

equips its readers with the necessary navigational tools and skills to embark on their own probes into the history of Christianity.

Berrien Springs, MI 49104

JUHYEOK NAM

Crockett, William, ed. *Four Views on Hell*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992. 208 pp. \$14.99.

Evangelical publishing has recently revealed increasing maturity with dialogical works on such themes as the millennium and predestination/free will. *Four Views on Hell*, a welcome addition to this genre, provides a forum for substantial presentations of the literal, metaphorical, purgatorial, and conditionalist views. In addition, the four contributors interact with each other at the end of each chapter.

It is obvious that any doctrine of hell is "out-of-kilter" with contemporary thought, yet none of the authors—all of them systematic theologians—discounts the possibility of ultimate separation from God. In fact, this illustrates an omission in the book. There is no separate treatment of the "universalist" position that hell is not an option at all.

Basing his view on what he considers to be Scripture's "literal, normal interpretation" (27) and word studies, John Walvoord asserts that the objections to the literal view of hell are founded in theological presuppositions rather than in exegesis. However, one must ask whether it is really possible to separate exegesis from theology. Theology must be built upon proper exegesis, but exegesis of one passage of Scripture must take into account the larger biblical perspective as well. Each must inform the other, and it is vital that exegetical conclusions with regard to God's justice and righteousness be tested by such prominent theological themes as God's love and grace. In fact, it seems to me that Walvoord's concluding argument that the "infinite nature of sin" demands "infinite punishment as a divine judgment" (27) is based on a Calvinistic theological framework rather than on exegesis.

William Crockett agrees with Walvoord that "hell" is eternal, but he attempts to mitigate its "hellishness" by his argument that, according to Jesus and the apostles, "the final abode of the wicked will be a place of awful reckoning," although we cannot know what it will be like until the afterlife (45).

Undoubtedly, Crockett's position highlights, especially for those who hold the Bible to be the Word of God, the question of whether the literal sense of the words is to be accepted as the actual meaning. Might not the biblical context sometimes demand a symbolic/metaphorical interpretation as the most natural meaning? Still, with Pinnock (87-88), one has to ask whether Crockett has actually gained anything with his metaphorical view. While he extinguishes the fire of hell, God continues to be seen as punishing sinners for eternity. Does making hell mental agony rather than physical pain make an unpalatable doctrine more preachable?

In his review of the purgatorial position, Zachary Hayes does not address the issue of hell *per se*. Rather, he has chosen to discuss the subject from the Roman Catholic perspective of an "interim period" between heaven and hell (93). For

Hayes, purgatorial cleansing is necessary because of the distance between humankind and God due to human finiteness and guilt (95) as well as the fact that life's projects are left incomplete this side of death (96).

Evangelical Protestants will immediately ask what scriptural warrant Hayes has for such a stance. In response, it has to be said that he does not make a strong attempt to find purgatory in Scripture although he does refer briefly to 2 Macc 12:41-46; Matt 12:31-32; and 1 Cor 3:11-15. Instead, he clearly indicates that he views Scripture as functioning alongside of Christian tradition, and so new doctrines and new formulas "may legitimately emerge later in Christian history" (103).

However, the Roman Catholic/Protestant argument over purgatory is oversimplified if it is dissolved into a discussion in regard to *sola scriptura* and/or tradition. After all, most Protestants also place enormous importance on tradition. Hayes is correct in pointing out that the real issue revolves around what God's grace is (113-114). His picture of God's mercy and human freedom is an attractive one, but it does not adequately account for the present completeness of the believer in Jesus Christ.

Interestingly, Clark Pinnock is somewhat attracted to Hayes' purgatorial view (129-131). One can only wonder if, in his journey from a Calvinian paradigm of divine sovereignty to a more Arminian dialectic of divine control and human freedom, he has not over-balanced on the side of human response. Perhaps too, Pinnock's basic amillennialism has created an eschatological void which can only be filled by some kind of purgatory.

For the conditionalist, the highlight of the book is Pinnock's spirited defense of hell as "final destruction" (137). Although he does tackle the major proof texts for the traditional view, one is somewhat disappointed by Pinnock's failure to engage in word studies of *she 'ol*, *gehenna*, *'olam*, and *aiōnios*; especially since Walvoord does so. However, Pinnock provides a strong biblical, theological, and philosophical case for his alternative position. He points out that the traditional view is founded in the Hellenistic doctrine of the immortality of the soul rather than in Scripture. In addition, he asks legitimately whether an eternally-burning hell measures up to human or biblical standards of morality and justice and whether such a view is not more consistent with cosmic dualism than with Christian eschatology (147-155).

Finally, *Four Views on Hell* well illustrates the fact that most theological disagreements find their basis in what one thinks Scripture is. That almost predetermines what we will conclude from its words.

Avondale College
Cooranbong, N.S.W.
Australia

RAY C. W. ROENNFELDT

Daniels, Peter T., and William Bright, eds. *The World Writing Systems*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. xlv + 919 pp. \$125.00.

The editors have chosen a list of brilliant, very competent contributors to join them in writing the many chapters in the 74 sections of this comprehensive book. As stated in the preface (xxxv), while "each contributor was asked to provide a