



Journal of Religion & Society

The Kripke Center

Volume 1 (1999)

William Lane Craig. *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up? A Debate between William Lane Craig and John Dominic Crossan. Moderated by William F. Buckley, Jr.; edited by Paul Copan; with responses from Robert J. Miller, Craig L. Blomberg, Marcus Borg, and Ben Witherington III.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. Pp. 179. \$16.99 (paper).

[1] Paul Copan's introduction offers a concise historical review of scholarly discussion surrounding the distinction between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith." It also gives an overview of the live debate between John Dominic Crossan and William Lane Craig, with accompanying responses from Robert J. Miller, Craig L. Blomberg, Marcus Borg, and Ben Witherington III, plus concluding remarks by Crossan and Craig.

[2] In Part I of the book, Craig's opening statements present two main contentions: that the real Jesus rose from the dead in confirmation of his radical personal claims to divinity, and that if contention one is false - that is, if Jesus did not rise - then Christianity is a fairy tale which no rational person should believe (25). From these two contentions, he develops four "facts" which Craig claims "provide adequate inductive grounds for inferring Jesus' resurrection" (26). Crossan's opening remarks express his own presuppositions regarding history and language, and do not address Craig's claims directly. The tone of the opening statements, rebuttals, and closing remarks is generally deferential, interspersed with occasional *ad hominem* attacks and fallacious appeals to authority, usually at the instigation of Buckley, and usually at Crossan's expense.

[3] Part II begins with Miller's sociological critique of Craig's position. Miller characterizes Craig's argument as an apology, contending that the gospels succeed in "proving" Jesus' resurrection only to Christian insiders. Miller's critique is ineffective on two counts, both in its argument, and in its use of Matthew's account of Jesus' resurrection as an example of a failed apology. First, to characterize Craig's argument as an apology, and effective only for insiders, eschews the question as to whether some historical event forms the basis for insiders' faith in the resurrection. Second, the presence of Matthean redaction (or any gospel's redaction, for that matter) does not provide exemplary proof that Jesus' resurrection is a contrived literary event, only that the gospels themselves are literary portraits, not video

tapes. By Miller's own admission, the evangelists are "interested in faith far more than facts" (95).

[4] Blomberg's response offers an evaluation and critique of Craig's four "facts" in light of current scholarship, and accuses Craig of overstatement regarding scholarly consensus about those facts. His relatively benign critique of Craig's position is juxtaposed with a rather substantial rebuttal of Crossan's position, including a discussion about gospel genre (105), and a refutation of Crossan's insistence that metaphorical or analogous language in the gospel context precludes any given event's basis in historical fact. Blomberg, like Craig, upbraids Crossan for failing to refute, or even respond adequately to Craig's four facts. Blomberg rightly identifies the crux of the fideist-evidentialist debate as being rooted in epistemological presuppositions which are not explicitly defined by either participant in this present debate.

[5] Borg maintains that the Crossan-Craig debate "hinges on the nature of faith" (128). He stands with Crossan in distinguishing the pre- and post-Easter Jesus, emphasizing the importance of separating the earliest (and therefore factual, according to Borg) layers of tradition, from the later (and therefore, metaphorical, mythological) layers of tradition in the gospels. Christian faith, for Borg, means "committing oneself to Jesus as the decisive revelation of God," (128) God's "no" to the "domination system" of Jesus' day, and God's "yes" to Jesus (125). Borg's concluding statements reflect his concerns about the universal problem of evil, religious pluralism, the Christian notion of grace, and of course, the necessity of maintaining a pre- and post-Easter Jesus dichotomy. The primary difficulty with Borg's separation of Jesus as a pre- and post-Easter being is that it ignores the multiple attestation found in the gospels regarding the nature of Jesus' glorified body after the resurrection. The gospels, whether using metaphorical language or not, consistently describe the resurrected Jesus as being the same Jesus, only transformed in appearance by the event of bodily resurrection. Jesus is, in his nature, the same Jesus before and after the resurrection; to maintain that the post-Easter Jesus can be separated from the pre-Easter Jesus cannot be substantiated by either metaphorical or literal renderings of the resurrection accounts.

[6] Witherington assumes his characteristic role as a caretaker of semantic accuracy. His response calls for the debaters to clarify such terms as "God," "person," and "resurrection," as well as "history" itself, and he laments the dearth of discussion of "deeper philosophical issues, much less the ontological issues about Jesus" (132). Like the debaters and Blomberg and Borg, Witherington uses an exegesis of 1Corinthians 15 to support his central contention, i.e., that "Paul wished to affirm both continuity and discontinuity..." between the present body and the resurrection body (134). This point is in contradistinction to the arguments for metaphorical resurrection, apostolic visions and hallucinations, and others like it. Witherington rejects the notion that the gospel accounts of Jesus' physical resurrection constitute pure apologetics. Nor would a Christian Church well on its way toward becoming a predominantly Gentile community have been sympathetic toward, or persuaded by such apologetics (136). Finally, Witherington forcefully dispels the notion that "literal" means "factual," and "metaphorical" means "fictitious" (143). He rightly concludes that credible Christianity stands or falls on the validity of certain historical facts central to its creed, not the least of which is Jesus' bodily resurrection (138).

[7] This volume complements current scholarship devoted to historical Jesus research with its lively debate format, and is conducive to stimulating discussion in a classroom or other public forum. For popular audiences accustomed to the "Jesus Seminar versus evangelical" ideologies, the book offers greater depth of insight into the issues surrounding historical Jesus studies without cumbersome jargon and bibliography to which scholars are generally accustomed. For undergraduates, it is ideal for supplementary reading in Christology or New Testament courses.

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