

Why is there—and why must there be—such a thing as an "a priori," or "transcendental" "christology"?

There is and must be such a thing as an a priori, or transcendental, christology, because, or insofar as, the existential question of the meaning of ultimate reality for us presupposes, or implies, the possibility, and thus the, notion of a decisive answer to this question; and any properly moral or metaphysical inquiry, if sufficiently pursued, more or less clearly and coherently forms the corresponding concept of such a decisive answer. Moreover, it belongs to the essence of the Christian witness to attest that the fundamental option for salvation that is decisively represented to Christians solely through Jesus is and must be also implicitly presented to every human being as soon and as long as she or he exists humanly at all. For both reasons, then, there is and must be what Rahner calls a "seeking christology" and the possibility of an "anonymous Christianity."

Even so, the truth of the a posteriori christological assertion, "Jesus is the Christ," could never be already deduced simply from premises that are properly moral or metaphysical. There is all the difference between a christology that seeks and one that has found, or between a Christianity that remains nameless and one that is properly so-called. This is because not even the christological question, properly so-called, could ever be simply existential. Because it could never so much as arise except on the basis of a particular experience of Jesus, it is and must be historical as well as existential; and the truth of the christological assertion that answers it could only be an a posteriori, not an a priori, kind of truth.

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