

The real humanity and divinity of Jesus belong within this interpretation of the New Testament teaching. The next stage is to consider the relationship of believers to Christ in terms of participation, especially in baptism and the Lord's Supper with their covenantal framework. This topic leads us back to the death of Christ and the nature of the believer's relationship to Christ. Paul's most characteristic theological term, the tiny preposition *en*, receives some attention, but perhaps needed fuller attention. Readers may be surprised by the sheer amount of New Testament material that is covered in the book and found to be germane to the theme; this is done at the price of what the author himself labels as a patchy treatment. The overall result is a comprehensive study of the topic leading to a plausible hypothesis regarding the uniting category that finds expression throughout the New Testament.

The book is worthy to stand beside the even more detailed work of Greg Beale (*A New Testament Biblical Theology*); the two scholars both find a unity in the theologies of the early church and the especial contribution of this one is to show how the underlying theology can have influenced the surface teaching. This is a remarkable reading of the New Testament. Beside it one could place the detailed, comprehensive exposition of New Testament theology by Udo Schnelle; his index of subjects contains only seven page-references to 'temple, the', and the thought of Jesus as himself the new temple is scarcely recognised, although, of course, he discusses the concept of Jesus as high priest in Hebrews. A debate between these two estimates of the role of this motif in the New Testament must be put on the agenda.

My impression is that Macaskill offers less in the way of new interpretations of the texts and more of the construction of a synthesis expressing the common theology of the early church. It would have been helpful if he had returned to the wider world of the contemporary theologians in the conclusion so as to demonstrate how their work is to be evaluated in terms of its biblical basis. In particular the use of participation language and similar motifs is being discussed vigorously in Reformed circles. Macaskill was able to mention the major work of Constantine Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012) but not to engage with it in any detail. Here, then are three areas where the contribution of Macaskill needs to be brought more fully into the arena.

At my age I may be allowed to let your mind wander from the academy. The second in the series of Tyndale Lectures, delivered in 1943, was given by Basil Atkinson, on *The Theology of Prepositions*; the author was a Librarian based in the Cambridge University Library and a much respected elder friend of the CICCUC (Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union). He pioneered our topic. We still need spare-time theologians to mediate the insights of academic works like this one to the church.

But we also need preaching inspired by deep theology.

One of the best sermons I ever heard was by Roderick Finlayson, Professor of Theology in the Free Church of Scotland College in Edinburgh. The text was Galatians 2:20: 'I am crucified *with* Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth *in* me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live *by* the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself *for* me.' The sermon had four points, identified by the four prepositions: with, in, by, for. But then homiletic genius entered into the sermon construction when the preacher treated them in reverse order! There is no copyright on this structure; I myself have used the framework but not the original wording to develop the text. Try it.

Grant Macaskill belongs to the same tradition as Roderick Finlayson. May his book play its part in helping preachers to find fresh ways to understand the theology of the early Christians and to present it to their congregations.

I. Howard Marshall, Aberdeen

Creation, Power and Truth: The gospel in a world of cultural confusion

Tom Wright

London: SPCK, 2013; xii + 110 pp, £9.99, pb; ISBN 978-0-281-06987-3

SUMMARY

In this book the well-known British New Testament scholar addresses what he sees as the main challenges for Christians today. At the heart of it lies the Enlightenment, which according to Tom Wright represents a neo-Gnostic separation of God from the world. The Western societies' arrogant self-understanding over against the rest of the world ('New Imperialism') is an offspring of this heritage. And even if Postmodernism claims to have seen through the power play at the bottom of Modernism, it supports it by rejecting truth as a possibility. Instead of supporting this culture by separating God from this world, Christians are to confront it, by means of faith in God as Creator, Christ as Lord, and the Spirit as the Truth. The book thus represents a profiled picture of what church and Christianity should be in relation to the society of today.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage, le spécialiste du Nouveau Testament bien connu qu'est Tom Wright traite de ce qu'il considère comme le problème majeur auquel les chrétiens doivent faire face aujourd'hui. L'état d'esprit des Lumières constitue le cœur du problème : d'après Wright, il y a là une conception néo-agnostique qui sépare Dieu du monde. Les sociétés occidentales se conçoivent elles-mêmes de manière arrogante comme étant supérieures au reste du monde (une nouvelle forme d'impérialisme) et c'est là un produit de l'héritage légué par les Lumières. Même si la postmodernité prétend avoir discerné les jeux de pouvoir qui ont été à l'œuvre dans la modernité, elle lui emboîte le

pas en niant la possibilité de la vérité. Au lieu d'acquiescer à cette culture en séparant Dieu du monde, les chrétiens ont pour responsabilité de lui opposer la foi en Dieu le Créateur, en Christ le Seigneur et en l'Esprit de vérité. Ce livre fournit ainsi un poteau indicateur de ce que l'Église et le christianisme devraient être au sein de la société contemporaine.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Buch greift der wohlbekannte, britische Neutestamentler auf, was seiner Meinung nach die hauptsächlichen Herausforderungen für Christen von heute sind. Im Zentrum liegt dabei die Aufklärung, welche nach Tom Wright eine neo-gnostische Trennung Gottes von der Welt darstellt. Das arrogante Selbstverständnis der westlichen Gesellschaft gegenüber dem Rest der Welt („Neuimperialismus“) ist ein Kind dieses Erbes. Und selbst wenn die Postmoderne behauptet, das Machtspiel zu durchschauen, das der Moderne zugrunde liegt, so unterstützt sie es doch gleichzeitig, indem sie Wahrheit als eine Möglichkeit ablehnt. Christen sollen statt diese Kultur noch zu stützen, indem sie einen Keil zwischen Gott und diese Welt treiben, sie lieber konfrontieren durch ihr Vertrauen auf Gott als Schöpfer, Christus als Herrn und den Heiligen Geist als die Wahrheit. Somit bietet das vorliegende Buch eine ausgeprägte Darstellung dessen, was Kirche und Christenheit in Bezug auf die Gesellschaft von heute sein sollten.

* * * *

Tom Wright's numerous books can be divided into three categories: groundbreaking scholarly work, popular exegesis, and applications of exegetical insights to current theological discussions. This book definitely belongs to the last category. It originates in a series of lectures (Noble Lectures) given at Harvard University in 2006, with the aim of addressing 'the challenge of today's and tomorrow's culture' by means of 'the resources in the Christian gospel, and the scriptures Christians read' (1).

The main challenges that Church and Christians face today are summarized under three headings: Neo-Gnosticism, New Imperialism and Postmodernism. Neo-Gnosticism is identified with the culture of the Enlightenment – which not only encompasses the secular culture but also, according to Wright, a good deal of the religious culture, both liberal and conservative. The traits that support this categorisation are, among others, the hostility of the Enlightenment towards the notion of a creator God, the almost religious belief in the Enlightenment as a story of liberation that renders the enlightened superior to others, the pervasive dogma of self-realisation, and the total separation of faith from the world of politics. Instead of challenging this neo-Gnosticism, much of today's church supports it in its dualistic separation of faith and world, either by way of a (liberal) identification with the world or a (fundamentalist) separation from it.

By 'New Imperialism' Wright is thinking of the Western societies and their politics. Like the Roman Empire, they/we look upon ourselves as the realisation of a new

level of civilisation, with 'a duty to share it with the world' (38). By aligning to our economy, our political structures, our ways of life etc., prosperity and happiness will fill the earth. Instead of challenging these arrogant presumptions, and this heretic eschatology, pointing at its inbuilt blindness over against its victims, churches and Christians support it.

And, finally, even if Postmodernism has seen through the power play that stands behind Modernism, it is incapable of doing anything about it. In its rejection of any truth it is only capable of standing by, barking at it as the ancient cynics did.

According to Wright, this tree-headed monster is to be met by the Christian proclamation of God as the creator (chapter 1), Christ as the Lord (chapter 2), and the Spirit as the Spirit of truth (chapter 3). As creator, God cares about this world. Even if sin has corrupted it, God has not given up on it. Wright rejects any kind of dualistic eschatology. We are to proclaim the future resurrection and judgment of *this* world, a judgment that has 'putting things to rights' as its primary goal.

In the same way, the Lordship of Christ means that *Christ* is the Lord of this world, not Caesar. (The book gives a good impression of Wright's anti-empire understanding of the New Testament.) Emperors and kings, and modern democracies alike, do not represent a religiously neutral and independent realm, separated from the interests of the Christian faith. They are a part of the world that has turned against God. But at the same time they represent a structure that comes from God, and that he wants to use. Christians are therefore to hold worldly authorities responsible, not only as stewards of a preliminary creational order (as it has often been understood in the Doctrine of the Two Regiments) but as servants of Christ and the Kingdom of God.

And it is this truth, i.e. the truth of the Lordship of Christ, that the Spirit is giving testimony to. In a climate of postmodern resentment against any truth – a resentment that fits New Imperialism's preference for power as a glove – Christians are to proclaim this truth to the powers, and live by it.

Once again, Tom Wright has written a passionate and provocative book. In parts, especially where he treats today's culture, he paints with an irritatingly broad brush. Where Wright is on home ground you are more inclined to listen. His exegesis of John, this seemingly dualistic gospel, is especially worth reading. But even so, evangelicals, and Lutherans like me, will hesitate at his lack of distinction between the two Regiments and his one-sided focus on the Lordship of Christ at the expense of his role as Saviour.

*Asger Chr. Højlund
Aarhus, Denmark*