启蒙话语与中国基督教护教学

Enlightenment Discourse and Chinese Christian Apologetics

孙尚扬 北京大学

Sun Shangyang Peking University

[英文提要]

19th century Christianity was attacked and resisted by traditional Chinese culture. By the 20th century, Christianity's challenge in China came from modern science. In the first half of the century, the import of enlightenment discourse impacted both Christianity and traditional Chinese culture. Christianity had to develop an apologetics in response to the new knowledge system based on science and the new mentality shaped by scientism.

Leading secular thinkers believed that the conflict between science and religion was inevitable and irreconcilable. In response, some Chinese Christian theologians argued that the conflict was not an intrinsic conflict between the true spirit of science and Christianity, but a contingent conflict between scientists and the institutionalized church as well as some narrow-minded Christian individuals at a given point in history. Their apologetics tended to differentiate between the sphere and functional field of science and religion. Based on this differentiation, they tried to establish a theory for the co-existence of science and religion, working hard in search for common grounds upon which to promote mutual assistance between them.

From the liberal arm of the church, Chinese theologians responded

to the challenge of science through the "rationalization" of Christianity; they did not hesitate to discard certain non – rational elements in biblical faith in order to accommodate modern thinking. Others responded through the "modernization" of Christianity; they attempted to introduce the modern form of knowledge into Christian theology and to establish closer ties between theology and the social and human sciences. However, in attempting to address the spirit of their time, Christian theologians had failed to demonstrate the transcendence of Christianity in their development of a Chinese apologetics.

一部中国佛教发展史,或者一部中国佛教哲学发达史,乃至一部中国哲学史,如果不涉及《弘明集》与《广弘明集》这两部佛教的护教文献,很可能会显得残缺不全。那些高僧大德、佞佛士子与不信者乃至反佛者之间就各种问题所展开的论战,不仅推助了佛教的流布,也深化了佛教对各种宗教问题的哲理运思,而且使佛学与中国传统哲学之间的互动产生了丰富的成果。

常常怀着欣羡乃至嫉妒之情、以中国佛教之发展为中国基督教之参照坐标的基督教著作家们,是否在20世纪留下了类似于《弘明集》与《广弘明集》护教文献呢?很多对基督教在中国之命运抱哀其不幸之感的学者,包括一些教会领袖或著名的基督徒著作家,都不无遗憾地指出,在整个中国基督宗教的历史上,除了史学家陈垣曾高度赞扬过的明末徐光启等著名教徒的护教文字以外,很少出现过类似的影响深远的护教文献。一部《近代华人神学文献》(本文将会经常征引该文献)中,① 那些曾对整个近现代中国思想界(不只限于教会)产生深远影响的文字或许并非出自基督徒

① 林荣洪编,《近代华人神学文献》,香港中国神学研究院,1986年。