

Altar to an Unknown Love: Rob Bell, C.S. Lewis, and the Legacy of the Art and Thought of Man



For centuries, the world of professing Christendom has faced countless contests regarding the nature of Gods justice and love, as well as the doctrines of Heaven and Hell. Rob Bells book, Love Wins, is just another illustration of this reality. The entire protest revolving around Bells book was fairly dramatic, however, it produced more smoke and heat than productive light. Despite the loud complaints leveled against the controversial author of Love Wins, what he unveiled in his book should have produced little surprise. There is a very important and untold story behind the whole Bell debate that must be passed on for the sake of future generations. The mystery and oddity of this conflict has revealed a systemic problem - one that is much greater than the premature protests surrounding Rob Bell. Altar to an Unknown Love addresses the untold story which stands behind the scenes of Bells particular views of theology. What the reader may find surprising is that Bells teachings are remarkably familiar, and have even been promoted, whether directly or indirectly, by some of Bells loudest critics. All of this points to a great opportunity for the church in the present day. The conflict surrounding Rob Bell actually supplies an opportunity to rediscover our need to go back to the Scriptures themselves, rather than to the teachings and traditions of men. This is an opportunity for the church to rediscover the priority of Sola Scriptura, now, and for the generations to come. Back Cover: Rob Bells Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell and the Fate of Every Person who Ever Lived, has been condemned by evangelicals who are, at the same time, professed admirers of authors from whom Bell has drawn, namely, George MacDonald and C.S. Lewis. Beasley challenges the consistency of this procedure, and if his book is taken seriously - as it deserves to be - it must

promote more controversy, for MacDonald and Lewis are widely respected figures. A reconstructed presentation of the love of God - to be found in all the authors Beasley is critiquing - produces teaching which carries no offence to the natural man. What is more offensive to the natural man than truth concerning the justice of God and his wrath against sin? But that offence is eliminated by the subjective, man-centered teaching here reviewed. Yet, instead of starting with Scripture, Lewis believed that considering love in man can help us to understand love in God. A major part of Altar to an Unknown Love is a refutation of this error. The love to be found in unregenerate man is self-love - love centering around the pursuit of pleasure and identified by the Greeks (and by Lewis) as eros. But the love of God (never called eros in the New Testament) is altogether different, and is unknown until a person is born of God (1 John 4:7-10). To our mind he proves the case that Lewis is now so widely acceptable in American evangelicalism because non-biblical ideas are not being recognized for what they are. Artistry in writing, effective story-telling, with a mixture of disconnected scriptural references and thoughts, are able to achieve wide success in a day when discrimination has given way to popular appeal. Reverend Iain H. Murray Former Editorial Director & Joint Founder of Banner of Truth Trust

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