



Meeting God on the Cross: Christ, the Cross, and the Feminist Critique

Arnfridur Gudmundsdottir

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The past thirty years have seen the emergence of a broad-ranging feminist theological critique of Christology. Speaking out of a range of Christian traditions, feminist theologians have exposed the androcentric character of classical Christology, drawing attention to the fact that women's voices in Scripture and in the history of theology have often gone and continue to go unheard. The theological consequences have been grave: Christ's liberating message of the full humanity of both women and men has been compromised by the patriarchal bias of its interpreters. Feminists have also argued that of all Christian doctrines Christology has been most often turned against women. Christological arguments have been used to reinforce an exclusively male image of God, and thus to legitimate men's superiority over women. Further, the image of Christ on the cross has contributed to women's acceptance of abuses of power, as it has often been interpreted as a model of passive submission to unjust suffering. Some feminists have argued for the total rejection of the doctrine of the cross. Others have concluded that Christianity and feminism are incompatible.

In this book, Arnfríður Guðmundsdóttir provides a lucid survey and analysis of the full range of such criticisms, as well as her own explicitly feminist retrieval and reconstruction of a theology of the cross. She argues that there is a redemptive message hidden in the cross of Christ that is valuable to women today. Despite its potential for abuse and its well-documented history of misuse against women, a theology of the cross can also affirm Jesus as a divine co-sufferer who brings good news to all who are poor and oppressed. Such a theology, Guðmundsdóttir contends, offers women meaning and strength from a God who takes human form and enters redemptively into their suffering.

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