

THE POWER OF THE CROSS: REFORMATION PERSPECTIVES

Christology

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

- Martin Luther (1483-1546)
Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, introduction and commentary on 1:16 (excerpt found in *The Protestant Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (New York: Harper, 1968), 124-136.)
 - Righteousness of faith
 - Active righteousness = what we can do
 - Righteousness of the law = Conviction of the law
 - Imputation by Christ = passive righteousness
 - The law
 - "When the law shows us our sin, our past life immediately comes to mind. Then the sinner, in his great anguish of mind, groans and says to himself: 'Oh, how damnably I have lived! If only I could live longer! Then I will amend my life.'"
 - "Therefore the afflicted conscience has no remedy against despair and eternal death except to take hold of the promise of grace offered in Christ, that is, this righteousness of faith, this passive or Christian righteousness..."
 - Gift of righteousness
 - No work can obtain it.
 - Only the grace of Christ can grant it.
 - "It is a marvelous thing and unknown to the world to teach Christians to ignore the law and to live before God as though there were no law whatever. For if you do not ignore the law and thus direct your thoughts to grace as though there were no law but as though there were nothing but grace, you cannot be saved."
 - Good works flow from the gift of passive righteousness.
 - "For this righteousness means to do nothing, to hear nothing, and to know nothing about the law or about works but to know and believe only this: that Christ has gone to the Father and is now invisible; that He sits in heaven at the right hand of the Father, not as a Judge but as one who has been made for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption from God; in short, that He is our High Priest, interceding for us and reigning over us and in us through grace."
 - The mediating role of Jesus
 - Marvelous exchange
 - Saved and sinner at the same time
 - Christ's death covers our sins (substitutionary redemption)
 - God is hidden in Christ's suffering
 - The glory of God is in the cross
- John Calvin (1509-1564)
 - Justification by Christ alone
 - Christ was punished for us (radicalizing of Anselm)
 - We were enslaved to sin, now we are enslaved to Christ
 - Radical discipleship
 - Social Christology (*Ordo salutis*)

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain:

Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon, this I see,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
For my cleansing this my plea,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can for sin atone,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Naught of good that I have done,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my hope and peace,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Now by this I'll overcome—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Now by this I'll reach my home—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Glory! Glory! This I sing—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,
All my praise for this I bring—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

THE RADICAL REFORMATION

- Anabaptists (Menno Simons, 1496-1561, see Schleitheim Confession, 1527)
 - Radical democratic movement
 - Baptism of adults (those who are repentant)
 - Public accusation of sin (after private admonition)
 - Eucharist as contingent upon communion and baptism
 - Separation from the world (including “Catholic and Protestant works and church services”)
 - Pacifist
 - Pastors recognized by the community
- Spiritualists (Kaspar von Schwenckfeld, 1489-1561)
 - Interior spiritual experience
 - Less emphasis or no emphasis on baptism and Eucharist
- Evangelical Rationalists (Michael Servetus, 1511-1553)
 - Reason interprets the scriptures
 - Rejection of the Trinity

GENERAL CHRISTOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

- Tendency to create a gap between the divinity and humanity of Jesus
- Personal Jesus
- Seeking a timeless Jesus through the gospel portraits (see Wright, *Jesus*, 13-16)
- Following of Jesus as different from ordinary humanity
- Fallibility of reason
- Being the Body of Christ – Imaging Christ
- The truth of Christ – restatement of authority

- One should be quiet before God, leaving everything to God

PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC DISTINCTIONS

- Importance of a relationship with Jesus
- Importance of a relationship with the Church, the Body of Christ
- Hearing the voice of Jesus
- Role of culture
- Means of salvation
- Boundaries of salvation

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