Contemporary Christologies: A Fortress Introduction, by Don Schweitzer
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It has long been said that Christian theology, if it is to be genuinely *Christian* theology, must first and foremost concern itself with Christology. The history of doctrine is in many ways a history of the church's concern to express its faith in Christ as the savior (what we might designate as "soterology") across many different times and places. As contemporary Christians face unique challenges and opportunities to confess faith in Christ as savior in a rapidly changing and quickly shrinking postmodern world, Don Schweitzer's review of contemporary christologies offers a particularly timely and welcome overview of fifteen christologies from the last sixty years.

Any project claiming to capture a snapshot of the "contemporary" state of affairs in any discipline inevitably confronts certain limitations of scope and must forfeit its hopes of presenting an exhaustive analysis. One laudable feature of Schweitzer's book is that he candidly acknowledges the limitations of his project, particularly in terms of its geographical scope. Nevertheless, he manages to marshal a representative cross-section of significant and influential contemporary christologies in this short introduction.

Students of contemporary theology will no doubt recognize several of the theologians included in this volume, including Karl Rahner, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and Jürgen Moltmann. Others, including Dorothee Soelle, Carter Heyward, and Raimon Pannikar, might be less familiar to casual observers of the contemporary theological scene. Included are representatives of several Christian traditions as well as figures from North America, Europe, Asia and South America, women and men, and theologians of color. Schweitzer's selections represent the increasing diversity that characterizes contemporary theological reflection. At the same time, he is to be commended for resisting the temptation to organize his work according to the categories of identity politics. Instead, in his organization he implies (rightly, I believe) that we have arrived at a moment in which diverse voices are allowed to speak without first drawing attention to race, gender, sexual orientation or geography. Here we are not confronted with *Latin American* theologians, *black* theologians, *queer* theologians, or *feminist* theologians who for much of the recent past have had to labor under an identifier not required for white male theologians. Instead we are simply introduced to *theologians* who happen to be African-American or Indian, female or male, gay or straight, European or South American, Roman Catholic or Protestant.

Instead of organizing his study according to identity, Schweitzer presents his chosen christologies according to their theories of atonement. One especially significant feature of Schweitzer's study is the guiding theological principle of his analysis, namely his contention that the person and work of Christ are finally inseparable and that the most productive approach to contemporary christologies requires an acknowledgement that any theological investigation of the meaning and significance of Jesus will inevitably lead one to a consideration of his saving work as the Christ. Fittingly, then, each chapter presents three christologies organized by soteriological emphasis: Jesus as Revealer, Jesus as Moral Exemplar, Jesus as Source of

Ultimate Hope, Jesus as the Suffering Christ, and Jesus as Source of "Bounded Openness." In each chapter Schweitzer offers brief summaries of the major themes in the work of three leading theologians on christology, noting shared emphases but also points of departure and unique insights on the person and work of Christ.

Atonement has traditionally been labeled a "theory" rather than a "doctrine," and this designation has granted theologians significant latitude in their descriptions of the saving work of Christ (in theory if not always in practice). This question of the capacity of Jesus Christ to function as savior has guided the theological work of the church from the earliest doctrinal formulations of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, especially the First Council of Nicaea (325) and the Council of Chalcedon (451). Schweitzer consistently returns to these formulations (the Nicene Creed and Chalcedonian Definition) as touchstones of the church's christology without necessarily confining validity or value only to those positions materially consistent with Nicene and Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Rather these formulations are treated as markers or plumb lines, providing a point of reference against which to judge contemporary formulations without necessarily serving as standards of orthodoxy. Instead of imposing external tests of orthodoxy on each of the christologies, Schweitzer judges them by their own internal logic, their use and reworking of the tradition, and their value for the present. The result is a study that values the historic teaching of the church on the person and work of Christ and likewise values the demand for each generation to confess Christ in language and thought forms appropriate to its own time and place.

Theories of atonement only make sense when paired with doctrines of sin consistent with the proposed means of atonement, and Schweitzer also includes a brief discussion of each theologian's doctrine of sin as an entrée to their proposed theory of atonement. Doctrines of sin have become as diverse as theories of atonement in recent years, including such faculties as the will and consciousness as well as multiple contexts of relations. Naturally theories of atonement will strive to address and overcome the deficiencies laid bare by the doctrine of sin. On the other side of atonement stands ethics, the resulting change of life and attitude in the Christian made possible by the saving work of Christ. Fittingly, then, Schweitzer does not end his discussions with the atoning work of Christ but extends the conversation backward and forward to place these discussions within the broader context of the Christian life so that each section comprises three theological moments: the problem of sin, the atoning work of the person of Christ, and the positive transformation effected by that atoning work.

Anyone doing ministry, studying theology, or simply living the Christian life in a postmodern context such as ours will be richly rewarded by a careful reading of Schweitzer's introduction. Like other texts in the Fortress Introduction series, *Contemporary Christologies* includes helpful supplementary material, including discussion questions, suggestions for further reading, a particularly useful glossary of terms, and citations to major works of each figure. Unfortunately, however, these citations are contained in endnotes rather than in a separate bibliography. Readers hoping to find a straightforward pronouncement on the orthodoxy of each christology will be disappointed with this study; however, those readers willing to engage diverse reflections on the nature of sin, the person and work of Christ, and the ethical implications of christology for Christian life and ministry in the twenty-first century will find a trustworthy reference and guide to deeper reflection in Schweitzer's introduction.

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