

(was Gifford auch einräumt) und die umkehrte Kritik kaum einbezieht. Hier bildet der Beitrag Stanleys eine Ausnahme und Anregung, die Diskussion auf einer breiteren Basis fortzusetzen.

Friedemann Walldorf, Gießen

The Fire that Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of the Doctrine of Final Punishment, third edition

Edward William Fudge

Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2012; xxiv + 417 pp., pb., £30.50; ISBN 978-0-7188-9270-8

RÉSUMÉ

Cette troisième édition de l'ouvrage de Fudge prend en compte les débats récents à propos de la doctrine de l'enfer et du jugement dernier parmi les évangéliques. Fudge répond aussi à certains de ses critiques. Il argue que la doctrine traditionnelle qui présente l'enfer comme un tourment éternellement conscient n'est pas biblique et défend une doctrine de l'immortalité conditionnelle qu'il distingue de l'annihilationisme. Le livre demeure un ouvrage de référence.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese dritte Ausgabe des Buches von Fudge berücksichtigt die neueren Diskussionen unter Evangelikalen über die Lehre von Hölle und jüngstem Gericht. Fudge geht auch auf einige seiner Kritiker ein. Er vertritt den Standpunkt, dass die traditionelle Doktrin von der Hölle als Ort ewiger, bewusster Qual unbiblich ist und befürwortet stattdessen die Lehre einer bedingten Unsterblichkeit; dies unterscheidet er von einem Annihilationismus [vollständige Vernichtung]. Das Buch ist nach wie vor ein Standardwerk.

SUMMARY

This third edition of Fudge's book takes into account recent discussions relating to the doctrines of hell and final judgement among evangelicals. Fudge also engages with some of his critics. He argues that the traditional doctrine of hell as eternal conscious torment is unbiblical and he instead advocates a doctrine of conditional immortality; this he distinguishes from annihilationism. The book remains a standard text.

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This is the third edition of Edward Fudge's book, first published in 1982. Since then the discussions relating to the doctrines of hell and final judgement have become much more widespread among evangelicals. In this latest edition much of this recent writing has been incorporated into the argument. Fudge also takes the opportunity to engage with some of his earlier critics, so a new edition is to be welcomed.

The essential argument of the book is that the traditional doctrine of hell as eternal conscious torment does not represent a faithful exposition of Scripture, but rests

on non-biblical presuppositions, primarily arising from the Platonic concept of the immortality of the soul. Fudge advocates a doctrine of conditional immortality, a view which has gained ground within recent evangelical scholarship. The author clearly differentiates his view from what is popularly referred to as annihilationism. The problem with this is that it can undermine the clear biblical teaching on final judgement. Fudge clearly articulates a view which gives space for hell as the outworking of God's justice and which would entail final judgement. The final consequence of that judgement would be the withholding of the gift of immortality; the final fate of the wicked is thus destruction. That this position will be familiar to many today is largely down to the way in which Fudge and others have argued the case over recent decades.

The book divides into two sections. The first involves a good deal of serious biblical exegesis, referring to Old and New Testament. Chapters cover the meaning of *aiōnios*, usually translated as eternal, Sheol, and the teaching of Jesus. There is much valuable work here, not least in the discussion about the way in which the adjective 'eternal' is used with reference to the following action. This discussion goes well beyond the debate regarding quality versus quantity and explores the way in which the language is employed.

The second section of the book examines the doctrine of hell as expressed by key figures throughout church history. One of the key intentions is to trace the influence of Platonic thought from the early church through to the Reformers and then into modern fundamentalism. The summaries are well written and offer a clear and concise history of the way in which differing authors express this. The differences between Luther and Calvin, and how this relates to the debates with the emerging Anabaptists, are of particular interest.

This book remains the standard text for anyone wishing to explore this topic from a biblical and historical perspective. From a personal point of view I would like to see more on the way in which literature and art have contributed to the traditional view of hell. There would also be scope for some theological reflection on the concepts of justice and judgement in relation to differing views of time and eternity. It might also have been appropriate to offer some response to the recent appearance of exponents of a form of 'evangelical universalism'. Yet this would perhaps make a lengthy book a little unwieldy.

As a carefully argued account of the doctrine of conditional immortality this is an informative source and is likely to continue to provoke debate. Whatever one's view, there is little doubt that the language of hell and final judgement tends to have fallen from common use in many evangelical churches. It is to be hoped that this book will contribute to a mature reflection on what we believe about the life hereafter, and thus facilitate faithful preaching of the Gospel of hope.

Graham J. Watts, London