

The Message of Deuteronomy: Not by Bread Alone (BST)**Raymond Brown**

IVP, Leicester, 1993, 333 pp., £8.99, paperback, ISBN 0–85110–979–9

RÉSUMÉ

C'est là un commentaire utile du livre du Deutéronome qui en montre l'application à notre société occidentale moderne. Il se lit agréablement et contient des réflexions susceptibles d'enrichir l'étude personnelle comme la prédication. Sans se préoccuper des questions soulevées par la critique, l'ouvrage comporte occasionnellement des remarques très pénétrantes pour celui qui veut approfondir l'étude du texte. Sa seule faiblesse est la tendance à perdre de vue les contours de la théologie du Deutéronome dans le désir légitime de trouver des applications pratiques à des versets isolés.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese ist eine klar verständliche Auslegung des Deuteronomiums mit Anwendung in Bezug auf moderne westliche Gesellschaften. Es ist sehr lesenswert und bietet eine Fundgrube fürs persönliche Studium und für die Predigtvorbereitung. Obwohl keine Auseinandersetzung mit der kritischen Auslegung des Buches erfolgt, bietet dieses Buch doch gelegentlich Einsichten, die auch für ein tiefergehendes Studium des Textes sehr hilfreich sind. Seine einzige Schwäche besteht darin, daß manchmal die größeren Zusammenhänge der Theologie des Deuteronomiums in den Hintergrund treten, was allerdings durch das an sich gesunde Bestreben bedingt ist, individuelle Verse im Alltag anzuwenden.

Any book which makes the profound theological and ethical teaching of Deuteronomy more accessible to the Church must be welcomed warmly. Raymond Brown's recent contribution to 'The Bible Speaks Today' does exactly that. His enthusiasm for Deuteronomy, and firm grasp of the relevance of this crucial part of the Old Testament is conveyed in a succinct and helpful introduction. After a short account of the issues in the current debate on setting and authorship, he affirms the traditional position of Mosaic authorship. Brown sees the book both as presenting our generation with an exposition of the 'timeless truth' of the doctrines of God, revelation and grace, and addressing contemporary social issues in a remarkable way, unparalleled by any other ancient text.

For the purposes of his study, the text is divided along conventional lines into five sections: introducing the Covenant (1:1–4:43), expounding the Covenant (4:44–11:32), applying the Covenant (12:1–26:19), confirming the Covenant (27:1–30:20) and sharing the Covenant (31:1–34:12). This is in keeping with the author's acceptance of the influence of ANE treaty forms on the structure and composition of Deuteronomy, and the perception that Covenant is a central theological category throughout the book.

The detailed exposition of the text, like Deuteronomy itself, is essentially sermoniac. The discussion is usually arranged under a series of related headings. This is especially helpful in plotting a path through the carefully arranged account of Israel's recent history in chapters 1–3 and the cluster of material surrounding the death of Moses in chapters 31–34. Many of his suggestions for interpretation of these difficult passages are original and stimulating, and always facilitate application. One minor criticism of this approach is that it occasionally obscures some of the subtleties of the text at the expense of the exposition of specific themes, e.g. ch. 4 is expounded solely in terms of four epithets applied to God, which does not do justice to the interweaving of other ideas crucial to the theological message of the book as a whole.

Perhaps the most difficult task for anyone writing on Deuteronomy is to demonstrate that benefit is to be derived from studying the laws in chapters 12–26. Raymond Brown makes a prodigious effort in his study to engage the reader's attention and show that these ancient laws do have something valuable to say to our contemporary situation. In almost every case he succeeds, particularly in emphasising the profound implications of this book for social justice and treatment of the environment. The only drawback to his study of the laws is that in his attempts to root their prescriptions in the experience and culture of today, he tends to lose sight of the overall theological context in Deuteronomy. While no one could come away from this work doubting that some of these laws are extremely relevant, they could be forgiven for being a little unsure of precisely how they relate to the Church or mankind in general today. While Brown, drawing on Christ Wright's work, acknowledges in the preface that Israel has a 'paradigmatic' role for us, he does not show how such a role might affect our appropriation of the legal material. This would have been most welcome.

Generally this is a helpful and exciting volume, which should do much to encourage those put off by the relative obscurity and perceived irrelevance of Deuteronomy. It is written with admirable

clarity, and vividly describes the preaching of God's grace and the necessary response first of Israel, and then of anyone in the Church willing to take the teaching of Deuteronomy seriously.

J. G. Millar
Oxford, England

EuroJTh (1994) 3:1, 89–90

0960–2720

Universalism And The Doctrine Of Hell Papers Presented at the Fourth Edinburgh Conference on Christian Dogmatics, 1991, ed. N. M. de S. Cameron Paternoster Press, Carlisle/Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1992, 317 pp., £14.99, paperback, ISBN 0–85364–552–3

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage collectif examine d'un point de vue historique et théologique les questions du salut universel, de la nature de l'enfer et du nombre des rachetés. Parmi les auteurs figurent les noms de John Wenham, Thomas Torrance, Paul Helm et Henri Blocher. Ces dix études constituent des contributions évangéliques significatives. Elles montrent aussi qu'un grand travail reste encore à faire.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Sammelband behandelt Themen wie die Frage, ob es eine universale Versöhnung gibt, wie das Wesen der Hölle beschaffen sei, und wie viele Menschen erlöst würden. Zu den Autoren gehören John Wenham, Thomas Torrance, Paul Helm und Henri Blocher. Die zehn Untersuchungen dieses Bandes stellen wichtige evangelikale Beiträge dar. Gleichzeitig zeigt sich jedoch auch, daß auf diesem Gebiet noch viel zu tun ist.

This compilation of essays presents us with themes that are of major importance to the evangelical church today. The questions of universal salvation, the nature of hell, and the number of the saved are examined from historical and theological standpoints, leaving the reader in no doubt of the necessity of addressing these issues.

Trevor Hart begins with an incisive critique of evangelical interpretations of universalism, and urges greater awareness of the subtle arguments used by the likes of Hick and J. Robinson that are still in use today. His essay decisively shows how universalism can no longer be treated as a single

phenomenon, yet also provides helpful discussion of the lines taken by universalists in reaching their conclusions.

The next three contributions present historical essays which attempt to dispel some commonly held myths. Frederick Norris looks at *apokatastasis* in Origen and Maximus, and especially how the former was more of a speculator rather than systematician; Daniel du Toit observes the connection between *descensus ad inferos* and universalism, demonstrating historically how the former never necessarily led to the latter conclusion; and David Powys discusses presuppositions which have influenced modern day confusion concerning the fate of the unrighteous, and how hidden agendas affect differing conclusions.

John Colwell draws on his published studies of Barth to critique the commonly held belief that he embraced universalism, arguing that only a proper understanding of Barth's view of election and time will enable an appreciation of Barth's true position.

John Wenham and Kendall Harmon battle it out on the contemporary issue of conditional immortality—are the unrighteous condemned to eternal conscious torment, or are they in fact annihilated after judgement? Wenham's essay provides a strong case that needs listening to, although Harmon's reply demonstrates that much more needs to be said. Conditionalism is not without its strengths, but these essays at the very least demonstrate how much more work is required if the issue is to be satisfactorily resolved.

T. F. Torrance examines the atonement from two angles—firstly, how it relates to the issues of limited atonement and universalism, and secondly, how the atonement links up with morality. As for the first, he argues that either extreme comes from a misunderstanding of the relationship between the atonement and forgiveness. The work of the cross should be understood in relational terms, rather than as a logico-causal connection. From this he proceeds to show how the atonement, at present often perceived as morally wrong, does in fact embody the ultimate ground for moral order amongst us. Torrance once again demonstrates his debt to Barth, which unfortunately may cause some, who are uninitiated in Barthian thinking, to be left behind.

Considering the question 'Are They Few That Be Saved?', Paul Helm presents a criticism of John Hick's 'Copernican revolution' in the field of religious pluralism, together with an evaluation of the teaching of Warfield and Shedd on the subject. Helm also introduces a new term into the traditional paradigm concerning salvation and other religions, that of *opaque exclusivism*. Although Christ is the only saviour, Helm argues