

Review of EX. Heatherley's Human Destiny and the Bible by Charles C. Ryrie
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Thesis: (1) Those who believe the Gospel during their lifetimes go to heaven when they die and are saved eternally.
(2) Those who disbelieve during their lifetimes go to hell when they die but are ultimately annihilated (he calls it "dissolution") before the "new heavens and new earth."
(3) Those who are "uncommitted" in this life go to hades when they die, and there they have a second chance (he calls it "a belated day of salvation") to believe or disbelieve before God finally determines their destiny.

Characteristics of the writing: First chapters much too flowery. Writing is much more straightforward when he examines the Biblical material. Well reasoned argument. Good research, except he picks and chooses those who agree with his theses. For example, in discussing the Greek word "age", he cites only those who agree that it has only temporal connotations and does not mean eternal. There is no reference to the latest Greek lexicon which does state that the word means eternal. Such a meaning would, of course, be devastating to his argument.

Furthermore, though a lot of biblical material is mentioned, a lot of relevant biblical material is not. The third part of his thesis (point (3) above) is based solely on an interpretation of I Peter 3. While his is not an abnormal interpretation of that passage, it certainly is not the only legitimate one, and some of the other interpretations of it would ruin his thesis.

Summary: If you want a quick summary of his position, look at pages iii, 56, 81, 83, 167, 186.

Evaluation: Orthodoxy will reject this book. Contemporary liberalism holds to universalism which the author rejects, so liberals will probably reject the book. His "middle" ground--second chance plus annihilationism is not widely held today, and, of course, it is not new. I don't think this book would appeal to a very wide market even though it is a ~~capable~~ *fair-to-good* statement of that viewpoint.