

the foreknowledge of God, salvation, theodicy, the use of Scripture, the Holy Spirit, responses to pluralism, sacramentalism and worship.

The strength of this variety is that there is something to interest every reader. For this reviewer there were a number of highlights. These included the essay by John Sanders on one of the "sins" of open theism, namely that of reducing God to human proportions, where he cleverly argues that those who make the accusation are themselves guilty of the same sin. I also found the essay by John Cobb on the distinction between his views as a process theologian and the open theism of Pinnock, a fascinating analysis of dealing with difference from the only avowedly non-evangelical contributor. If one followed Cobb's postmodern suggestion that different theologies are simply "audience appropriate", then it is possible to see how the heat could be taken out of debates about Pinnock's theology. But that is only achieved by ignoring the question of truth, a strategy of which I doubt Pinnock himself would approve. Some of the other contributions left me uninspired by comparison. But that opinion probably reflects my own personal interests.

Reaching an overall assessment of this book is not easy. On the one hand it could be dismissed as a lucky dip where there is likely to be as much disappointment as reward for the reader. However, having sometimes struggled through the 400 pages, my conclusion is different. The book explores a most important question for contemporary evangelicalism: "to what degree should its theology be *semper reformandum*, ever subject to reform?" Pinnock's fundamental claim is that the tradition has allowed itself to drift away from its biblical foundations and to become hostage to alien philosophy. His critics accuse him of the same fault. Either way, the debate is clearly crucially important and this collection illustrates the wide-ranging impact that it has on theology. If we really have lost our rooting in Scripture, then clearly reform is urgent.

Two final things struck me about this collection. Firstly, is the respect in which Pinnock is held by his critics and his fans alike. One contribution that his reforming zeal seems to have made is to offer a model of debate and dialogue between opponents that really does mirror speaking the truth in love. Secondly, is the profoundly pastoral focus of Pinnock's work. Several contributors highlighted the way in which his writings addressed issues of real concern in their own lives, including the loss of a wife. If there is any truth in the accusation that evangelical theology's failure to face up to it's perceived dissonance with human experience is leading to a haemorrhage from the churches (see Jamieson, Alan, *A Churchless Faith*, (London: SPCK, 2002), then Pinnock's is a voice that should be heard. So we can be grateful to Stanley Porter and Anthony Crow for creating a platform for discussion of that voice.

Trevor Cooling, Cheltenham, England

Swinburne's Hell and Hick's Universalism: Are We Free to Reject God?

Lindsey Hall

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, x + 244 pp., £45, hb, ISBN
0 7546 3400 0

SUMMARY

This is a study that explores Richard Swinburne's freewill theodicy of hell and John Hick's universalism. Swinburne's theodicy is critiqued and rejected whilst Hick is, for the most part, defended against critics. The author then sets out her own version of Christian universalism in which each individual faces God after death and embraces salvation. There is some good critical interaction with various scholars here and many of Hall's claims carry weight yet there is also a systemic philosophical misunderstanding and an inadequate account of final judgement.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Studie untersucht Richard Swinburnes Freier-Wille-Theodizee der Hölle und John Hicks Universalismus. Swinburns Theodizee wird kritisiert und abgelehnt, während Hick größtenteils gegen Kritiker verteidigt wird. Die Autorin legt dann ihre eigene Version eines christlichen Universalismus dar, in der jedes Individuum nach dem Tod Gott begegnet und Rettung annimmt. Es gibt einiges an guter kritischer Auseinandersetzung mit verschiedenen Autoren, und viele von Halls Behauptungen sind gewichtig, aber es gibt auch ein systemisches philosophisches Missverständnis und eine inadäquate Darstellung des letzten Gerichts.

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur examine la théodicée de l'enfer en fonction du libre arbitre telle que l'a exposée Richard Swinburne, ainsi que l'universalisme défendu par John Hick. Elle critique et rejette la première, pour défendre la thèse de Hick en répondant à ses critiques. Puis l'auteur expose sa propre version de l'universalisme chrétien, selon laquelle chaque individu rencontre Dieu après la mort et reçoit le salut. Lindsey Hall entre en dialogue critique avec divers spécialistes de façon intéressante et bien de ses arguments ont un certain poids, mais elle fait aussi preuve d'une incompréhension fondamentale en matière philosophique et son traitement du jugement dernier est inadéquat.

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In a nutshell this text is a critical study of what two contemporary philosophers of religion have to say on the topics of hell and universalism and the attempt to construct, from the interaction with their work, a positive case for Christian universalism. Hall begins by setting out the main issues that will be raised in the study (Ch. 1). With the stage set she examines in detail the work of Richard Swinburne. Swinburne's defence of hell is essentially that God allows people to make significant, non-determined choices which shape their characters (and thus future decisions) and their destiny. The more bad choices that are made the more our character cor-

rupts and a point is reached at which the corruption is irreversible. However, God, in his goodness, values our libertarian freedom so highly that he will allow us to damn ourselves eternally. (Ch. 2).

Hall is at her best in her critique of Swinburne where she exposes significant problems in his account (Ch. 3). Although freewill defences of hell are popular today they are far more fragile than is often realised.

Having rejected freewill defences of hell Hall moves on to examine the work of John Hick (Ch. 4). She focuses on his earlier, more Christian, phase and outlines his case for Christian universalism. This grows out of a foundational belief in God's universal love. Because not all are ready for salvation by the time they die Hick postulates many future lives in which people can continue the journey towards becoming children of God. Hell, for Hick, would be the ultimate failure by God to achieve his purposes. Scripture, thinks Hick, teaches both universalism and eternal hell but the universalism is more in accord with its central message. Hick's wholly inadequate discussion of biblical teaching cannot but send a shiver down any evangelical spine. Hall, whilst recognising inadequacies in Hick's argument, is largely sympathetic in her evaluation of Hick and defends him against various critics (Ch. 5).

Finally Hall sets out her own version of Christian universalism. God loves and desires to save all and freedom is no impediment to the achievement of this goal. Hall claims that she believes in compatibilist and not libertarian freedom. However, it is here that one of my main criticisms of the book lies. Hall objects to Swinburne's libertarian account of freedom and embraces a modified version of what she sees as Hick's compatibilism. The main difference between the two accounts of freedom is that compatibilists see human freedom as compatible with determinism whilst libertarians do not. But that would make both Swinburne and Hick libertarians and *it would also make Hall a libertarian* because she clearly believes that determinism is incompatible with the human freedom we possess. This confusion runs throughout the book and is further shown by the central role she gives to middle knowledge in making freedom and providence compatible. Hall uses it to argue that our freedom is compatible with universalism. That may well be so but middle knowledge is unnecessary if one is a compatibilist because God could save everyone without compromising freedom anyway. Thus I think that when Hall says that she is a 'compatibilist' she uses the term in an idiosyncratic way – what she means is that God has created all people with a desire to love him that will *strongly influence* (though not determine) the choices we make when we encounter God after death. At some point in the life (or afterlife) of each individual they will God 'face to face'. This will induce remorse and will lead people to embrace fulfilment of their humanity in a relationship with Yahweh through Christ. Hall thinks that universalism is compatible with Scripture.

There is much useful material in this book for those

interested in the topics under discussion and some helpful insights in the interaction with Swinburne and Hick. Her final position is not without merit, yet there remains a serious theological weakness in her account of final judgement. For Hall final judgement is about suffering 'shame and remorse' and 'judging ourselves' when we encounter God 'face to face' and enter into salvation (p. 208). But this sounds very unlike the consistent accounts of last judgement found in the Bible and the Christian tradition. For that reason Hall's account cannot be accepted as it stands.

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Church Leaders Handbook

Harold Rowdon (ed.)

Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002, published for Partnership.
xxiii + 390 pp. p/b, £14.99, ISBN 0-900128-26-7

SUMMARY

The present volume is a helpful resource for church leaders. Its background and perspective is that of the Open Brethren Movement in Britain. Its fifty-one contributions survey issues of church leadership, church activities, church management, pastoral matters and legal, financial and practical issues. It is of interest to lay-leaders and ministers of other denominations as well, especially with its refreshing and challenging absence of an assumption of the pre-dominance of full-time ordained ministry. It provides insight into the current state and character of one section of the British Brethren movement.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Band ist eine hilfreiche Arbeitshilfe für Gemeindeführer. Sein Hintergrund und seine Perspektive ist die der offenen Brüderbewegung in Großbritannien. Seine einundfünfzig Beiträge untersuchen Sachfragen zur Leiterschaft einer Gemeinde, zu Gemeindeaktivitäten, zu Gemeindeführung, zu pastoralen sowie juristischen, finanziellen und praktischen Angelegenheiten. Es ist auch für Laien in Leitungsverantwortung und Pastoren anderer Denominationen von Interesse, besonders im Hinblick auf die erfrischende und herausfordernde Abwesenheit der Annahme der Vorherrschaft des vollzeitlichen, ordinierten Dienstes. Das Buch bietet Einsicht in die gegenwärtige Situation und den Charakter eines Teiles der britischen Brüderbewegung.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici un livre utile pour les responsables d'Église. Il est rédigé dans le contexte du mouvement des Frères Larges en Grande Bretagne. En cinquante et un essais sont abordées des questions de direction d'Église, d'activités d'Église, de ministère pastoral et divers aspects légaux, financiers et pratiques. Il intéressera les responsables laïques et les pasteurs d'autres dénominations. On notera en particulier l'absence de toute idée préconçue selon