

Christ vs Christlike---a follow-up

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 03 Dec 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5260>

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David Stockhoff — 03 Dec 2008, 17:11

I present this recycled post as a follow-up to the thread about comparing Severian to Christ:

Pelagic, as a simple adjective, means oceanic, deep-sea. But there is a Christian heresy named after Pelagius, a strong rival to Augustine of Hippo (who nailed down a great deal of Christian doctrine, including some of the most intractable). The position of Pelagius was that the doctrine of Grace, as taught by Augustine, was in opposition to the doctrine of Free Will, and ultimately was productive of moral laxity. Pelagius was condemned several times (usually by a narrow margin), but in practice, Western Christianity has wavered between his side and Augustine's ever since.

The basic points were a rejection of Original Sin (Adam was merely a bad example); thus there is no need for salvation through Christ as it can be achieved by one's own efforts (Christ was merely a good example). Man, not God, is responsible for man's depravity (and Pelagius found plenty of depravity in Rome), and it is entirely possible for a man, even before Christ, to be sinless--we can choose our path. Infant baptism, one of Augustine's most controversial stands (unbaptized babies were damned, which, to some of us, seems like an extraordinarily perverse superstition) was rejected. You can check all this out at length in the online Catholic Encyclopedia.

---Alice Turner, from the archives.

Perhaps this was already mentioned in the recent discussion. But I think it's important to suggest that once you accept the theoretical possibility that Christ was not special (regardless of his also being a slice of the Increate, since perhaps anyone can be that), you open up a realm of fictive possibility.

Suddenly the chance to tell stories of alternative Christs becomes almost an imperative. How could one resist? And Christ becomes a more real person. No longer is a believer (or reader) forced to chose between the mythical and the historical figure, otherwise rigidly set against one another.

And the distinction becomes less critical for TBotNS, as is perhaps whether Christ and Severian can coexist.

All of myth now can be seen as tales of bad men trying to be good.

David