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Theology, salvation and culture

(Clive Marsh, *A Cultural Theology of Salvation*,
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, 272 p.)

Important contemporary researcher, Clive Marsh, the academic head of Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning from University of Leicester, and International Research Consultant and Research Fellow at Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education from Birmingham, offers in his latest book published at Oxford University Press, a rich and interesting approach on the cultural theology of salvation.

Segmented in 8 chapters and three big parts, the book deals in first of them with the doctrine of salvation seen as a cultural theology, in the second one with its understanding in the Western culture and in the last one with its revival in the contemporary one. After defining the keywords and presenting the way how the current context shifted the understanding of the topic and generated the re-birth of interest for it, Marsh insists on the way how cultural theology developed after (Paul Tillich's (1886-1965) period and contributions (see: Paul Tillich, *Aux frontières de la religion et de la science*, (Paris: Le Centurion, Delachaux et Niestlé, 1970); Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the encounter of world religions*, (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1963); Paul Tillich, *Théologie de la culture*, (Paris: Denoël: Gonthier, 1968).

The introductory section is followed by an unity dedicated to a 4th oriented perspective on the topic, namely: the aesthetic, the affective, the therapeutic and economic one. Grünewald's ideas, the ones of Handel, together with theories like the “Bing Bang” one (cf. Harold W.G. Allen, *The new cosmology: a revolutionary treatise involving: demise of Big Bang cosmology, the nature of gravitation evolution and reincarnation, cosmic purpose and destiny*, Expanded edition (Spring Hill, Florida: Perspective Books, 2006); Cynthia Stokes Brown, *Istoria lumii de la Big Bang până în prezent [World's history from the Big Bang until nowadays]* (București: Litera, 2011); William Lane Craig, *Theism, atheism, and Big Bang cosmology*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) or the positive psychology are presented there in an approach that links the idea of salvation and its Christian meaning with the theories developed by the secularised societies. As it was expected, the section ends with a presentation of the economical perspective on the salvation, where Clive Marsh offers a deep presentation on the way

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how the economic development of the societies and authors like Weber (Max Weber, *Etica protestantă și spiritul capitalismului* [*Protestant ethics and capitalism spirit*], (București: Humanitas, 2003) contributed to the change of the discourse from this area.

The last part, entitled: “Salvation Reworked” is segmented in two chapters, namely: “Salvific Themes in Contemporary Western Culture: The Shape of Soteriology in Secular Societies,” and “Reconstructing a Christian Approach to Salvation in the Contemporary West.” Here, the author brings into attention the actual dimension of the salvation and speaks about the challenges brought by the scientific evolution, the orientation of philosophical discourse or other elements into the understanding of salvation and its use for the contemporary cultural background.

Well-written, offering a synthesis of the way how salvation has been perceived in the cultural space during the time and also underlining its relevance for areas like philosophy, sociology, aesthetics, philology or economy, Clive Marsh’s book entitled: *A Cultural Theology of Salvation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) is not only an useful tool for the theologians who want to find ways of dialogue with people coming from other areas of research, but also an interesting lecture for a curious reader or for a researcher who wants to deep a topic like the salvation and to understand it in a holistic way.