

Grace and the Person: 20th Century Perspectives

Grace, classes 9

Karl Rahner (1902-1984)

- Anthropology as starting point
- Spirit in the World
 - Transcendence
 - Evolutionary vision
 - Structures of human knowing
 - Questioning
 - Reflexivity
 - Potentia obedentialis
- Hearers of the Word
 - Potentia obedentialis (Vorgriff)
 - Universal salvific will of God
 - Elevated transcendence
 - Supernatural existential
- Absolute Mystery
 - Knowing God
 - The experience of God
 - Categorical knowing
 - Categorical acting
- Grace
 - Nature & grace
 - Remainder concept
 - Reflection on uncreated grace
 - Action of God on the person
 - Quasi-formal causality
- Beatific vision
 - Unending mystery
 - Transformation in holiness

Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988)

- Nature and grace
 - Nature never exists in this world without grace
 - Grace draws nature to its proper end
 - Grace as an Inner Dynamic of Nature
 - Grace brings about the breaking forth of the form of the cross in creation
- Importance of form
 - Role of beauty
 - The encounter with God
- Engaging in the drama
 - Reshaped by grace
 - Human freedom and divine freedom
- Dare we hope?

Karl Barth (1886-1968)

- The ways of God are unknown to humanity
- The Gospel confronts humans with the love of God
- Predestination
 - God is predestined
 - From all eternity God has decided that humanity will not be lost
 - God is predestined to give his grace, through Christ to all
 - All are predestined to glory
- Grace is poured forth upon all
 - Some have accepted this grace
 - Others have not yet accepted it
 - Human freedom remains and may refuse God's grace
- Is God's will thwarted by human freedom?
 - Are all saved?
 - God is the source and sustainer of our freedom

Conservative Presbyterianism

- TULIP expresses the fundamentals of faith
- Trust in God is essential
- Grace is irresistible; thus, if you do good works that are saving it is because God is moving you to do so in the infiniteness of his mercy.

Lutheran

- Pervasiveness of sin
- Convicted by the law
- Free gift of justifying grace

Methodist

- God's prevenient grace prepares humans to receive God's mercy
- Prevenient Grace: "The divine love that surrounds all humanity and precedes any and all of our conscious impulses" (*The Book of Discipline*, 101)
- Christians may be made perfect in love in this life by God's grace

Baptist understandings

Liberal protestant understandings

Modern Orthodox understandings of grace

- Three stages in God's plan of creation
- The effect of sin on creation's participation in God
- Redemption: the role of the Church
 - Corporate grace
 - Sacraments?
 - The liturgy
 - Monasticism
- Deification

Bibliography

- Karl Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, New York: Crossroad, 1979.
- Stephen J. Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992.
- Stephen J. Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthropology*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993, chapter 7.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church, *Confessing Our Faith Together: A Proposal for Full Communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2008)

Grace and society: 20th Century Perspectives

Grace, classes 10

The Social Gospel

- Origins and impetus
 - A late 19th-century, early 20th-century American, Protestant evangelical movement in response to the Industrial Revolution
 - Key thinkers: Walter Rauschenbusch, Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong
- Principles
 - Confidence in social sciences
 - The Church's mission is to transform society: Kingdom is coterminous w/ society
 - The true Church is the Kingdom of God: those committed to social justice
 - Jesus is a moral exemplar for building the just society
- Grace
 - Sin and depravation are purely social realities
 - Original sin is a way of describing human ignorance and underdevelopment
 - Grace and human progress are two descriptions of the same reality

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)

- Works
 - *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic* (1928)
 - Convinced of the evils of capitalism, this work expounds his socialist views
 - *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932)
 - Pride and insecurity are the roots of evil
 - These are rooted in all human social groupings
 - *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1941-3)
 - *Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944)
 - *The Self and the Dramas of History* (1955)
 - *The Structure of Nations and Empires* (1959)
- Understanding of grace
 - Human nature is capable of depravity and the response to grace
 - (no total depravity)
 - Motives are easily drawn down by evil but can also be open to grace
 - Grace comes with the realization that God is sovereign
 - The cross of Christ reveals that God's love in powerlessness will overcome sin

Liberation Theology

- Grace and Social Location
- Grace and Well-being
- Blocking the operation of grace
- Cooperation