in London. Love is little known today but Don Kistler seems to be on a mission to change that, republishing not only this book but another one by Love, as well as *The Works of Christopher Love* and a biography written by Kistler. The rediscovery of Love is worthwhile.

This book is a collection of sermons from two texts. The first five sermons derive from 1 Kings 14:13, and the last ten from 2 Timothy 2:1. The burden of the sermons is discerning evidences of true grace (i.e., conversion) in one's heart and then recognizing growth in the midst of struggles with sin and doubt. Love demonstrates the heart of a pastor dealing gently with the fearful conscience. From God's recognition of "some good thing" in the son of Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:13), Love notes God's generous recognition of the slightest good in his people. Love summarizes the burden of these sermons in this way:

... I come to the main doctrine I intend to handle: God not only exactly takes notice of, but also tenderly cherishes and graciously rewards, the smallest beginnings and weakest measures of grace which He works in the hearts of His own people (14).

Love provides a stark contrast to the mean-spirited caricature often given of Puritan preachers.

From 2 Timothy 2:1, Love goes on to discuss specific evidences of the beginnings of grace, evidences of maturity in grace and how these can at various times coincide with great temptations and failings. This is not an 'easy-believism' but a carefully nuanced encouragement to the doubting while also warning any who would turn grace into license.

This is a useful book containing much wisdom on various matters. The style is that of the seventeenth century, so those who are unaccustomed to it will have to take some time with it, though the spelling, formatting and some grammar have been updated by Kistler. Also, Love is not a model for doing hermeneutics. He typically writes truth whether or not those truths are actually found in the passage under consideration. Still, this is a useful book as Love is a model of sound theology applied forthrightly yet with the compassionate heart of the shepherd of souls.

Ray Van Neste
Union University