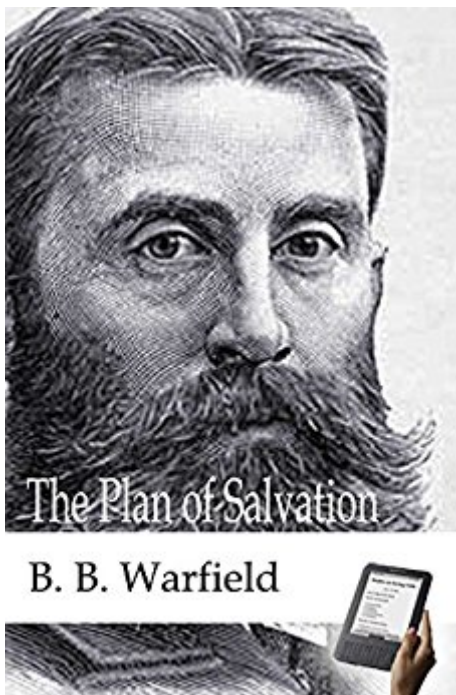


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The Plan Of Salvation



Synopsis

Does man save himself or does God alone save him, or is it somewhere in-between? The Subject to which our attention is to be directed in this series of lectures is ordinarily spoken of as "The Plan of Salvation." It is my purpose in this lecture to bring before us in a rapid survey the varying views as have been held by large parties in the Church, that some conception may be formed of their range and relations. This may be most conveniently done by observing, in the first instance at least, only the great points of difference which separate them. I shall enumerate them in the order of significance, proceeding from the most profound and far-reaching differences which divide Christians to those of less radical effect. Dr. Michael J. Kruger wrote the following of this little book....Throughout the history of the church, there have been many different perspectives on how a person is saved. So, what is the best way to help Christians understand these various approaches? And what is the most effective way to make the case for Calvinism? There are many answers to these questions, but there is one resource that I have found tremendously helpful. And it is a resource that is often overlooked and forgotten. And that resource is the five lectures delivered by B.B. Warfield in 1914 at Princeton Theological Seminary. These lectures are not found in the standard 10 volume collected works of Warfield and for that reason are often missed. Instead they are found in a little book entitled The Plan of Salvation. What makes Warfield's approach so helpful is that he takes the reader through a series of choices about how God saves, starting with very broad concepts and moving towards more specific concepts. At each point along the way he eliminates the options that just don't work. Thus, the reader is able to see how theologians have arrived at a belief in Calvinism in a gradual, step by step fashion. In a sense, Warfield has created a logical "decision tree" that any Christian could follow. Thus, it is an incredibly useful tool for convincing people of the Reformed approach...Here is the outline of his decision tree: 1. Deism vs. Theism: Is God personally involved in our lives (Theism) or does he stand back from the universe and allow it to take its course (Deism)? Warfield's answer: Theism. 2. Supernaturalism vs. Naturalism: Given the reality of Theism, the next question is whether man saves himself and works his way to God (Naturalism) or whether God intervenes and saves man (Supernaturalism). Warfield's answer: Supernaturalism. 3. Evangelicalism vs. Sacerdotalism: Given the reality of Supernaturalism, the next question is the specific manner in which God saves. Does God save men through an instrument he has appointed like the sacraments (Sacerdotalism) or does he act on people's souls directly and immediately (Evangelicalism)? Does God use sacraments as an intermediary or does God operate directly on the human soul by grace? Warfield's answer:

Evangelicalism.4. Universalism vs. Particularism: Given the reality of Evangelicalism – that God works on men’s souls directly – the next question is whether he exerts this saving power equally on all men. Does he apply this saving power on every person, whether they are saved or not (Universalism), or does he apply it to particular individuals who are actually saved (Particularism)? Does God’s grace just make salvation a possibility or does it actually make salvation a reality? Warfield’s answer: Particularism (Calvinism). The logic and flow of Warfield’s argument are powerful and weighty. He builds such momentum towards Particularism (Calvinism), that even at an early point in the book the reader gets the sense that it is an inevitability. All the biblical and theological arrows are pointing in the same direction. If you are looking for a persuasive tool for others, or even for yourself, check out Warfield’s little book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you do not have time for a long systematic approach to Calvinistic Salvation, then this small primer will be helpful. Other forms of Soteriology are discussed, but Warfield argues for a most practical solution.

Great classic

Print on demand - the Table of Contents has glaring errors.

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