

sonance God is capable of acting outside God's own scriptural precedents" (202). Alan Segal's chapter on Paul's Jewish presuppositions begins while Brian Rosner's summary of Paul's ethics concludes this very good part of the monograph.

The final part of the book draws the lines of Paul's history of effect from the second century (e.g. Calvin Roetzel's well balanced presentation of Marcion is to be commended) through "Paul's enduring legacy" (by Robert Morgan) to contemporary perspectives on Paul (by Ben Witherington). The monograph as a whole is a good textbook, presenting all the main views of present day Pauline scholarship. The majority of the contributions are fair in mentioning alternative solutions; yet the reader should know that most of the "solutions" offered are open to criticism, and on certain aspects (e.g. the introductory matters mentioned above) a more traditional view can be argued for.

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Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron

Nicholas Perrin

Academia Biblica no. 5; Society of Biblical Literature:
Atlanta, 2002, xii + 216 pp. p/b, \$29.95, ISBN 1-58983-045-8

SUMMARY

Perrin offers an original thesis that the Gospel of Thomas comes from the last quarter of the second century and was dependent on Tatians Diatessaron. Most of the book is taken up with establishing that the Gospel of Thomas was originally composed in Syriac and that almost every saying is linked to its adjacent sayings by catchwords, which Perrin reconstructs in Syriac. The problem with these reconstructions is that Perrin allows himself too much licence in reconstruction and consequently many of the catchwords can result from scholarly imagination. In its present form the argument cannot be said to be sustained.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Perrin bietet eine neue These an: das Thomasevangelium sei im letzten Viertel des zweiten Jahrhunderts entstanden und abhängig von Tatians Diatessaron. Ein Großteil des Buches versucht zu zeigen, dass das Thomasevangelium ursprünglich in syrisch verfasst wurde und dass fast jeder Spruch mit den angrenzenden Sprüchen über Stichworte verbunden ist, die Perrin auf syrisch rekonstruiert. Das Problem dieser Rekonstruktionen ist, dass Perrin sich zuviel Freiheit in der Rekonstruktion erlaubt, so dass viele der Stichworte der wissenschaftlichen Einbildungskraft zu entstammen scheinen. In seiner gegenwärtigen Form kann das Argument nicht als schlüssig gelten.

RÉSUMÉ

Perrin défend une thèse originale : l'évangile de Thomas

daterait du dernier quart du II^e siècle et serait dépendant du *Diatessaron* de Tatien. La majeure partie de son ouvrage vise à établir que l'évangile de Thomas a d'abord été rédigé en syriaque et que presque toutes ses unités sont liées aux unités adjacentes par des mots crochets, dont Perrin cherche à retrouver l'original en syriaque. Il s'accorde cependant beaucoup trop de liberté dans ces reconstructions ; ainsi, beaucoup de ces mots crochets ne sont peut-être que le résultat de l'imagination du chercheur. Telle qu'elle se présente ici, l'argumentation ne convainc pas.

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At a time when much of the energy spent investigating the Gospel of Thomas comes from those persuaded that it is a significant early historical source about Jesus, this book stands out as somewhat distinct. Perrin argues that, rather than being a first century or even mid-second century composition, the Gospel of Thomas actually comes from the late second century since it had Tatian's *Diatessaron* (composed ca. AD 172) as one of its sources. If correct, this thesis obviously has rather wide-ranging implications.

The Introduction explores the contemporary importance ascribed to the Gospel of Thomas; ch. 1 uses linguistic evidence to argue that the Gospel of Thomas was originally composed in Syriac, rather than Coptic or Greek; ch. 2 introduces the notion that the Gospel of Thomas, rather than being a relatively unstructured collection of sayings, is in fact structured by a series of Syriac catchwords (*Stichwörter*) that link adjacent sayings – catchwords that do not work in Greek or Coptic; ch. 3 produces a circumstantial and literary argument that the Gospel of Thomas was dependent on the *Diatessaron*.

Perrin's argument is simple, but involves a wealth of technical linguistic detail. Right at the heart of the book is the table of catchwords (pp. 57–155), consisting of a continuous English text of the Gospel of Thomas, followed by columns of partial text or reconstructed text in Coptic, Greek and Syriac, respectively. The conclusion is that while Coptic has 269 catchwords and Greek 263, Syriac has 502 (p. 155). '[T]he quantitative evidence points decisively in the direction of Syriac composition. ... Even if a third of the *Stichwörter* adduced in the chart were called into question (I believe the challenge remains for the one wishing to discount any one of them), the evidence would still favor a Syriac text' (p. 156).

Though this conclusion may seem impressively supported, in fact recurring problems in his reconstructions considerably reduce its support. Firstly, the reconstructions are not straightforward. Thus from the Coptic word 'earth' (saying 9) and the Coptic word 'world' (saying 10) he reconstructs the Syriac word 'earth', despite the fact that Syriac has a perfectly good word for 'world' (pp. 65–66). When it suits Perrin to render Coptic 'world' by Syriac 'earth' it is so rendered (p. 78), but on other occasions the Coptic word 'world' is rendered by Syriac 'world' (p. 83). The author is thus selecting the

words used in his retroversion *in order to create* catchwords. Similarly tendentious renderings from Coptic back to Syriac are 'corpse' rendered by 'flesh' (p. 106), 'evening' rendered by 'night' (p. 115), and 'belongings' rendered by 'house' (p. 124). A significant proportion of the catchwords discovered can be accounted for in a similar way.

A second category of catchwords are those said to sound similar. Take, for instance, the link supposedly established between sayings 54 and 55: 'The two homophones [sic], šmayā [heaven] and sānyā [hate], would only be separated by a handful of words' (p. 105). To begin with, Perrin should have reconstructed Syriac s̄anē (absolute state) for sānya (emphatic state). Next, although s and š look similar in a Roman-based alphabet, no evidence is produced that the sounds they represent were perceived as similar at the time. Thus the only sound in common between the two words is ā, which occurs in a different stress position in each. Consequently there are no matching sounds between the words. Similar examples could be multiplied and large numbers of alleged catchwords accounted for.

The argument is founded upon technical detail and it is due to scores of technical errors that it fails. Since the premise that the Gospel of Thomas was composed in Syriac has itself not been set on a secure foundation Perrin's subsequent case that the Gospel of Thomas had the Diatessaron as its source lacks cogency. A significant achievement of the book, however, is to be a reminder that there is still no firm evidence against as late a dating for the Gospel of Thomas as Perrin proposes.

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Wesley and the Wesleyans
Religion in Eighteenth Century Britain
John Kent

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, vii + 229pp. p/b, £14.99, ISBN 0521455553

SUMMARY

In this book Professor John Kent challenges the generally accepted view among historians that John Wesley promoted a widespread revival which saved the soul of the British people. Instead, he suggests that Wesley simply tapped into primary religion which manifested itself in healings, sobbings and fallings. These experiences, far from being the work of God, simply occurred as the result of altered states of consciousness in those concerned. Professor Kent also argues that the Hanoverian established church was not as lax or as weak as Wesley maintained.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Buch greift Professor John Kent die unter Historikern allgemein anerkannte Ansicht an, dass John Wesley eine weitläufige Erweckung angetrieben hat, die die Seele der Briten gerettet hat. Im Gegensatz dazu legt Kent nahe,

Wesley hätte einfach eine Grundreligion angezapft, die sich in Heilungen, Weinkrämpfen und Hinfallphänomenen geäußert hätte. Diese Erfahrungen, weit entfernt davon, das Werk Gottes gewesen zu sein, traten einfach als Resultat veränderter Bewußtseinszustände auf. Kent argumentiert darüber hinaus, dass die etablierte hannoversche Kirche nicht so locker und schwach war, wie Wesley behauptete.

RÉSUMÉ

John Kent s'oppose ici à l'idée, généralement admise par les historiens, selon laquelle John Wesley aurait été à l'origine d'un grand réveil qui aurait sauvé l'âme du peuple britannique. Il pense au contraire que Wesley a donné dans une religiosité simpliste se manifestant par des guérisons, des soupirs ainsi que par des personnes se laissant choir. Ces expériences, loin d'émaner de l'œuvre divine, résultaient tout bonnement d'états de conscience altérés chez les participants. Kent soutient aussi que l'Église anglicane n'était pas aussi laxiste ni aussi faible que le prétendait Wesley.

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This is a book which presents an alternative to the generally accepted view of the impact of John Wesley on eighteenth century English society. Professor John Kent does not accept the traditional historiography that there was a large scale evangelical revival which 'saved the soul of the British nation through the miraculous gift of the Spirit'. Rather, he argues, that Wesley tapped into 'primary religion', which for Kent is a kind of subconscious carnal sensuality, which can be brought to the surface and excited by rhetoric and the techniques of the revivalist and the evangelist. Primary religion, according to Kent, manifested itself 'in meetings thick with talk of answered prayer', 'sudden bursts of religious enthusiasm', healings and alleged diabolical miracles which he regards as 'old fashioned'. Kent is also scathing of Wesley's teaching on holiness and interprets the professed experience as merely an altered state of consciousness in the believer.

It is clear therefore that Kent is no fan of John Wesley, indeed he is a strident critic of the founder of Methodism. Wesley, he asserts, lived with 'self-rejection', 'found in religion a means of imposing his will on some of his contemporaries' and, despite allowing women to preach, he was intensely patriarchal and sought always to confine women to the domestic sphere. Wesley, writes Kent, 'dropped out of the mainstream of British society, to wander around the British Isles for about fifty years' and although not anti-intellectual, 'he did not question the classical, including biblical authority on which his education had relied'.

Kent is critical of Wesley's attacks on the established church and maintains that the Wesleyan societies had a detrimental effect on the parochial system. His sympathies clearly lie with the Hanoverian established church and he contends that 'eighteenth century Anglicanism was never as dead as Wesley said it was'. Kent draws on the writings of several of Wesley's ecclesiastical oppo-