

Person and Work of Jesus Christ

Christology

1

Challenges in Christology

140-142

- How intelligible are ancient Christological creeds?
<Do we lose sight of historical reality of Jesus?
- Historical-critical method of analyzing gospels raises questions about the relationship between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history
- New Testament has several portraits of Jesus – 4 gospels and Paul
- “Scandal of particularity” of Jesus Christ whose ministry, death, and resurrection call our lives into question

2

Principles of Christology

142-145

- Knowledge of Jesus Christ is first and foremost “faith knowledge”
- Understanding Jesus Christ must take place within context of history of Israel and even cosmos
- Person of Christ is inseparable from work of Christ
- All understandings of Jesus Christ grow out of particular situations of those who form them
- The living Jesus Christ is greater than all of our confessions, creeds, and theological formulations about him

3

Classical Affirmations of the Person of Christ

145-151

- Jesus is fully human
 - < A human and the norm for new humanity
- Jesus is fully divine
 - < God acts, suffers, and triumphs in and through Jesus
- Mystery of the unity of Jesus person
 - < “hypostatic union” of God and human
 - Migliore suggests analogy of personal relationship – kenosis of free self-limitation and self-giving

4

Two Questions:

- Do we come to know the nature of Jesus through our understanding of God, or do we come to know the nature of God through our encounter with Jesus?
 - < What is the difference between the two?
- Migliore states, “a Christology faithful to the biblical witness will always have a critical and subversive dimension: it will be iconoclastic in relation to conventional understandings of God and the support that these understandings give to oppressive attitudes and relationships” (147).
 - < What does he mean? Do you agree or disagree and why?

5

Traditional Views of the Work of Christ

(151-156) What does Christ do to overcome our alienation from God?

- Christ the Victor (*Christus Victor*) – Christ’s death and resurrection defeats forces of evil
- Satisfaction theory of atonement (Anselm) – our sin against God is infinite, but only an infinite satisfaction could repair the harm, thus Christ dies as a substitute for us
- Moral Influence theory – God’s perfect love for us in Christ compels or inspires us to respond in gratitude and awe
- Calvin’s view of Christ as prophet, priest, & king (*munus triplex*) captures all three

6

Liberation Christology (work of Christ)

(156-158) Distinctive marks of Liberation Theology's view of Christ [compare to Robert Crawford in *Doubting Thomas*]

- God in Christ displays God's solidarity with poor
 - < Preferential option for the poor
- Bondage of sin is not just personal, but is also social and political (powers and principalities)
 - < Exploitation of poor
- Christology requires us to be suspicious of dehumanizing ideologies that lie behind traditional theological views
 - < E.g., cross is mark of God's condemnation of exploitation, not condoning unjust suffering
- Christology is linked to Christian praxis
 - < We begin to understand the true meaning of Christ when we align ourselves with those he did

7

Violence and the Cross

158-161

- The cross of Christ is a sign of what happens when the violence of the world is confronted with the love and forgiveness of God who identifies with the poor, outcast, and stranger
- Migliore believes that Jesus' ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection affirm the nonviolent love of God which we are called to embody
 - < What do you think Migliore would say that the cross teaches us about capital punishment?
 - < Interestingly liberation theology does not call for nonviolence if violence is the only way to overthrow the oppressor

8

Finality of Jesus Christ

(161-164) Christ and other religions

- Exclusivist approach – Christ is the final and only revelation of God to humankind
 - < Other religions are simply false or misguided
 - Thomas's view prior to meeting the Buddhists
 - < Problems with this view
 - To confess Christ as Lord doesn't mean we possess all that Christ is and means
 - Christian gospel has always said that God is not left without a witness in the world

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Finality of Jesus Christ (cont.)

- Developmentalist view of religions says other faiths know something of God, but Christianity is the most complete expression of God's revelation
 - < Problem is that closer study of other major religions suggests that they are not necessarily interested in the same thing – “they turn on different axes”

10

Finality of Jesus Christ (cont.)

- Transcendentalist view says God's transcendent grace comes to people of other faiths when they live out their best understandings sincerely, even if they do not consciously understand or accept Christ
 - < “anonymous Christians vs. “anonymous Buddhists”

11

Finality of Jesus Christ (cont.)

- Dialogical view says that Christians and those of other faiths should take their different faith commitments seriously and be open to dialogue with each other
 - < Goal is not condemnation of other, but genuine understanding and appreciation
 - < Can help us understand our own faiths better
 - < View that Migliore prefers (compare to Prof. Wilson's in *Doubting Thomas*)

12

Finality of Jesus Christ (cont.)

- Theocentric core of all religions that is true, while the “trappings” are relative historical manifestations
 - < Variation of many paths up same mountain
 - your path is as good as mine so long as we’re trying to get up the mountain
 - < Migliore suggests that the problem here is that it trivializes the very way Christians come to know God in the historical person Jesus
 - < We could also add that not all religions are interested in God!

13

Final Point About Finality of Christ

- Jesus Christ is far greater than any Christology – there is always more to learn about and from the living Christ
 - < How does this point compare to the point of *Doubting Thomas*?

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