
Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus. By Miriam S. Taylor. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995. ISBN 90-04-10186-1. Pp. ix+207.

Since World War II it has become essential for scholars to re-examine the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, from its beginnings to the contemporary dialogue. As the re-examination has proceeded, it has become clear that Christian anti-Judaism has greatly influenced the development of modern anti-Semitism. The quest for a greater understanding of Christian anti-Judaism has, in turn, focussed a great deal of attention on the period in which early Christianity lived independently of, but also side by side with, Judaism as minority religious traditions within the Roman Empire (c. 150–312 C.E.).

A scholarly consensus has emerged which posits a conflictual relationship between these traditions of Jerusalem, whereby two vibrant and dynamic religious communities competed with each other for converts in the pagan setting. Simply stated, the origins of Christian anti-Semitism lie in the success of the synagogue communities, which inevitably led to a collision with the church communities. Based upon the seminal work of Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135–425)* (1943), this consensus has remained largely unchallenged, until now. Taylor's volume, a revised version of her dissertation (Oxford 1991), critiques the consensus on historical, hermeneutical and theological grounds.

To her credit, Taylor carefully places the "conflict theory" within the context of the accepted interpretations of doctrinal development proffered by thinkers like Adolf von Harnack, who found the reason for Christianity's triumph in the tradition's inherent superiority. Thus, Simon is seen as refuting the prejudiced assumption of supercessionism. While the latter did indeed offer a corrective to the former, Taylor argues that it too is problematic, having served as the genesis for other theories regarding the Christian-Jewish relationship. Scholars building on the so-called "Simon foundation" have further refined the conflict at social and political levels. With an audacity that one would wish of all doctoral candidates, Taylor sets out to

identify and categorize the hypotheses put forward by modern scholars. While these theories all have a superficial air of plausibility that has contributed to their widespread acceptance, their presuppositions have never been fully questioned, and their real implications remained unexplored. The result is an approach ensnared in confusions and contradictions. Indeed, when these theories are carefully scrutinized, they reveal themselves to be based on dubious historical assumptions that lead to hasty and unjustified conclusions (4).

The argument is developed over four chapters. The first ("Competitive Anti-Judaism") questions the assumption that the church and the synagogue rivalled each other in the quest for converts. Did the Jews proselytize as the Christians

did? Simon affirms this model. Taylor argues that Simon has in fact imposed the Christian model of religious development on ancient Judaism. Is religious vitality only to be measured by the number of converts? Obviously, the author would answer in the negative, choosing to follow the relatively recent work of A.T. Kraabel and D. Rokeah, who have found insufficient evidence to support Jewish proselytism along the Christian model. The second chapter ("Conflictual Anti-Judaism") treats theories which have arisen from Simon's foundation. All share a common interest in establishing the *Sitz-im-Leben* of the two communities within the Roman Empire, attempting to grasp their relative positions—socially and politically. The third chapter ("Inherited Anti-Judaism") critiques the perspective which asserts that the anti-Judaism of the patristic era was either brought into the church by osmosis from the pagan/gentile environment or taken over from established biblical exegesis.

It is in the fourth chapter ("Symbolic Anti-Judaism") that we find the exciting proposal which Taylor offers as the thesis for a new discussion about the ancient relationship: the anti-Judaism found in the early church was not founded upon rivalry with living Jewish communities, but, in fact, served a formative function in the church's process of self-identification. It was, therefore, *symbolic* Judaism which features in the discourse of the early church. Taylor concludes with a strong attempt to move contemporary theological dialogue toward acceptance of this insight. Unless Christian (and Jewish) dialogians accept the presence of symbolic anti-Judaism at the heart of Christian self-identity, it will be left intact if and when the dialogue removes anti-Judaism based upon the conflict model from the Christian *Weltanschauung*.

This is a powerful, well-written study and essential reading for historians of the early church, for historical theologians, and for all interested in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Gary A. Gaudin

McGill University

***The Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow: The Presbyterian Contribution to Canadian Life and Culture.* Ed. William Klempa. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-88629-239-5. Pp. viii+275.**

This collection of twelve essays reconstructs the little-explored area of Canadian experience, namely the Presbyterian contribution to the country's intellectual and cultural life. The volume is divided into four parts, each of which deals with a specific topic related to the influence of Presbyterianism in Canada.

Part one, "Presbyterianism and Canadian Education," includes B. Anne Wood's searching essay on the prominent theologian Thomas McCulloch and the Pictou Academy from 1816–38, and a piece from Michael Gauvreau on Sir Robert Falconer (former President of the University of Toronto), focussing on Falconer's belief in a strong liberal education during the first three decades of this century. Both essays highlight the well-known fact that Presbyterians of Scottish