

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.

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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

that some may come to salvation by worshipping Christ in ignorance. Although careful to limit the extent of this 'opaqueness', Helm is surely closer to one of the forms of what many have labelled 'inclusivism'. It may be true that there are more positions than the generally accepted three of pluralism, inclusivism and exclusivism, and Helm does well to defend his standpoint, but more needs to be done with regard to his paradigm.

The final essay is an attempt by Henri Blocher to look at theodicy in the light of the doctrine of hell. He presents a strong criticism of human attempts to deal with the problem of evil, and issues a call to remain within the boundaries of revealed truth. At the same time he is wise to caution against reading into biblical texts misconceptions concerning hell which have almost become orthodoxy, his contentment to remain in the midst of mystery, together with his dismissive attitude towards a theodicy based on human freedom, will not be shared by all.

One major disappointment with the book has nothing to do with its content, but with its presentation and type-setting. It is a shame that such a relevant and vital work should be let down on the production side. Having said that, the other main limitation of the book is inherent in its nature. With such a wide range of material and diversity of topics covered, many questions remain. Evangelicals will be left in no doubt of the significance of these papers, but also left with a lot more thinking to be carried out.

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The New Testament and the People of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 1

N. T. Wright

London: SPCK, 1992, xix + 535, £15.00

RÉSUMÉ

Il s'agit là du premier de cinq volumes en chantier sur la théologie du Nouveau Testament. Les suivants seront consacrés à Jésus, à Paul, et aux Évangiles, avec une conclusion. Ce volume est une introduction.

Il comporte cinq parties:

- 1) les questions de méthode,
- 2) la compréhension de la nature littéraire, historique et théologique de l'entreprise au moyen du genre des récits,

3) le judaïsme au sein du monde gréco-romain du premier siècle,

4) le premier siècle chrétien.

5) Une brève conclusion insiste sur le fait que le problème de Dieu est fondamental pour toutes les questions qu'on aborde en rapport avec le Nouveau Testament.

C'est un ouvrage clair et bien écrit, qui sera apprécié des spécialistes comme des étudiants. Il constitue une bonne introduction à bien des questions difficiles, comme l'herméneutique et la critique des formes. Cependant son contenu n'est pas aussi nouveau qu'il le prétend. De plus, il sépare l'histoire, la théologie et la critique littéraire de façon trop rigide et sa propre notion de 'récit' n'est pas maniée avec une précision suffisante. N'empêche que c'est un ouvrage qui stimule la réflexion et qui éveille notre désir de voir les volumes suivants.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dies ist der erste Band einer geplanten fünfbändigen Theologie des Neuen Testaments. Die anderen Bände werden jeweils die Schwerpunkte Jesus, Paulus und die Evangelien behandeln, abschließend mit einer Schlußfolgerung. Dieser Band ist als Einführung gedacht.

Er ist aus fünf Teilen aufgebaut. Der erste Teil behandelt methodologische Fragen. Der zweite Teil versucht das literarische, historische und theologische Wesen des Untersuchungsgegenstands mittels der Kategorie 'Erzählung' (engl. 'story') zu erfassen. Der nächste Abschnitt folgt mit der Behandlung des 'Judentums des ersten Jahrhunderts in seiner griechisch-römischen Umwelt', dann folgt der vierte Teil über 'das erste christliche Jahrhundert'. Der letzte Teil besteht aus einer kurzen Schlußfolgerung, die erklärt, daß die Gottesfrage den meisten, möglicherweise allen anderen Fragen neutestamentlicher Theologie zugrundeliegt.

Dies ist ein klar verständliches, lesenswertes Buch, das Studenten wie Wissenschaftlern gleichermaßen Freude bereiten kann. Viele schwierige Fragestellungen, wie z.B. Hermeneutik und Formgeschichte, werden gut und verständlich eingeführt. Allerdings ist sein Beitrag zur neutestamentlichen Theologie nicht so originell, wie er gerne sein möchte. Darüber hinaus werden Kategorien wie Geschichte, Theologie und literarische Methodik prinzipiell zu stark voneinander losgelöst, während die Kategorie 'Erzählung' zu undifferenziert gebraucht wird. Trotz dieser Anmerkungen handelt es sich um ein stimulierendes Werk, das Appetit macht auf die folgenden Bände.

In an engaging Preface, Wright tells us that he set out to write two books side by side, one on Paul and his theology, and the other on Jesus in his historical context. It dawned on him that the