

Evangelicals Now June 2017

## Same hymn sheet

### WERE THEY PREACHING ANOTHER GOSPEL?

Justification by faith in the second century

By Andrew Daunton-Fear

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**The impression is sometimes put about that the doctrine of justification by faith was highlighted by the 16th century Reformers for their own ends and that since then it has been both misunderstood and given far too much prominence.**

It has been said to be 'not noticed before Origen in the East (3rd century AD) and Hilary of Poitiers in the West (4th century AD).'

#### Six second century leaders

This pamphlet shows that such ideas are at odds with reality. After stating clearly the Pauline doctrine from the NT with the help of Leon Morris, it proceeds to examine the writings of six prominent second century Christian leaders; Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. The author spotlights quotations which mention justification by faith from the writings of all these figures. Some of these are words in passing,

others more in harmony with the concerns of the Reformers. He explains that, by the second century, Paul's battle to establish his gospel against opposition from the Judaizers

was over. This is why it is not as prominent as in the 16th century when the doctrine had been lost. He acknowledges that, while mentioning justification by faith, Clement of Alexandria may have 'lost sight' of the NT meaning of the doctrine, but the others had not.

There are comments which tend to burst the bubble of the so-called New Perspective on Paul. The booklet concludes with some brief lessons as to what we can learn from each of the six second-century leader's quotations on this primary truth of the evangelical Protestant faith.

This is a worthwhile read for pastors and preachers who may need to tackle justification by faith alone in some depth during this 500th anniversary year of the Reformation. **JEB**

