

Vom Preis des Gebets/ On the Price (Prize) of Prayer

by Kurt Appel

According to the essay, the question of the prayer is the most difficult theological question of our time. It argues that the loss of a symbolic order with God at its center has led to the traumatic occidental experience of an empty prayer. The location that once belonged to a divine addressee, is now occupied by a void that devours all sense. Schelling's attempt to reconstitute a God to whom one can pray, fails as he tries to directly represent the absolute in a positive manner. The essay argues that when the praying subject cannot directly reach its recipient, it needs to take the detour of relocating itself which implies the loss of the self as the center of power. Through an examination of Leibniz' monad, self-affection in Kant and Hegel's early fragment on love, the subject is shown to reside in its radical openness and to constitute a fracture against a world of objects whose absolute determinedness closes off any symbolic order that lives through references and displacements. The essay shows that the prayer questions traditional symbolic orders and is able to reconfigure them and open them up. E.g. the story of the multiplication of loaves shows that God relocates his temple into the body of Christ. In order for a new world of creativity and sensibility to be possible all images and causal-mechanical timeframes that have constituted the old world need to lose their validity. Finally, the prayer - taking place in spirit through the son addressed to the father - points at a twofold translation and relocation of the praying subject until the prayer can reach its addressee and thus the praying subject constitutes itself as a translated subject in front of God.

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Question of God

Miracles of Jesus

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Mortality

Translation

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Psalm 36