

or wrong. Morality is a human creation and projection onto a valueless world (ch. 13). This is essentially Holmes' narrative.

In the final chapter he pulls the threads together to identify four basic positions on the fact-value relationship which he thinks he discerns from the history outlined above. He then outlines in skeleton form an agenda for future thinking on the subject. First of all he argues briefly for resisting Nietzsche and reinstating 'the will of God' as the ultimate foundation of values. Second, he believes that the notion of teleology needs to be reopened for discussion and third, the Logos doctrine and its concomitant theory of universals need to return to the agenda as they provide a resource for grounding values in facts and point to the reliability of human reason.

This is a deceptively lightweight looking book. Do not be deceived. Holmes writes for people who are already familiar with the philosophers under discussion (p. viii) and thus (contrary to some of the comments on the book jacket) it is *not* really an *introduction* for 'readers with no formal training in philosophy'. Holmes writes clearly and competently on a fascinating area of study and gives the lie to the myth that values cannot be grounded in fact. The myth is relatively recent in the history of philosophy. I would have liked the study to move on into the Twentieth Century. It did seem rather arbitrary to halt with Nietzsche. There were also times that one felt that Holmes had wandered from his chief goal of charting the fact-value relation and had got side-tracked detailing the much broader concerns of the ethical philosophy of different characters. I suppose, had he not done so he would have been chastised for not setting his comments in the context of the wider philosophy of the characters. You cannot please all of the people all of the time. Holmes' final sketchy proposals were most interesting and one would very much like to see them fleshed out much more thoroughly. In the end though this book is an agenda setting text that very helpfully sets issues of critical importance to Christian thinkers in broader historical perspective.

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**Warum das Kreuz? Die Frage nach der Bedeutung des Todes Jesu**

**Volker Gäckle et al.**

Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1998, 224 p., pb, ISBN 3-417-29080-5

## RÉSUMÉ

*Le dogme traditionnel de la substitution pénale à la croix est sérieusement remis en question dans le débat théologique contemporain. On peut donc être reconnaissant aux professeurs de l'Abrecht-Bengel-Haus à Tubingue (RFA) pour cet ouvrage solide de réflexion théologique, également accessible au non-théologien. Dans la partie exégétique, le thème de l'expiation est étudié dans le Pentateuque et dans Esaïe 53. De même, on examine l'interprétation de la croix dans les évangiles et chez Paul. Dans la partie historique, les différents auteurs montrent la continuité et le développement de la pensée chrétienne sur ce sujet à partir de l'Eglise ancienne jusqu'à la Réforme. Ils s'interrogent sur les raisons pour lesquelles le dogme traditionnel a été contesté au siècle des lumières et dans l'idéalisme allemand (Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher). Ils s'intéressent aux interprétations de la croix données au vingtième siècle (Bultmann, Barth, Tillich, Pannenberg). Le livre se clôt par une réflexion homilétique: comment annoncer avec pertinence la croix à l'homme (post-)moderne?*

*L'ouvrage est une défense intelligente et sans ambiguïté de la substitution pénale. D'approche pluridisciplinaire, il aurait pourtant besoin d'être complété par une étude proprement dogmatique.*

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

*Das traditionelle Dogma der stellvertretenden Sühne, am Kreuz vollbracht, ist in der heutigen Theologie sehr unter Beschuss gekommen. Wir können deshalb den Dozenten des Albrecht-Bengel-Hauses in Tübingen sehr dankbar sein für ihre solide theologische Arbeit zu diesem Thema, die hier auch allgemeinverständlich dargestellt wird. Im exegetischen Teil untersuchen die verschiedenen Autoren die Sühne im Gesetz des Mose und in Jesaja 53. Außerdem gehen sie dem Verständnis des Kreuzes in den Evangelien und bei Paulus nach. Im historischen Teil zeigen sie die Kontinuität und die Entfaltung theologischen Nachdenkens über das Kreuz von der Alten Kirche bis zur Reformation auf, fragen nach Gründen der Infragestellung des überkommenen Dogmas zur Zeit der Aufklärung und des deutschen Idealismus (Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher) und beleuchten Ansätze zum Verständnis des Kreuzes im 20. Jahrhundert*



(Bultmann, Barth, Tillich, Pannenberg). *Das Buch schließt mit einer homiletischen Untersuchung: Wie können wir die Botschaft vom Kreuz dem (post-) modernen Menschen nahebringen?*

*Das vorliegende Buch verteidigt mit theologischer Kompetenz und ohne Zugeständnisse die überkommene Lehre der stellvertretenden Sühne. Es verfolgt dabei einen multidisziplinären Ansatz, der jedoch durch eine eigentlich dogmatische Studie ergänzt werden sollte.*

Evangelical Christians tend to take penal substitution as the centre of the Gospel: Christ taking the place of the sinner, expiating sin by his death and thus reconciling the world to God. But everybody sensitive to modern theological debate knows that there is hardly a theologian outside the Evangelical movement today who clings to penal substitution. As Evangelicals have been very zealous (and rightly so) in *preaching* the saving grace of the Cross, they have not always manifested the same zeal in *reflecting* upon the Cross and in engaging in scholarly debate.

Therefore we should be very grateful to the teaching staff of the Albrecht-Bengel-Haus in Tübingen (Germany) for having responded to this need. As this institution aims mainly to support students at a main-stream theological faculty, its teachers know by experience the importance of presenting the biblical faith intelligently. The health of our Churches and the future of our missions depend on such an effort.

The book makes a bold defence of the traditional dogma of penal substitution. The authors are not ashamed of the Gospel, and it is a pleasure to see how they expand biblical truth and unmask false presuppositions of the 'modern' world view. At the same time they are sensitive to the obstacles which have to be surmounted before our contemporaries can accept the Gospel. They address a variety of biblical, historical and homiletic topics related to expiation.

About one half of the volume is occupied by valuable exegetical studies: Hartmut Schmid studies the theme of expiation in the Pentateuch. Ralf Albrecht addresses the controversial question of expiation in Isaiah 53. Volker Gäckle contributes two articles: in the first, he asks how the canonical Gospels understand the Cross, with a special interest in the words of Jesus himself. In the second, he examines the Pauline theology of the Cross. All of this is refreshing, positive scholarly work,

exegesis rooted in the text, which intelligently defends the traditional understanding of the various texts related to the doctrine of expiation.

A second group of essays is concerned with the history of the dogma of expiation, starting from the Old Church through the Enlightenment right down to contemporary voices. Tobias Eißler looks at the period from the Apostolic Fathers until the Reformation, showing the continuity and the development of Christian thought on the subject. Rolf Hille addresses the question why traditional dogma is no longer credible to modern man. In answer to this question, he analyses prominent Enlightenment and idealist thinkers: Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl. Eberhard Hahn finally looks at twentieth century interpretations of the Cross: Bultmann, Barth, Tillich and Wolfhart Pannenberg.

This second group of texts is without doubt the most difficult part of the volume to understand (especially the last two articles), and I admire the courage of the authors in seeking to encompass this very wide range of thought in what are, after all, very concise essays. Perhaps one of the strongest points of the book as a whole is its moderate length, which will avoid discouraging the lay reader! But I must confess nevertheless that this *tour de force* left me unsatisfied. It was not clear to me how the rather lengthy and complicated citations of Hegel, for example, relate to the current debate. Historically, it is surely interesting to know what great philosophers have said about the Cross; but it seems primary to me to show in which respects their teaching has found an echo with our contemporaries. One might also doubt if it is possible to present Barth's theology in seven (small) pages; but it is disappointing to see the author following very closely one single secondary source on Barth. Is this the reason why he qualifies Barth as a 'universalist without ambiguity, in respect to salvation' (p. 184)? Final universalism is certainly the logical consequence of the Barthian system; but Barth himself refused to affirm it unequivocally.

On the whole, I wonder if the more historical than dogmatic approach in this section is perhaps a symptom of a more general weakness of the book (there is no proper dogmatic study included in the volume!), and perhaps of some entire strands of Evangelical theology. There is a need to continue and to deepen the reflection started by the Bengel-Haus teachers. Theologians from a Calvinist and/or Baptist background would perhaps like to react in



some places where Lutheran sacramental theology is assumed to be the biblical view (p. 183, n. 31, p. 184, n. 38, p. 200). More important: we have to respond to the challenges of modernistic theology by a thorough analysis of its presuppositions and by the systematic exposition of biblical teaching, these are both tasks for dogmaticians.

This would engage our thinking on the subject of sin—a very slippery slope, as our intellect was first made to understand creation and not its perversion! This is perhaps the reason for what I feel to be a dangerous bias in Hille's language concerning sin. He criticises the characterisation of sin as 'privatio boni' (i.e., the want of good) as typical of idealistic philosophy (p. 147); sin has to be unmasked as 'a real power . . . which governs him [i.e., man] and which brings him temporal and eternal death' (p. 150). The definition of sin as *privatio boni* is classical and can find support from theologians as prodigious as Augustine, Thomas of Aquinas or in the Reformed tradition, for example, Charles Hodge. The doctrine of creation does not leave room in itself for any essence of sin. Even if I sympathise with the overall intention of Hille's discussion of sin (refusing the optimistic negation of its objectivity), this seems to me to be one more point where systematic theological thinking on expiation must be brought to bear.

The volume closes with a contribution by Wolfgang Becker concerning our homiletic practice. The richness of the multidisciplinary approach adopted by the Bengel-Haus teachers is here at its best. Even if Becker's analysis of the post-modern world view repeats some commonplaces, he goes beyond them to show some very pertinent points of contact between the preaching of the Gospel and our contemporaries. For example, he underlines the omnipresence of death in the mass media, against the commonly received idea of death as a taboo in Western societies (p. 213). He also finds examples of solidarity in guilt acknowledged in recent (German) history—in Nazism and the GDR police state—refuting the modern idea of isolated responsibility of the individual (p. 210–11). Both insights can help to smooth the path for the comprehension of the Gospel.

*Warum das Kreuz?* is a proof of the potential fruitfulness of co-operation in theological research, which is too often practised by isolated individuals. It is to be hoped that it will not only stimulate Evangelical preaching and thinking on this very central subject, but also give an example for other collective work on important issues of theological debate.

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