

# THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

by

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## Lecture 1: Introduction

When Professor McNeill began his lectures last semester, I was in his first class for a few minutes and spoke about the relationship between Church history and the history of Christian thought. I said there that they cannot be separated from each other, and that in the history of Christian thought the history of the Church must always be presupposed; and vice versa, that in the history of the Church the history of Christian thought is implied. This separation, therefore, into two semesters following each other is artificial. Fortunately this is the last time that we have this procedure and that I give these lectures, and from now on there will be a more integrated form of teaching Church history, in one year and a half. You are now still anticipating this period of glory in the Church History Department, and we must still make the best of it! But don't forget that Christian thought is the expression of something which is more universal and more real than thought, namely the Christian life itself. Because of this, Christian thought has very often been neglected and even despised. But this is equally wrong, and I want therefore to make a few remarks in the beginning about the necessary function of thought in every human endeavor, and especially in the religious life.

All human experience implies the element of thought, simply because man's intellectual or spiritual life is embodied in his language, and language is thought expressed in spoken and heard words. Therefore there is no human existence without thought, and the kind of emotionalism so rampant in religion is not

something more than thinking, but is less than it, and brings religion down to the level of a pre-human experience of reality.

In the tension between the philosopher Hegel and the theologian Schleiermacher, you know that Schleiermacher emphasized the function of "feeling," or emotion, in religion; and Hegel, who emphasized the function of thought, said: "Even dogs have feeling, but man has thought." Now this was based on an unintentional misunderstanding of what Schleiermacher meant with "feeling," a misunderstanding which we find very often even today. But it expresses some truth. Man cannot be man without thought. He must think even if he is the most primitive devotional Christian, with no theological education or understanding. Even in religion we give names to special objects. We distinguish acts of the Divine. We relate symbols to each other. We explain their meaning. There is language in every religion, and the existence of language means that there are universals, and of universals that there are concepts, and of concepts that one must think, even on the most primitive level. It is interesting that this fight between Hegel and Schleiermacher was anticipated by a man like Clement of Alexandria, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, who said that the religion of animals, if they had a religion, would be mute, without words. And he must have derived from this that every man who lives religiously, must participate in religious thought.

Now I repeat : REALITY PRECEDES THOUGHT. But I repeat also : THOUGHT SHAPES REALITY. These two are interdependent. You cannot abstract the one from the other. Therefore when you shall fall into despair – which you certainly will, when we come to the sections on trinity and Christology, where much thinking is needed because the Church Fathers for hundreds of years did much thinking about these problems – don't forget that the decisions which were made on the basis of this thinking are decisions which have influenced the life of the most primitive Christian, ever since, not because they understood the discussions going on between the philosophical theologians, who were in classical Greek philosophy, but in the way the devotional life itself developed. The decisions of the Church councils are omnipresent, and they are omnipresent even in the least theological congregations today in this country. So don't underestimate them, as I certainly wouldn't ask you to overestimate them.

Beyond this thinking, which is always present, there is the development of methodological thought, thought which goes on according to logical rules and methods of dealing with experiences. This methodological thought, if expressed in

speaking or writing and communicated to other people, produces theological doctrines. This is, of course, more than the thought element which is implied in every life. This is a development beyond the more primitive use of thought. And ideally such development leads to a theological system, not because systems are especially nice to dwell in – everybody who dwells within a system feels after a certain time that it is a prison, and even if you produce a systematic theology, as I did, you always try to go beyond it and not to be imprisoned by it. Nevertheless the system is necessary because the system is the form of consistency. And I repeat here what I repeated in my answer to my critics in the book on my theology \*, that those of my Union Theological Seminary students who have the greatest misgivings about the production were most impatient with me when they discovered that two of my statements disagreed with each other; that means, they were unhappy in finding one point in which the hidden system had a gap. But when this system was developed, then they felt it was a mean attempt on my side to imprison them! This is a very interesting double reaction, but understandable because if the prison is taken as a final answer, then it is of course even worse than a prison. If it is understood as an attempt to bring theological concepts into consistent expression, where none contradicts the other, then you cannot escape a system. And even if you think in fragments--as some philosophers and theologians (and some great ones) have done--then every fragment contains implicitly a system. When you read Nietzsche's fragments – I think he is the greatest fragmentist in philosophy – then you can find in each of his fragments a whole system of life and world implied. So you cannot escape a system except if you want to make verbal statements which are nonsense and completely contradict each other. And that is, of course, sometimes done.

But, of course, a system has a danger of becoming a prison, and also the danger, when it is built, of moving within itself, of separating itself from reality, of becoming something which is, so to speak, above the reality which it is supposed to describe. Therefore I am not so much interested in the systems as such – with a few exceptions, for instance with relationship to Origen – but I am interested in the power of these systems to express the reality of the Church and its life.

The Church doctrines have been called dogmas, and in former less noble periods of Christian instruction – for instance when I myself was young – the whole thing was called "the history of dogma." This cannot be done any more. One calls it "history of Christian thought." But this is only a change in name, because nobody would dare to present a history of Christian thought in the sense of what every

theologian in the Christian Church had thought. That would be an ocean of contradictory thoughts. But this series of lectures has a quite different intent: to show you those thoughts which have become accepted expressions of the life of the Church. And this is what the word "dogma" originally meant.

The concept of dogma is one of the things which lie between the Church and the secular world. Most secular people are afraid of the dogmas of the Church, and not only secular people but also members of the churches themselves. "Dogma" is a red cloth waved before the bull in a bull fight: it produces anger, aggressiveness, or in some cases flight, and I think the latter is mostly the case with the "seculars" with respect to the Church.

Why is this so? Because the word has a very interesting history, which you must know. The first step in this history is the use of "dogma" derived from the Greek *dokein*, "having an opinion", in the Greek schools of philosophy preceding Christianity. Dogmata are the differentiating doctrines of the different late Greek schools of philosophy, the Academics (from Plato), the Peripatetics (from Aristotle), the Stoics, the Sceptics, the Pythagoreans. Each of these schools had special fundamental doctrines in which they were distinguished from each other, and if somebody wanted to become a member of one of these schools, he had to accept at least the basic presuppositions which distinguish this school from another school. Of course he could discuss these foundations, he could find out that another school was better for him than this school. But even the philosophical schools were not without dogmata.

In the same way the Christian doctrines were understood as doctrines distinguishing the Christian school from the philosophical school, and this was natural and nobody was angry by this. It was no red pieced cloth for anybody at that time. This is seen in the characteristics of the Christian dogma in the early period. First of all it is an expression of the Christian conformity, of that which all Christians who, with the risk of their lives and with a tremendous transformation of their lives, entered, the Christian congregations, accepted when they did so. So a dogma is never an individual statement or a theoretical statement: it is an expression of a reality, the reality of the Church.

Secondly, all dogmas are formulated negatively, namely as a reaction against misinterpretations from inside the Church. This is even true of the Apostolic Creed. We will come to the first article, "I believe in God the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." This is not simply a statement which says something in itself, but it is

the rejection of dualism, of Manichaeism, after a life and death struggle of a hundred years. And so also with all the other dogmas. The later they are, the more they show clearly this negative character. They are PROTECTIVE DOCTRINES, protecting the substance of the Biblical message. This substance was fluid. It had, of course, a core which was fixed, the confession that Jesus was the Christ, but beyond this everything was in motion. But now doctrines came up which seemed to undercut this fundamental statement, and the protective doctrines were added to it. In this way the dogma arose. Luther still knew this, that dogmas are not results of a theoretical interest, but of the need for protection of the Christian substance.

Now these statements again could be misinterpreted, and if this was done, then a sharper theoretical formulation was necessary. In order to do this, it was necessary to use philosophical terms. In this way the many philosophical concepts came into the Christian dogma, not because people were interested them – again Luther is very frank about it: he openly declared he disliked terms like "Trinity," "homoousios," or similar words, but he said they must be used, unfortunately, because we have no better terms. This is the theoretical formulation which comes if other theoretical people formulate the doctrine in such a way that the substance seems to be endangered by a leading group in the Church.

But this was not the last step. The next step was that this dogma was accepted as canonic law, by the Church. Canonic law is law according to the canon, which is the rule of thought or rule of behavior. Canonic law is the ecclesiastical law to which everybody must subject himself who belongs to the Church. In this way the dogma receives a legal sanction, and in the Roman church the dogma is a part of the canonic law, and its authority comes from the legal realm, not from the dogmatic realm, according to the general development of the Roman church, which is especially Roman, that means, always legalistic development. .

Now even this perhaps would not have created the tremendous reaction against the dogma in the last 400 years if another step had not been taken: the ecclesiastical law was accepted as state law by the medieval society. This meant that he who breaks the canonic law of doctrines is not only a heretic against the Church: he disagrees with fundamentals which were accepted by the Church as a whole; but he is also a criminal against the state. And this last point was one which produced the radical reaction in modern times against the dogma, and the impossibility of using the concept of dogma even for the title of these lectures.

Don't forget all these steps:

FIRST, the natural thought, which is in every religion.

SECOND, the methodological development of doctrines.

THIRD, the acceptance of some doctrines as protective doctrines against distortions.

FOURTH, the legalization of these doctrines as parts of the canonic law.

FIFTH, the acceptance of these doctrines as the foundation not only of the Church but also of the state, because the state has no other content than the content the Church gives it., so that he who is supposed to undermine this content not only undermines the Church but also the state. He is not only a heretic who must be excommunicated; he is also a criminal who must be delivered into the hands of the civil authorities to punish him as a criminal. Now this was the state of the dogma, against which the Enlightenment was fighting – not so much the Reformation, which was still in the same line, but certainly the Enlightenment; and ever since, all liberal thinking has been characterized by trying to avoid dogma, and this also was supported by the development of science and the necessity to leave science and philosophy complete freedom in order to give them the possibility of their creative growth.

In his famous *History of Dogma*, Harnack asked the question whether, with the dissolution of the dogma in the early period of the Enlightenment, the dogma has not come to an end. He agrees that there is still dogma in orthodox Protestantism, but he believes that the Enlightened dissolution of the Protestant dogma is the last step of the history of the dogma: there is no dogma any more in Protestantism, since the Enlightenment. This means a very narrow concept of dogma, and Harnack agrees that he uses a very narrow concept, namely the Christological-Trinitarian doctrine of the early Church. Against this, Seeberg emphasized that the dogmatic development has not finished with the coming of the Enlightenment, but that it is still going on.

Now this is a very important systematic question: Are there dogmata in present-day Protestantism, or are there not? Those of you who go into the ministry have to undergo a kind of church examination, which is not an examination for knowledge but for faith. The churches want to know whether you agree with their fundamental dogmatic tenets. And they often do it in a very narrow way, without much understanding of the development of theology in the last 400 years, since the

period of old Orthodoxy On the other hand if you have an inner revolt – :and I know that most Union Seminary students have such an inner revolt against this faith-examination – don't forget that you go into a definite group, which is distinguished from other groups.. It is first of all a Christian and not a pagan group; it is a Protestant and not a Catholic group; and within Protestantism it may be an Episcopalian, or a Baptist--or between these extremes! Now this means there is a justified interest in the Church that those who represent it at least show some acceptance of their foundations. Every baseball group demands of you that you accept the rules and the moral standards of a baseball team, and why should the Church leave it completely to the arbitrary feelings of the individual? That cannot be done. Usually the problem today is of somebody who is too heretic, too radical, too much on the side of Bultmann in the demythologization of the New Testament, or Tillich in using the term "IT Being" for God – or other bad people! This is the problem today. And on this basis many churches are suspicious.

But now think for a moment that this was not the problem, but that the young ministers all suddenly became enthusiasts for the veneration and perhaps even adoration of the Holy Virgin, and wanted to introduce this into the Baptist and Methodist churches! Now here you see immediately that there is a real and serious problem in it. And of course, if we come to the political dogmas – which are more dogmatic than any church whatsoever is – then you find that the problem becomes even more acute for the present situation. So it is one of the tasks of systematic theology to help the churches to solve this problem in a way which is not narrow-minded and not dependent on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century theologians which are identified with the pure word of God – although they are dependent on their time as we are dependent on our time – but on the other hand there is some fundamental point which is accepted if somebody accepts the Church. Now I will give you here – because this is so important--something which anticipates my systematic theology, which you can read in the first volume already published: I believe that it is not the matter of accepting a series of dogmas, which the Church must demand of their ministers; how can they honestly say that they don't doubt about any of these dogmas? They would be not very good Christians if they did not, because our intellectual life is as ambiguous as our moral life. And who would call himself morally perfect, and how then can someone call himself intellectually perfect? The element of doubt is an element in faith itself. And what the church should do is to accept somebody who says to them that this faith for which this church stands is a matter of my ultimate concern, which I want to serve with all my strength. But if you are asked to say what you believe about this or that doctrine,

then you are driven into a kind of dishonesty even if in this moment you can say "I believe," e. g., concerning the Virgin Birth – or whatever that may mean. If you say you will agree, then you are dishonest. . . ; you may subject yourselves to this whole set of doctrines as long as you are ministers, and you can say you cannot promise because you cannot cease to think, and if you think you must doubt. And that is the problem. I think the only solution on Protestant soil is to say that this set of doctrines represents your own ultimate concern, and that you desire to serve in this group which has made this the basis of its ultimate concern, but that you can never promise not to doubt anyone of these special doctrines.

Now this was a deviation from history into not only systematic but even practical theology. . . This shows you that what we do in terms of historical description is not so far away from the practical problems of your own life as ministers. This means that without dogmatic expression, without doctrinal formulations, no human life can live at all, neither a non-ecclesiastical group nor an ecclesiastical one. The problem is not to abolish the dogma but to interpret the dogma in such a way that it is not the horror and the suppressive power which necessarily produces dishonesty, or flight from it, but that it is a wonderful profound expression of the actual life of the Church. And in this sense I will direct the entire lectures, namely to show how in even the abstract doctrinal formulations, with difficult Greek concepts, etc., it is not a matter of discussing concepts as such, but it is a matter of discussing those things of which the Church believed that they are their most adequate expression for life, devotion, and life and death struggle: outside, against the pagan and Jewish worlds; and inside, against all the disintegrating tendencies which belong to every group.

So my conclusion would be: estimate the dogma very highly. There is a great thing about the dogma. But don't dissolve it into a set of special doctrines to which you must subscribe as it stands. This is against the spirit of the dogma, and is against the spirit of Christianity.



## Lecture 2: The Readiness of the Ancient World to Receive Christianity

Yesterday we discussed the meaning and development of the doctrinal expression of Christianity, and described especially the concept of dogma. I tried to remove some of the fears and resentments every modern man has when he hears the word "dogma." I hope I succeeded. Now I come to the "preparation" of Christianity in the ancient world.

According to Paul, there is not always the possibility that that can happen which, for instance, happened in the appearance of Jesus as the Christ. This happened in one special moment of history, and in this special moment everything was ready for it. I will talk now about this "readiness." Paul speaks of *kairos* to describe the feeling that the time was ripe, mature, prepared. It is a Greek word which, again, witnesses to the richness of the Greek language and the poverty of modern languages in comparison with it. We have only the one word "time." The Greeks had two words: *chronos* (still used in "chronology," "chronometer," etc.): it is clock time, time which is measured. Then there is the word *kairos*, which is not the quantitative time of the watch, but is the qualitative time of the occasion: the "right" time. "It is not yet *kairos*," the hour; the hour has not yet come. (Cf. in the Gospel stories. . .) There are things in which the right time, the *kairos*, has not yet come. *Kairos* is the time which indicates that something has happened which makes an action possible or impossible. We all have in our lives moments in which we feel that now is the right time for something: now I am mature enough for this, now everything around me is prepared for this, now I can make the decision, etc: this is *kairos*. In this sense Paul and the early Church spoke of the "right time," for the coming of the Christ. The early Church, and Paul to a certain extent, tried to show why this time in which the Christ appeared was the right time, why it is the providential constellation of factors which makes His appearance possible.

What we therefore must do now is to show the preparation of Christian theology in the world situation into which Jesus came. From this point of view - which is only one point of view: the theological - the understanding of the possibilities of a Christian theology is provided. It is not, as some theologians want to believe - contrary to Paul - that the revelation from Christ fell like a stone from heaven: here it is, and now you must take it or leave it - But there is a universal revelatory power

going through all history and preparing that which is considered by Christianity to be the ultimate revelation.

The genuine situation into which the New Testament event came was the universalism of the Roman Empire. This meant something negative and something positive, (as do all these things I will now mention) at the same time. Negatively it meant the breakdown of national religions and cultures. Positively it meant that the idea of mankind as a whole could be conceived at that time. The Roman Empire produced a definite consciousness of world history, in contrast to accidental national histories. World history is now not only, in the sense of the prophets, a purpose which will be actualized in history, but now it has become an empirical reality. This is the positive meaning of Rome. Rome represents the universal monarchy in which the whole known world is united. This idea has been taken over by the Roman church, but applied to the Pope, and is still actual within the Roman church, and still means that Rome claims the monarchic power over all the world - following the Roman Empire in this. It is perhaps an important remark generally that we should never forget that the Roman church is Roman, that the development of this church is not only influenced by Christianity but also by the Empire which was Rome, by the greatness that was Rome, by the idea of law that was Rome. All this is embodied also in the Roman church, after it took over the heritage of the Roman Empire. We should never forget this situation; and we should ask ourselves; if we are tempted to evaluate the Roman church more highly than we should: how much Roman elements are there in it, and how much are they valid for us in our culture? - as we should do the same with Greek philosophical concepts which created the Christian dogma, and we should also ask: to what degree are they valid? It is not necessary to reject something because it is Roman or Greek, but it is not necessary, either, even if sanctioned by a dogmatic decision, to accept something because the church has accepted it, from Rome or Greece.

Within this realm of one world, a world history and monarchy created by Rome, we have Greek thought. This is the Hellenistic period of Greek thought. We distinguish ... the classical Greek period, which goes up to the death of Aristotle, from the Hellenistic period which starts after him, - which the Stoics, Epicureans, Neo-Pythagoreans, Sceptics, and Neo-Platonists begin. This Hellenistic period is the immediate source of much Christian thought. It is not so much classical Greek thinking. It became this later in the 4th century. But it is more Hellenistic thinking, which influenced early Christianity. Here again I want to distinguish the negative and the positive elements in Greek thought in the period of the kairos, the

period of the ancient world coming to an end. The negative side is what we would call Skepticism. Skepticism, not only in the Skeptic school but also in the other schools of Greek philosophy, is the end of the tremendous and admirable attempt of Greek philosophy to build a world of meaning on the basis of an interpretation of reality in objective or rational terms. Greek philosophy had undercut the ancient mythological and ritual traditions. In the period of the Sophists and Socrates, it became obvious that these traditions were not valid any more. Sophism is the revolution of the subjective mind against the old traditions. But now life must go on. The meaning of life in all realms - politics, law, art, social relations, knowledge, religion - has not been probed, This the Greek philosophers tried to do. They were not people who were sitting behind their desks writing philosophical books. If they were nothing but philosophers of philosophy, we would have forgotten their names long ago. But they were people who took upon themselves the task of creating a spiritual world by objectively observing reality as it was given to them, interpreting it in terms of analytic and synthetic reason.

This attempt broke down at the end of the ancient world. This breaking down of the great- attempt of the Greek philosophers to create a world of meaning through philosophy, produced what I call" the skeptical end of the ancient development. Skepsis means, originally,.observing things. But it has received the negative sense of looking at every dogma, thereby undercutting it, even the dogmata of the Greek schools of philosophy. Therefore the Skeptics are those who doubt the statements of all schools of philosophy. And what is perhaps even more important, these schools of philosophy, e. g. , the Platonic Academy, took a lot of these Skeptical elements into itself. Skepticism did not go beyond probabilism, and the other schools became pragmatic. So a skeptical mood entered all schools and permeated the whole life of the later ancient world. This Skepticism, especially in the school called the School of the Skeptics, was a very serious matter of life. Again it was not a matter of sitting behind one's desk and finding out that everything can be doubt - which is comparatively easy. But it was an inner breakdown of all convictions, and the consequence was - very characteristic of the Greek mind - that if they were not able to give theoretical judgments any more, they believed that they were not able to act practically, either. Therefore they introduced the doctrine of epoch', - restraining, keeping down, not giving judgment nor acting, deciding neither theoretically nor practically. This doctrine of epoch' meant the resignation of judgment in every respect. Therefore these people went into the desert, with a suit or gown very similar to the later Christian monks who followed them in this respect, because they also were in despair about the possibility of living in this world. Some of the

skeptics of the ancient Church were very serious people and drew the consequences which our snobbistic skeptics do not usually do, who have a very good time while at the same doubting everything! That was not what the Greek Skeptics did; so they retired from life in order to become consistent.

This skeptical element was an important preparation for Christianity, not only in the later Christian theology but also already in the philosophical schools. The Greek schools, the Epicureans, Stoics, Academics, Peripatetics, NeoPythagorean, were not only schools in the sense in which we today speak of philosophical schools, namely that there is a great teacher, e. g , at Columbia University, or Boston, etc; or the "school" of Dewey or Whitehead, etc; and the "schools" at Chicago, etc A Greek philosophical school was a cult community, a community of a half-ritual, half-philosophical character. These people wanted to live according to the doctrines of their masters. In this period, in which this skeptical mood permeated the ancient world, they wanted certainty above all: we must have it in order to live, they demanded. The answer was: our great teachers, Plato and Aristotle, Zeno the Stoic, and Epicurus, and, later, Plotinus, were not simply thinkers, professors, but they were inspired men. And long before, Christianity, the doctrine of inspiration developed in these Greek schools, namely the inspiration of the founders of these schools. Later, when these schools discussed with the Christians, they did not say Moses was inspired, but they said, e. g., Heraclitus was inspired. This doctrine of inspiration gave Christianity also a chance to enter into the world. . . ; pure reason alone is not able to build up a reality in which one can live.

The character of the founders of these philosophical schools was also very similar to what the Christians said about the founder of their Church. A man like Epicurus - this is very interesting - who later was so much attacked by the Christians, that we have only fragments about him, was called soter by his pupils, the Greek word used in the New Testament which we translate by "savior.." Epicurus the philosopher was called a savior. What does this mean? We regard him as a man who had a good life all the time in his beautiful gardens, and had a very bad anti-Christian hedonistic philosophy - and other name-calling words. The ancient world thought quite differently about Epicurus. They called him soter because he did something for them which was the greatest thing he could do for them, a thing which also is praised by Paul when he speaks of the transformation of the pagans into Christians, namely, liberation from anxiety. Epicurus, with his system of atoms - we call it a materialistic system - liberated them from the fear of demons which permeated the whole life of the ancient world and especially of the later ancient world. Men like

Epicurus were called soters, saviors, because they liberated people from fear by their philosophy. All this shows what a serious thing philosophy was at that time. . .

Other consequences also of great seriousness, was what the Stoics called apatheia, namely, without feelings towards the vital drives of life, not feeling desires, joys, pains, but being beyond all this in the state of wisdom. They knew that only a few people were able to reach this state, but those who as Skeptics went into the desert, showed that they were able to do so to a certain extent. Behind all this, of course, stands the early criticism of the mythological gods and the traditional rites for these gods. The criticism of mythology was made in Greece almost at the, same time in which the Second Isaiah did it in Judea. It was a very similar kind of criticism, and has undercut the belief in the gods of polytheism.

This was the negative side in Greek thought of that time. But there were also positive elements in the same tradition. First, the PLATONIC TRADITION: Here Christian theology had as its preparation the idea of transcendence,..that there is something that trespasses empirical reality. Plato speaks of "essential" reality, the reality of ousia's, or "ideas", I. e., the true essences of things. At the same time we find in Plato, and even stronger in Neo-Platonism and in the Platonic school leading to Neo-Platonism, the development of a devaluation of existence. It was called matter, and as a material world it has no ultimate value compared with the essential world. Further, in Plato the inner aim in human existence is described - in the Philebus somewhere, but also practically everywhere in Plato - as becoming similar to God as much as possible. God is the Spiritual sphere. Participation in the Spiritual divine sphere as much as possible is the inner telos of human existence. This is the Platonic tradition and has been used, especially by the great Cappodocian fathers of the Church, to describe the ultimate aim of human existence.

A third doctrine is a doctrine of the soul falling down from an eternal participation in the essential or Spiritual world, being on earth in a body, trying to get rid of the bondage to the body, coming to an elevation above the material world, in steps and degrees. This again was an element which was used not only by all Christian mystics, but also by the official Church Fathers to a large extent.

The fourth point in which the Platonic tradition was important was the idea of PROVIDENCE. This again seems to you to be a Christian idea, but it was formulated already in the later period of Plato's writings, and was a tremendous attempt of the ancient world to overcome the anxiety of fate and death. And in the

later ancient world the anxiety of 'Tuch' and Heimarmen' (the goddesses) of accident and necessity - of fate, as we would call it today - was the most important thing. And in the greatest hymn of triumph in the New Testament, in Romans 8, we hear "that it is the function of the Christ to overcome the demonic forces of fate. . . . That Plato anticipated this situation is one of his greatest contributions; that providence, coming from the highest God, gives us the courage to escape the vicissitudes of fate, is something we should never forget when we speak of the "bad pagans." They produced this concept by their own philosophizing, by their own philosophizing in terms of an ultimate concern.

Fifthly, in Aristotle another element is added to the Platonic tradition: the Divine is a form without matter, perfect in itself and - what is the profoundest idea in Aristotle - this highest form, called God, is moving the world, not causally, not by pushing it from outside, but by driving everything finite towards Him in terms of love. Aristotle developed, in spite of his seeming merely scientific attitude towards reality, one of the greatest systems of love, where he says that God, the highest form - or pure actuality, as he calls it--moves everything by being loved by everything. Everything has a desire to unite itself with the highest form, to get rid of the lower forms in which it lives, where it is in the bondage of matter. In this way the Aristotelian God, as the highest form, came into Christian theology and played a tremendous role there.

Now I come to another tradition: THE STOIC TRADITION, which is the second one of great importance for the understanding of Christian theology. The Stoics were, more than Plato and Aristotle together, important for the life of the later ancient world. The life of the educated ancient man in the world of rulers, coming from Alexander the Great in the Macedonian Empire, or coming from Rome and taking away the independence of all nations - the life of the educated man in these periods was shaped mostly by Stoic tradition. Therefore it is even more important than the Platonic tradition, for the life of the people. I have dealt with this from the point of view of life, of the courage to take fate and death upon oneself, in my book *The Courage to Be*. There I show that Christianity and the Stoics are the great competitors in all the Western world. But now I show in this lecture something else: Christianity has taken from this great and always present competitor - present even today a lot of fundamental ideas. The first is the doctrine which will bring you into despair when we come to the history of Trinitarian and Christological thought, namely the doctrine of the Logos. but we must deal with it, otherwise no part of the Christian dogmatic development can be understood.

Logos means word, and means also the meaning in a word, the reasonable structure which is indicated by a word. Therefore logos also can mean the universal logos or law of reality. This is the way in which the first one who used this word philosophically - Heraclitus - used it. The logos is the law which determines the movements of all reality.

Now this logos was used by the Stoic as the Divine power which is present in everything that is, and which has three sides to it, all of which have become extremely important in the later development. The first is the law of nature. The logos is the principle according to which all natural things move. It is the Divine seed, the Divine creative power in everything, which makes it what it is. And it is the creative power of the movement of everything.

Secondly, logos means the moral and legal law, what we could call today, with Immanuel Kant, "practical reason," the law which is innate in every human being when he accepts himself as a personality, with the dignity and greatness of a person. It is the moral or legal law. This is equally important and even precedes the other. When you see in classical books the word "natural law," we should not think usually of physical laws, but of moral and legal laws. For instance, when we speak of the "rights of man," as embodied in the American Constitution, that would be called by the Stoics and all their followers in all of Western philosophy, natural law. The rights of man are the natural law, which is identical with man's rational nature. But it is also identical with man's ability to recognize reality. It is not only practical reason; it is also theoretical reason, it is man's ability of reasoning, because he has the logos in himself and can discover the logos in nature and history, From this follows, in Stoicism, the man who is determined by the natural law, by the logos; he is the *logikos*, corresponding to, determined by, the logos: the wise man, But the Stoics were not optimists. They did not believe everybody was a wise man. Perhaps only a dozen, and no more, reached this ideal. All the others were either fools, or between the wise and foolish .. the majority of human beings, those who are in the process of improvement, those who are --as we would say in America - under the power of education. All this was a fundamental pessimism about most human beings. The Stoics were originally Greeks, but they also became Romans, and some of the Roman emperors were some of the most famous Stoics. When Stoicism came in the hands of the Roman emperors - e. g., Marcus Aurelius - they applied it to the political situation, for which they were responsible. The natural law, in the sense of practical reason, had the consequence that every man participates in reason by the very fact that he is man. And out of this they derived laws which were far superior to

many things which we find in the Christian Middle Ages. They gave universal citizenship to every human being, because he potentially participates in reason. Of course, the Stoics - and certainly not the Stoic emperors, who knew people - were optimistic about man and believed he was actually reasonable. But what they meant was that man potentially participates in reason and that through education they might become actually reasonable, at least some of them. That was their presupposition, from which presupposition they did the great and tremendous thing: they gave Roman citizenship to all citizens of the conquered nations. Everybody could become a Roman citizen or, finally, was declared to be such by birth. This citizenship was a tremendous equalizing step.

Further, the women, slaves and children, who in the old Roman law were the least regarded and developed human beings, became equalized by the laws of the Roman emperors.

This was done, moreover, not by Christianity, but by the Stoics, who derived the idea from the belief in the universal logos in which everyone participates. (Of course, Christianity has another foundation for the same idea: human beings are the children of God who is their Father.)

Thus the Stoics conceived of the idea of a world state embracing the whole world, based on the common rationality of everybody.

Now this certainly was something in which Christianity could enter and develop. The difference was that the Stoics did not know the concept of sin. They knew the concept of foolishness, but not of sin. . Therefore, STOIC SALVATION is salvation through reaching wisdom. CHRISTIAN SALVATION was a salvation through reaching Divine grace. And these two things still fight with each other in our days.

There was another reality which was taken over by the Christian Church, and for which pure philosophers coming from Europe have often a great contempt, while I think Americans should not have contempt at all, because in this as in so many respects, they are basically ancient Romans - namely, what is called eclecticism, from a Greek word meaning: choosing some possibilities out of many. The eclectics were philosophers but they were not originally creative philosophers, as the Greeks were, who created their system on which basis the schools worked. The Roman thinkers, politicians, and statesmen were often the same persons, as in England: in this I think England is superior to America; I hope we will soon have in this country philosophers who are statesmen, as we had it in England, and in ancient Rome. --



These people were eclectics; they did not create new systems. What they did, e.g., Cicero, was to choose the most important concepts from the classical Greek systems which were pragmatically useful for a Roman citizen. That which gave the best way of living pragmatically as a Roman citizen, as a citizen of the world state, was taken from the different philosophies. For this reason the following ideas, which you can recognize very much in popular political speeches in this country today, are those chosen from a pragmatic point of view: the idea of PROVIDENCE, which gives some kind of feeling of safety to the life of the people; the idea of GOD as an innate idea in everybody, which induces fear of God, and discipline; the idea of MORAL FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY, which makes it possible to educate and to uphold responsibility for moral failures; and finally the idea of IMMORTALITY, which threatens with another world those who escape punishment in this world.

These ideas, which we also find in the 18th century Enlightenment and which, from this source, are still very much prevalent in this country, were the ideas chosen by the Roman eclectics for the making of a good Roman citizen. They all were in some way a preparation for the Christian mission.

Now this was the philosophical world into which Christianity came when the kairos had arrived.

### Lecture 3: Intertestamental Period

We spoke yesterday about the preparation of Christianity in Hellenistic philosophy. Today we come first to the Hellenistic period of the Jewish religion. Of course, the Old Testament is the soil on which Christianity grew, but there is a long period between the end of the Old Testament and the appearance of the Christ. This period developed in Judaism ideas and attitudes which deeply influenced the Apostolic Age, i. e, Jesus, the apostles, and the writers of the New Testament, etc.

The first is the development of the idea of God in this period between the Testaments, (the inter-testamental period, as it is usually called.) It is a development towards a radical transcendence: God becomes more and more transcendent, and for this very reason He becomes more and more universal. But a God who is absolutely transcendent and absolutely universal has lost many of the concrete traits which the God of a nation has. Therefore names are introduced which try to preserve some of the concreteness of the divinity, names like "the heaven": therefore we often find in the New Testament not "the kingdom of God" but "the kingdom of heaven"; or "the height," coming down from the height.. . etc.; or "the glory." All these words indicate the establishment of a more concrete God. At the same time, the abstraction goes on under two influences: 1) The prohibition against using the name of God; 2) In the fight against anthropomorphisms of the past seeing God in the morph , the image, of man (anthropos) the passions of the God of the Old Testament disappear. The abstract oneness is emphasized. This made it possible for the Greek philosophers (who had introduced the same radical abstraction with respect to God), and the Jewish universalists ,with respect to God, to unite. It was especially Philo of Alexandria who carried through this union, in the idea of God.

But if God has become abstract, then it is not sufficient to hypostasize some of His qualities, such as heaven, height, glory: more is needed. Mediating beings appear between God and man who become more and more important for practical piety. There are three main concepts of this mediating character. First, the angels: they are deteriorized gods and goddesses from the surrounding paganism. In the period of the prophets, when the fight with polytheism still was going on, they couldn't play any role. But when the danger of polytheism was completely overcome as it was in later Judaism then the angels could reappear without too great danger of a relapse into polytheism. But even so, the New Testament is aware of this danger and again

and again warns against the cult of the angels. These are the first figures which mediate.

The second is the Messiah: the Messiah has become a transcendent being, the king of Paradise. He is also called, in the Danielic literature, which is dependent on Persian religion, the "son of man" who will judge the world. In Daniel it is probably used for Israel, but it became more and more the figure of the "man from above," as Paul describes him in I Corinthians 15. And when Jesus calls himself the "son of man" or when the very earliest tradition called him in this way, this also means "the man from above," the original man, who is with God and comes down when the *kairos* is fulfilled.

Thirdly, these names of God are increased and become almost living figures. The most important figure is the figure of God's wisdom, which already appears in the Old Testament: the wisdom which has created the world, which has appeared in the world, and which returned to heaven since it did not find a place among men an idea very close to the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

Another of these powers between God and man is the *shekinah*, the dwelling of God on earth. Again, another is the *memra*, the speaking of God, the word of God, which became so important later through the Fourth Gospel. Another is the "spirit of God," which in the Old Testament is God in action, but now becomes a partly independent figure between the most high God, and man: the *ruah Yahweh*, or *Adonai*. Most important became the Greek meaning of the term *logos*. .. This unites the Jewish *memra* with the Greek philosophical *logos*. *Logos* in Philo is the *protogēnes huios theou*, the first-born son of God. All these are developments which are pre-Christian, and prepared the Christian thinking of the *logos*, the word, who is the first-born son of God (Philo). These mediating beings between the most high God, and man, partly replace the immediacy of the relationship to God, as in Christianity especially in Roman Catholic Christianity the, ever more transcendent idea of God was made acceptable to the popular mind by the introduction of the saints into the practical piety. But as in Christianity the official doctrine always remained monotheistic, and the saints never were supposed to receive adoration but only veneration, so the same thing (and even more radically) was the case in late Judaism, Judaism which has one fundamental anxiety: the anxiety of relapsing into polytheism, because that was its whole history: to fight polytheism within and outside of itself.

Another world of beings between God and man arose and became powerful: the realm of the DEMONS. There are not only good angels, but also evil ones. These evil angels are not only organs of temptation and punishment under the direction of God, but they are also a realm of power against God. We can see this very well out of the conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees concerning the Divine or demonic power, where he exorcizes the demons. This belief in demons permeated the daily life of that time, and filled the highest speculation of the time. It was a dualistic element, but it never became ontological dualism. Here again Judaism was able to introduce a good many ideas from Persia, among them the demonology of the Persian religion, where the demons have the same standing as the gods, where the evil god has the same ontological standing as the good god. It introduced these ideas and the New Testament is full of them but it never fell back into an ontological dualism. All these demonic powers have power only through the one God; they have no standing of their own in an ultimate sense. This comes out in the mythology of the fallen angels. The evil angels are, as is everything created, good which is the first anti-pagan dogma; but as fallen angels they are now evil angels. . . . and therefore responsible and punishable, and are not simply creations of an anti-divine being.

Another influence on the New Testament here is the elevation of the future into a coming aeon. In the late apostolic period of Jewish history, world history was divided into an *aion houtos* (this aeon in which we are living) and an *aion mellon*, (the coming aeon which they expected.) This aeon is valued very pessimistically, while the coming great aeon is valued ecstatically. This is not only a political idea: this goes beyond the hope of the Maccabean period, in which the Maccabees defended the Jewish people against tyranny. Also it was not a statement of the prophetic message: the prophetic message was much more historical and this-worldly, while these ideas are cosmological: the whole cosmos participates in these two aeons. The characteristic of this aeon is that it is controlled by the demonic forces, and that it has come of age. The world, even nature, is aging and fading away. One of the reasons is that man has subjected himself to the demonic forces and is disobedient against the law. In connection with these ideas, the concept of Adam's fall, producing the universal destiny of death, is developed out of the short story of Genesis, into a system as we find it in Paul; and this fall is confirmed by every individual by his actual sin. This aeon is under a tragic fate, but in spite of the tragic fate of this aeon the individual is responsible for it.

Now here you have many ideas which you have not in the Old Testament but in the New Testament, which developed in the period between the Testaments. The piety of the law becomes more and more important, partly replacing the piety of the cult. Of course there is still the temple, but beside the temple the synagogue, the religious school, developed. The synagogue becomes the form in which the decisive religious life develops. The law is not valuated as negatively as we are accustomed to doing so, but for the Jews it was a gift and a joy. The law is eternal; it was always in God; it is pre-existent, as later in Christian theology Jesus was interpreted as pre-existent. The content of the law is the organization of the whole life, in its smallest functions: every moment of life is under God: this is the profound idea in the legalism of the Pharisees, which is so heavily attacked by Jesus.

But of course this produces an intolerable burden, and if in religion you receive an intolerable burden, either in thinking or in acting, two alternatives are always possible: the way of the majority, which is one of compromise: you reduce the burden to a point where you can stand it; or the other way, the way of despair, and this was the way of people like Paul, Augustine and Luther, In IV Esdras, written in the period of Paul, we read: "We who have received the law shall be lost because of our sins, but the law never will be lost. Here you have a mood which is reflected in many Pauline sayings. This is the development of late Judaism, the period between the Testaments, and we see how many theological ideas came to the foreground beyond the Old Testament in this period, and were developed in the New Testament community.

Now I come to a third group of influential movements for Christian theology: mystery religions and mysticism. They are not the same. Let us begin with Philo, who developed a doctrine of ek-stasis, (standing outside of oneself which for him is the highest form of piety, lying beyond faith, uniting the prophetic ecstasy with the en-theos-mania (whence our word "enthusiasm"): possessing the Divine, in the Greek mysteries. Out of this comes finally the fully developed mystical system, the ecstasy which leads to the union of the one, namely the individual man, with the One, namely the Absolute, God. which is the fully developed mysticism of the Neo-Platonists such as Dionysius the Areopagite.

But besides this development we have the more important development of the concrete mystery gods. These mystery gods, are monotheistic. He who is initiated into such a mystery has a concrete God who is at the same time the only God. But one can be initiated into more than one mystery, which means that the figures of

the mystery gods are exchangeable. There is nothing of the Old Testament exclusiveness of Yahweh. These mystery gods had greatly influenced Christian cult and theology. If somebody is initiated into a mystery as later on the Christians initiated the congregations by steps then he participates in the mystery god and the experiences which the mystery god has. These experiences are described by Paul in Romans 6 with respect to Jesus, namely participation in the death and the resurrection of the mystery god. This is the ecstatic experience which is produced in the mystery activities. In the devotional services, in which those who belong to it are brought into a state of deep sorrow about the death of the god, about the tragic reality in which even the god is involved, and after a certain time experience the ecstatic experience of the god resurrected, in which the individual participates for resurrection himself. This presupposes that the idea of the suffering god is described in these mysteries. Since the Delphic Apollo, we have the idea of the participation of God in the suffering of man: Apollo at Delphi has to pay for the guilt of slaying the powers of the underworld, which have their own right, themselves. Then we have the methods of introduction through psychological means: intoxication; by a change of light and darkness; by ascetic fasting; by incense, sounds, music, etc. all similar to what we can experience every Sunday in a Catholic cathedral.

There is another element, namely the esoteric character of these mysteries. You must learn the words esoteric and exoteric: the former is derived from the Greek *eso* (inner, internal), and the latter is from *exo* (outer, external, public). The mysteries were esoteric: you had to be initiated. You can enter them only after a harsh process of selection and preparation. In this way alone, the mystery of the mystery performances is protected against profanization, and later on, in the Christian congregations, against betrayal to the pagan persecutors.

So we have in these mysteries a lot of elements which the early Christian church accepted. But of course all this is preparation, is potential. The decisive preparation is the event which is documented in the New Testament. And therefore we must say that the decisive preparation of Christian theology is the New Testament. Now I cannot give you here a New Testament theology, but I can show, with a few examples, how early Christian theology used the New Testament. I can speak about the method: it is the reception of New Testament categories of interpretation, and their transformation in the light of the reality of Jesus as the Christ. This means Christian theology used the New Testament always in two steps: reception and transformation. It received the categories which developed in the surrounding

religions, in the Old Testament, in the inter-testamental period, and used them in order to interpret the event Jesus. But in doing so they also transformed the meaning of these categories, or symbols, however you want to call them.

For example, with respect to Christology: Messiah is the old prophetic symbol. What happened was that this symbol was applied by the early disciples, perhaps in the very beginning of their encounter with Jesus, to the name "Jesus." This was a great paradox. It was, as we can say adequate because He brings the New Being, and it was inadequate because all the connotations of the word "Messiah" go beyond the actual appearance of Jesus. Therefore Jesus himself, according to the records, realized the difficulty of this double judgment. He himself had this double judgment. "Messiah" ("Christ" in Greek) is adequate; it brings out the new reality which appears in him; and it is inadequate: it brings it out in a way which necessarily produces misunderstanding. Therefore He prohibits his disciples to use this term at all. Now it might be that this is a later construction of the records, but however it may be, it mirrors the double judgment about this concept whether Jesus himself had it or the early congregations, which we never know, with certainty, in any case: namely, it mirrors the fact that such a category is, on the one hand, adequate, and on the other hand is inadequate.

The same is true of the concept Son of Man. It is adequate and therefore used, perhaps even by Jesus himself, because it points to the Divine power present in this man to bring the new aeon. On the other hand, it is inadequate because the "son of man" was supposed to appear in power and glory, on the clouds of heaven, (according to Daniel, in symbolic, poetic language.) And so since the inadequacy seems to be greater later on in the pagan world than the adequacy, this term disappeared.

Or the term man from above, used by Paul in I Corinthians 15. But Paul sees that this also is difficult. Therefore he says: Now the man from above is historical, and therefore he is the "second man" and not the first; the first is Adam, who fell, and the second is the "man from above," the Spiritual man, who is identical with Jesus as the Christ.

Or they used the term Son of David, which is adequate since he is supposed to be the fulfiller of all the prophecies. But it is inadequate, because David was a king, and "son of David" can indicate a political leader and king. Therefore the fight of Jesus against this misunderstanding, when He says that David himself calls the Messiah his lord.

Then Son of God is adequate because of the special relations and intimate communion between God and Jesus. But it is also inadequate because "son of God" is a very familiar pagan concept. All pagan gods have sons. They propagate sons on earth. Therefore there was a danger in this term, and one added "only begotten," and called Him "eternal." But it was also difficult for the Jews: they could not stand the pagan connotations. They themselves used that term, but for Israel as the "son of God," and they couldn't use it for an individual.

There are many other terms, but I will now only mention two of these interpretative concepts: KURIOS, i. e., Lord. This is adequate because of its use in the Old Testament, where Divine power is expressed in terms of this word. At the same time it is inadequate because the kurioi the lords, were the mystery gods, and Jesus was pictured concretely in a finite being. It was adequate because the mystery gods were objects of mystical union; and Jesus, also - -especially for Paul was an object of being in Christ (en Christo), in the power and holiness and fear of his Being.

Finally the concept logos, which is the most important one for the development of theology. This term had been developed in Greek and Jewish thinking. It is adequate insofar as it expressed the universal self-manifestation of God in all forms of reality. It is in Greek philosophy and Jewish symbolism the cosmic principle of creation. But at the same time it is inadequate because the logos is the universal principle, while Jesus is a concrete reality. It is a concrete personal life, which is described in these terms. And this inadequacy is expressed in the great paradox of Christianity: the logos became flesh. In this expression you have a perfect example of everything I said to you today, namely a perfect example of using a term (logos) with all the connotations of the past, and at the same time transforming this meaning not denying it or removing it from its original character, and bringing in the Christian message that this universal logos became flesh, an idea which could never have been directly derived from Greek thinking. Therefore the Fathers again and again emphasized that the doctrine of the logos is universal the Greek philosophers have it, as do the Christians but one thing is not universal, and is peculiarly Christian: the logos became flesh in a personal life.

Now it is the greatness of the New Testament that it is able to use words, concepts, symbols, which have developed through the whole history of religion, insofar as it has influenced the Old and New Testaments, and that in using these terms the New Testament at the same time preserves the picture of him who is interpreted by



these symbols, namely Jesus. The spiritual power of the New Testament was great enough to take all these concepts into Christianity, with all their pagan and Jewish connotations, without losing the basic reality, namely the event Jesus as the Christ, which these concepts were supposed to interpret. Now it is very important for all your preaching, for your whole theology, for your personal piety, always to distinguish these interpretative categories from the event itself. I always give here, as an example, something many of you might have experienced, e. g., suddenly somebody comes to you and asks: "Do you believe Jesus was the Son of God?" Now this question is an absolutely inescapable threat, if you accept it as a question. You cannot get out of it, because whether you say yes or no, it is absurd. But you can do something else. You can ask back: What do you mean by this term "Son of God" ? -- And then the fear and trembling is on the other side of the fence. Then he looks at you and asks you to help him, and then you can help him and can say: "Son of God" is a very largely used symbol for a special intimate relationship between God and a human being. In paganism this relationship was mostly a relationship by propagation. In Judaism it was the relationship by election. But in any case it is a symbol which interprets such a relationship, and your question, my dear friend, can only mean: "Are we justified in using such a symbol for the event Jesus as the Christ?" And to this answer I answer fully affirmatively.

Then you have escaped the threat and have at the same time given a very important instruction. And I think those of you who deal with children in religious instruction should do the same thing, very consciously and very carefully.

Now we come to that group of people who are called the Apostolic Fathers. But since we have only two minutes, I don't want to go into this now, and we will have questions.

QUESTION: You said that mystery religions and mysticism were not the same thing, and out of the mystery religions came the mysticism. . .

REPLY: The word mysticism is very ambiguous and has many different meanings. One type of mysticism is what I would call abstract or absolute mysticism, as in Plotinus, where the soul disappears into the Ultimate. Then we have a kind of concrete mysticism. namely a concrete mystery god, who might even have the absolute concreteness of Jesus as the Christ, in whose Spiritual sphere we participate. This is what Paul means when he speaks of "being in Christ." This is concrete mysticism. This is the "baptism" of mysticism. It has been taken into

Christianity by being concrete mysticism, and by being related to Jesus as the Christ.

#### Lecture 4: Apostolic Fathers: Clement. Ignatius.

We come now to the so-called Apostolic Fathers, the earliest post-biblical writers, partly earlier than some of the later books of the New Testament. These so-called Apostolic Fathers (Ignatius, Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, and others) are more dependent on a Christian conformism which slowly had developed, than on the outspoken position of Paul in his Letters. Insofar as Paul still was effective in this period, it was mostly not directly but more through John and Ignatius. The reason for this was, partly at least, that the fight with the Jews was a matter of the past, that the conflict with the Jewish Christians did not have to be continued and repeated. Instead of that, the positive elements became important which gave an understandable content for the pagans. One can say that in the generation of the Apostolic Fathers, the great visions of the first ecstatic breakthrough had disappeared, and that instead of that, a given set of ideas was left, a set of ideas which produced a kind of ecclesiastical conformity and made the missionary work possible. Some people have complained about this development, complained that so early after the second generation the power of the Spirit was on the wane. But this is an unavoidable thing in all creative periods. After the breakthrough – one only needs to think of the Reformation – and after the first generation which received the breakthrough (i. e., the second generation), a fixation or concentration on some special points begins; the need to preserve what was given, the educational needs – all this working together to a Christianity which, compared with the Christianity of the Apostolic age, had considerably lost its Spiritual power.

Nevertheless, this period is extremely important since it was what was preserved and what was needed for the life of the early congregations. The first question to be asked was: Where could one find the expression of the common spirit of the congregation? Originally the real mediators of the message were those who were the bearers of the Spirit, the "pneumatics" who had the pneuma (the spirit). But, as you know from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, especially the 12th chapter, he already had difficulties with the bearers of the Spirit because they produced disorder. Therefore he already emphasizes the order besides the Spirit. In the supposedly Pauline letters of the New Testament, this emphasis on ecclesiastical order becomes increasingly important. In the generation of the Apostolic Fathers, the ecstatic Spirit almost had disappeared. It was considered to be dangerous, and why, one asked, do we need it?: everything the Spirit has to say has already been

classically expressed in Bible and tradition; therefore, instead of the prophets, who travelled from place to place, following the Apostles we now have definite norms and authorities in the early Christian congregations, and the first thing we must do is to find out about these norms and authorities.

The first and basic authority is the Old Testament, and the older parts of the New Testament, as they already had appeared and were collected. But the New Testament at that time had a very vague edge: there were many books which were not yet decisively received into the canon of the Bible. It took more than 200 more years before the Church finally decided about all those books which we now consider as the New Testament. But in any case, the Church possessed the whole Old Testament and a central basic amount of New Testament books.

But this was not all. Besides these writings, there was a traditional life, a complex of dogmatic and ethical doctrines, called by I Clement "the canon of our tradition." The names of this tradition were: truth, Gospel, doctrine, commandments, tradition. All these words were used; theology points to the same thing: the living tradition beside the Old Testament, and the beginnings of the New Testament. But this was a large amount of material and it was necessary to narrow it down. First of all, for those who were baptised, it was necessary that they received and confessed a creed which made them members of the Church. So a confessional creed was created, which bore similarity to our present-day Apostles' Creed, and which was, in its center, Christological, because this was what distinguished the Christian communities from Judaism as well as from paganism.

Baptism was the sacrament of entrance, and in this sacrament the one baptized – who at that time, of course, was an adult, coming from paganism – had to confess that he wanted to accept the implications of his baptism. He was then baptised in the name of Christ. Later on, the names of God and the Spirit were added But nothing was explained. All this was faith and liturgy, but not yet theology.

All these things are going on in the Church. Therefore the doctrine is the doctrine not of a philosopher of religion, but is the doctrine of the Church, expressing its conformity, its traditional doctrines, its baptism creed. This "Church" – derived from the Greek *ekklesia*, an assembly, i. e., an assembly of God or Christ: the original meaning is being "called out" of the houses, gathering together the Greek citizens to the city... etc.; similarly those who were called out of all houses and nations to form the Church Universal. Those people who are called out of the nations into the universal Church are the true people of God. They are called out of

the barbarians, out of the Greeks, out of the Jews, – although the Jews anticipated it and had a kind of ekklesia themselves, namely as the people of God of the Old Testament. But they are not the true people of God, because the true people of God are universally called out of all nations.

If this is the case, it is necessary that those who are called together to the conformity of the ecclesiastical creed distinguish themselves from those outside and from those who are inside but wrongly: the heretics. But how can this be done? How can you find out whether a doctrine may or may not be an introduction of barbarian, Greek or Jewish doctrines which do not fit into the conformity of the Church? The answer was: this can be done only by the bishop who is the "overseer" of the congregation, and who represents the Spirit, who is supposed to be in the whole congregation. In the fight against pagans, Jews, barbarians and heretics, the bishops become more and more important. Ignatius writes, in his letter to the Smyrnians: "Where the bishop is, there the congregation should be. Even if assumed prophets appear, they may be wrong or right. But the bishop is right." The bishops are the representatives of the true doctrine. The bishops themselves were not originally distinguished from the presbyters (the elders). Then slowly the bishop became a monarch among the elders and a monarchic episcopate developed. This is of course a consistent development. If the authority which guarantees truth is embodied in human beings, then the tendency towards one human being who has the final decision is almost unavoidable.

In Clement of Rome – one of the Apostolic Fathers, to be distinguished from Clement of Alexandria, a few hundred years later...we already find the first traces of apostolic succession: the bishop represents the apostles. So this is the first thing we must say: the doctrine of the authorities. And this is fundamental, showing how early the problem of authority was decisive in the early Church; how early what came to full development in the Roman Church developed already in early Christianity.

We now come to special doctrines. The pagan world in which these few Christians lived demanded first of all an emphasis on a monotheistic idea of God. Therefore the Shepherd of Hermas says: "First of all, believe that God is one, who has made all things, bringing them out of nothing into being." Here we have the doctrine of creation out of nothing, which we cannot find in the Old Testament but which is implicit in it and was expressed already before Christianity by Jewish theologians in

the period between the Testaments. It is the doctrine which was decisive for the separation of the early Church from paganism.

In the same line was the emphasis on the almighty God, the despotes as he is called, the ruling powerful lord. Clement says: "o great demiurge", (i. e., master of all work and lord of everything: he is the great builder of the universe and the lord of everything he has built. Now here are three very important concepts. I already mentioned creation out of nothing; then the demiurge; and then the almighty, the despotes who rules the world. Why are these concepts, which seem so natural to us, so important? Because they are concepts of protection used against paganism. Creation out of nothing means that God did not find matter when He started creating, a matter which always resists the form, and which therefore should be transcended – as it was in neo-Platonic paganism. Such a matter does not exist. The material world is an object of Divine creation and therefore good and must not be disparaged for the sake of salvation. The word "demiurge" was used in Plato and Gnosticism, in the religious mixture of these centuries, for something which is lower than God, which is below the highest God, who does not deal with such low things as creating the world, but leaves it to a demiurge. This means that creation is something in which the Divine reality is less present, that it is a falling away from full Divinity. Against this, these words of Clement speak: the great demiurge is God himself; there is no duality between the highest God and the maker of the world. Creation is absolute act, out of nothing. This means almightiness. Almightiness does not mean a God who sits on His throne and can do anything he wants to do, like an arbitrary tyrant; rather, almightiness means God is the ground and the only ground of everything created, and that there is no resisting matter against Him. This is the meaning of the first article of the Apostles' Creed, which you should read with great awe again and again, because here Christianity separated itself from the dualistic interpretation of reality which we find in all paganism – dualistic in the sense that there is a good principle and an evil principle, and that both of them are of equal originality, that matter is as eternal as form, that chaos... resists God. All these ideas disappeared in the moment the Christians created the first words of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the almighty creator of heaven and earth." This is the great wall of Christianity against paganism. And Christology, without this wall, inescapably deteriorizes into Gnosticism, where Christ becomes one of the cosmic powers besides others, even if he is the highest. Therefore don't underestimate the first article. Only in the light of this first article is the second article meaningful. Don't reduce God to the Second Person. of the Trinity. This was very well understood by these earliest post-biblical theologians, these Apostolic Fathers. They

knew that they needed a God who is creator, almighty, and not in any way dependent on a resisting matter.

As ruler of everything, God has a plan of salvation. This idea of a plan of salvation is especially developed by Ignatius. In his letter to the Ephesians, he speaks of the "economy towards the new man." This is a wonderful summary of the Christian message: economy towards the new man. Economy means "building a house." But this word is used in our culture for what we call economic production. It is used in the Greek period for the structure of God and world, in their relationships. There is an economy of the Trinitarian thinking: Father, Son, and Spirit. They only together are God. There is an economy of salvation, the building of the different periods which finally led to the new man. This idea of the new man, or new creature, or new being, as the aim of the history of salvation, is an important contribution of these theologians.

This economy, this periodic preparation, is already present in the Old Testament. So Ignatius says: "Judaism has believed towards Christianity." Here again we have the relationship towards fulfillment. The Christ, the new man, has appeared. He is perfect. The disruptedness of the old man is overcome and death is dissolved. This leads to Christology.

Now you will find that here already, some of the defects arise which will become overwhelming when we come to the Trinitarian and Christological discussions. So I ask you to follow very carefully each mentioning of the Christological problem in the earlier periods, otherwise it is impossible to understand anything of the dogma of the early Church, which has two parts: Christ in heaven (the Trinitarian dogma) and Christ on earth (the Christological dogma).

Generally speaking, one can say that Jesus as the Christ was considered to be a spiritual being who is pre-existent, and who had transformed the historical Jesus into a tool for His saving activity. The Spirit is an hypostasis in God, an independent power – which of course is completely united with God – but it has the character of a certain independence or hypostasis. The Son came into the realm of flesh; He accepted flesh, which had developed independently; the flesh cooperated with the Spirit in Him; the Holy Spirit dwelled in the flesh which He chose; He became the Son of God by His service. ("Flesh" here always means historical reality),

But there is another idea – and now things become serious. One could say that the first Spirit, the proton pneuma, became flesh. For instance Ignatius says: "Christ is

God and perfect man at the same time. He comes from the Spirit, and the seed of David." This means that He is not only some Spiritual power which has accepted flesh, but He, as the Spiritual power, has become flesh. One also uses other words. One says: "There is one physician." Salvation is still understood as meaning healing. This hiatros, this physician, heals fleshly and spiritually; He has genesis and has not genesis; He has come into flesh, He has come into death, and has eternal life in death; and He is God who came into flesh. He is from Mary and from God; able to suffer and then not able to suffer, because of His elevation to God.

Now these are still very mixed ideas, They all want to emphasize that here something paradoxical has happened. that a Divine Spiritual power has appeared under the conditions of humanity and existence.

From the point of view of God, Ignatius says: "For there is one God who made himself manifest through Jesus Christ, His Son, who is His logos, proceeding from His silence. II Clement: "Being the first Spirit, the head of the angels, He became flesh. Being He who appears in human form, Christ is the Word proceeding out of the silence." (apostrophes). The Christ breaks the eternal silence of the Divine ground. As such He is both God and complete man. The same historical reality is the one as well as the other, as one person. One can speak of a double message (a dipton kerygma), the message that this same being is God and man.

Now here we have the main religious interest of this whole period. The interest is, as Clement says, theologein ton Christon, i. e., speaking theologically of Christ as of God. "Brothers, so we must think about Jesus Christ as about God, for if we think small things about Him, we can hope to receive small things only. The absoluteness of salvation demands an absolute Divine Saviour." Now all of this is quite germinal for our development, but it had to evolve through centuries of struggle. Otherwise, they could not grow. But here we have the problem of the two possible categories: Has Christ come into flesh, accepting it?; or has He come as the logos, being transformed into it? Both ideas already appear.

The second point is: Here is logos apostrophes, the Divine Logos who breaks the silence of God. This is a very profound idea. It means that the Divine Abyss in itself is without word, form, object, and voice. It is silence, the infinite silence of the eternal. But out of this Divine silence, the word, the logos, breaks and opens up what is hidden in this silence. He reveals the Divine Ground



Thirdly, Christology is not a theoretical problem, but the Christological problem is one side of the soteriological problem (from the Greek *soteria*, "salvation"). We can see it here already, and can say that it is not a merely theoretical interest which drives to Christology and the fight about it, but it is the desire to have a safe salvation. It is the desire to get the courage which overcomes the anxiety of being lost. This is the situation, and these three points you should keep in mind. They appear as early as in the Apostolic Fathers:

The first point: The two Christologies: taking on flesh, or being transformed into flesh;

Second: The question of the Divine silence and the Logos revealing it;

Third: The question of soteriology, which is the basis for the question of Christology, and not vice versa. (Perhaps even those of you who don't know Greek should learn the word *soter*, "saviour" ...) And now, what is this "salvation"? The work of Christ is a two-fold one, and remained so in the whole early Greek church, and is still so in the present Greek Orthodox church. It is first *gnosis*, (knowledge), and secondly, (life). (It is always sad for me to see that there are many who don't know Greek, because the Bible--and also Plato! --was written in Greek.)

In any case, these are the things which the Christ brings: knowledge and life. Sometimes it is combined in the phrase *athanatos gnosis*: immortal knowledge, knowledge of that which is immortal and which makes immortal. Knowledge: the Christ called us from darkness into light; He made us serve the Father of Truth. Or: He called us who had no being and wanted that we have being, out of His new Being. This means knowledge brings being. Knowledge is knowledge of being. And he who has this knowledge has saving knowledge. Knowledge and being belong to each other. And so do lie and non-being. Truth is being; new truth is new being.

Now all this I mention in order to show one thing which is not often understood. Harnack and his followers have called the early Church as being infested by Greek intellectualism. I think this statement has two mistakes: first. Greek intellectualism is a wrong term because the Greeks were extremely interested in truth. but. with some exceptions, the truth they wanted to have was existential truth, truth concerning their existence, truth saving them out of the distorted existence and elevating them to the immovable One. And in the same way. the early congregations understood truth. Truth is not theoretical knowledge about objects, but truth is cognitive participation in a new reality. in the reality which has

appeared in the Christ. Without this participation, no truth is possible. and knowledge is abstract and meaningless. This is what these people meant when they combined being and knowledge. Participating in the New Being is participating in truth. having the true knowledge.

This identity of truth and being mediates the other side. namely life. Christ gives immortal knowledge, the knowledge which gives immortality. He is the saviour and leader of immortality. He is in His being our imperishable life, He gives both the knowledge of immortality and the drug of immortality. which is the sacrament. Ignatius calls the Lord's Supper the antidotonto me apothanein . the remedy against our having to die, This idea that the sacramental materials of the Lord's Supper are, so to speak, drugs or remedies which produce immortality, has a very profound meaning. It shows. first of all, one thing: these Apostolic Fathers did not believe in the immortality of the soul, There is no natural immortality. otherwise it would be meaningless for them to speak about immortal life. appearing and given to us in Christ, But they believed that man is natural..-..mortal, exactly as the Old Testament believes; that in Paradise man was able to participate in the food of the gods, called the "tree of life", and to keep alive by participating in this Divine power. In the same way the Apostolic Fathers said that with the coming of Christ the situation of Paradise is reestablished. Now we again participate in the food of eternity, which is the body and the blood of Christ, and in doing so we build in ourselves the counter-balance against the natural having to die. Death is the wages of sin only insofar as sin is the separation from God, and therefore God's power to overcome our natural having to die – from dust to dust, as the Old Testament says,. – does not work any more: and now it works again, in Christ. and it is seen in a sacramentally realistic way in the materials of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Now if you see this, then you can at least say one thing -- that our traditional speaking of the immortality of the soul is not classically Christian tradition, but is a distortion of it, not in a genuine but in a pseudo-Platonic sense.

## Lecture 5: The Apologetic Movement. Celsus, Justin Martyr.

Today I want to start with something which can rightly be called the birthplace of a developed Christian theology, namely the **apologetic movement**. Christianity needed apologetics for different reasons. *Apologeisthai* means replying, answering, to the judge in the court, if somebody accuses you. You remember Socrates' apologia, his answer to those who accused him. In the same sense, Christianity expressed itself in terms of answers, of apologia. The people who did this systematically are called the **apologists**.

The necessity to answer was brought about because of a double accusation against Christianity : 1) that Christianity is a danger to the Roman Empire. This was the political accusation, that it undermines the structure of this empire.

2) that, philosophically speaking, Christianity is nonsense, a superstition mixed with philosophical fragments.

These two attacks supported each other. The philosophical attack was taken over by the authorities and used in their accusations. In this way these philosophical attacks became dangerous even in terms of political consequences. And so Christianity had to defend itself against both. The most important representative of these attacks was the physician and philosopher CELSUS. It is very important to listen to him in order to see how Christianity looked at that time to an educated Greek philosopher and scientist. For Celsus, Christianity is a mixture of fanatic superstition and philosophical piecemeal. The historical reports, according to him, are contradictory and are uncertain in their evidence. Here we have, for the first time, something which has repeated itself again and again: historical criticism of the Old and New Testament – but we have it here with hate, by an enemy. Later we have, in the 18th century, the beginning of historical criticism with love, namely with a love towards the Reality which lies behind these reports. Even today many people confuse the original way in which historical criticism was done – with hate – and react with hate against it, while Christian theologians for more than two centuries now, have worked – mostly with the same arguments as the enemies – but with love, in order to understand what really is in the Old and New Testaments. So we should not confuse this. But it is interesting that the first criticism came from outside, from enemies, in terms of hate and not love.

Now a few of Celsus' arguments: One of the main points which is always discussed between critical historians and traditional theologians is the resurrection of Jesus. Celsus says that this event which is so important was observed only by adherents, and originally even only by a few ecstatic women. His deification is nothing else than processes of deification which occurred in many other cases which we know from history. Good old Euhemeros, the philosopher of religion, has given sufficient examples of the way in which a human being, a king or a hero, was deified. Then he says that the Christians do something which is especially disgusting, namely, when the stories become extremely incredible – as many of them in the Old Testament – then they are explained away, allegorically. (All these things were actually done.) In this criticism, especially of the Old Testament miracle stories, a slight element of anti-Judaism is visible, and this is understandable because some of Celsus' criticism hit, the Jews as much as the Christians. ... He says that the descent of God contradicts the unchangeable character of God which is also emphasized so strongly by the Christian writers. But if the Divine Being has descended to earth, why did this happen in a despised corner of the world, and why did it happen only once? Especially disgusting – and here again we have anti-Judaistic feeling – is the fight between the Jews and Christians as to whether the Messiah has or has not appeared. This is particularly disgusting to the educated pagan.

Very stupid, also, was the much used argument of that time from prophecy to fulfillment. He is historically educated enough to see that the prophet did not mean the fulfillment in the terms in which the fulfillment happened. And I would say this is an especially sore spot in all Church history, something where the idea of universal preparatory revelation – which is a sound idea – has been distorted in the mechanism of "foreseeing" events, and then they "happened". He sees this weakness with great clarity.

But the deepest point in his criticism of Christianity is not the scientific with respect to history, or the philosophy with respect to the idea of incarnation, but it is something else: it is a really religious feeling, namely when he says that the demonic powers which as Paul says have been conquered by Christ, actually rule the world...the argument which you can hear everywhere in our time, and the world has not changed, since the beginning of Christianity. But Celsus adds: There is no sense even to try to overcome these powers; they are the real rulers of the world. Therefore, one should be obedient to the Roman rulers on earth because they have at least reduced the power of the demons to some extent – which is also a Pauline idea. They have established a certain order in which the demonic forces are limited.

Therefore the Roman emperors, however questionable they may be personally, must be obeyed and must receive veneration, for through the obedience to the orders of this world, to the necessities of law and nature, Rome has become great. What the Christians do is to undermine the greatness and the glory which is Rome, and in doing so they undercut the only power which is able to prevent the world from falling into chaos and a complete victory of the demons.

This was not an easy attack, but a very serious one, and one which has been heard again and again in all Church history. And you can understand that Christians arose who had the same philosophical education as Celsus had, and who tried to answer these attacks. This is the meaning of the apologetic movement, out of which theology has arisen.

Now these people didn't refute historical criticism very much, because in the moment in which you go into this, then whether you defend one position or not, you cannot defend all positions. When you accept the method, then all the difficulties arise which we have experienced in the history of Protestantism during the last 200 years, and which are alive today as they ever were. Think of the famous discussion about the demythologization of the New Testament, where we have exactly the same problem.

So these Apologists didn't go into this, but they tried to answer the philosophical criticism, and did it in a way which tried to show three things. This is the way every apologetic has to work. First of all, if you want to speak with somebody meaningfully, there must be a common basis, some mutually accepted ideas. This truth common to Christians and pagans must first be elaborated. If there is nothing in common between them, no conversation is possible and no meaningful addressing oneself to the pagans is possible. It always must be supposed – and this is a rule for all Christian missionary work – that the other one understands what you say, but understanding is partly participating. If he speaks an absolutely different language, then no understanding is possible. So the Apologists showed that there is something in common.

Secondly, they must show that in the actual ideas of paganism, there are defects. There are things which contradict the ideas even of the pagans themselves. There are things which have been criticized for centuries, even by the pagan philosophers. One shows the negativity in the other one, as the second step of apologetics.

Thirdly, one shows that one's own position is not to be accepted as something from outside, which is thrown at one's head – this is not good apologetics, throwing stones – but that Christianity is the fulfillment of what is, as longing and desire, in paganism. (This is) the way in which I work that out in all my systematic theology which I call, consciously, an apologetic form of theology: the relationship or the correlation between question and answer. Only if Christianity answers the existential question in the pagan mind can Christianity be accepted and understood.

Now these three steps – first a common ground without which no conversation is possible at all; second, the defects of the object of the apologetic; third, the belief that one's own position is the fulfillment of what, as longing and desire, is in the other one: this is good apologetics and this you must do whenever you work apologetically, and I cannot imagine any conversation or any sermon which you will ever give in which the apologetic element is not present, in which you do not answer questions, answer to accusations, to criticism, implicitly or explicitly.

Now there is one danger in apologetics: that the common ground is overemphasized over against the differences. And if this is done, then you certainly do not throw stones at the heads of the others; but you don't give him anything either: you accept him as he is. This is not the purpose either. So you must find a way between these two forms: the one, the wrong way of preaching and teaching Christianity, is: throwing undigestible objects at the other one, which he cannot receive, as the human being cannot receive stones or bullets; the other, that you don't tell him anything he didn't know already. And that is often the way in which liberal theology acted, while the other is the way fundamentalism and orthodoxy acted. Christian theology tried to find a way between these two wrong behaviors, and in doing so they became the founders of a definitively

### **Christian Theology.**

**Justin Martyr**, perhaps the most important of the Apologists: "This is the only philosophy which I have found certain and adequate." This sentence needs a comment. Some anti-apologetic theologians – they are not only in continental Europe – would say: Now there you see: Christianity is dissolved into a philosophy; that is what the Apologists did and that is what every apologetic theology does -- even my own. I have heard this several, or even innumerable, times. The situation must be understood: what does this sentence mean, actually? Certainly it says Christianity is a philosophy. But if someone makes such a statement, one must

know what philosophy means, in the mouth of this man, who was not a professor of philosophy, in America in the year 1953, in one of the colleges or universities. A Greek philosopher was something quite different. Philosophy at that time was the name for the spiritual, non-magical and non-superstitious character of a movement. Therefore! Justin says that Christianity is the only certain and adequate philosophy, he first of all says it is not magical, it is not superstitious; it is meaningful, adequate, to the logos, to the word, to reason; and this was the first thing he had to say against people like Celsus.

Secondly, for the later Greeks, philosophy was not only a theoretical but even more practical matter. It was a matter of existential interpretation of life, of an interpretation of life which was a matter of life and death for the existence of the people at that time.

Thirdly, to be a philosopher meant, ordinarily, to belong to a philosophical school. And philosophical schools at that time were not the same as what we mean by them, e. g., that there are pupils of Dewey and Whitehead in different colleges in this country; rather, "school" meant, then, a ritual community in which the founder of the school was supposed to have had a revelatory insight into the truth. Acceptance in such a school was not a matter of a doctor's degree, but of a whole personal initiation into the atmosphere of this school. So the word "philosophy" had a much larger sense than professors of "philosophy", or textbooks on "philosophy".

By the way, in English the word philosophy has still preserved some of this larger meaning. One speaks even of a philosophy of business management, and a philosophy of home cooking, etc. – very important things – and if the word philosophy is connected with them, then philosophy means a systematic understanding of a realm of reality which has something to do with real existence, and it is not only a matter of philosophical analysis in terms of logic, epistemology and metaphysics.

Now if, therefore, Justin called Christianity a philosophy, then he makes it a human existential enterprise which is neither superstitious nor magical, but follows the principles of sound reason.

Now with respect to this Christian philosophy, he says that it is universal – and this is very important – that it is not a corner truth of a sectarian character, but that it is all-embracing truth about the meaning of existence. And from this follows that

wherever truth appears, it belongs to us, the Christians. Existential truth...truth not in the scientific sense, but in the sense of truth concerning existence, truth about life and death, truth about to-be-and-not-to-be--is, wherever it appears, Christian truth. "What anybody has said about truth belongs to us, the Christians." This is not arrogance. He doesn't mean that the Christians now have all truth, which they invented, etc. , but they said exactly what they said later in terms of the logos doctrine, namely that there cannot be any truth anywhere which is not included in principle in Christian truth. This is what already the Fourth Gospel says, namely that the logos appeared, full of truth and grace.

And vice versa, he says: "Those who live according to the logos are Christians." Now what happens here is very important. He includes, for instance, Socrates, Heraclitus, Elijah, and others. But there is a difference; he added, "the total logos," which appeared in Christ and has become "body, mind and soul." Therefore the philosophers, apart from Christianity, are partly in error and even partly subjected to demonic inspirations which come from the pagan gods. The gods of the heathens are not non-entities, but they are demonic forces, they are realities. But since they are on a limited basis (since) they are idols, they therefore have destructive power.

What does all this mean? It takes away the wrong impression...as though these Christians felt themselves as another religion. There is here actually the negation of the concept of religion, for Christianity: one religion beside others. All the others are wrong; ours is right: against this the Apologists would say: not.our religion is right, but the logos has appeared on which our religion is based, and is the full logos of God himself, appearing in the center of His being, appearing in His totality. This is more than religion. This is truth appearing in time and space. So here the word "Christianity" is still understood not as a religion but as the negation of religions, and for this reason as being able to embrace them all, in terms of universality. Justin has said what I think it is absolutely necessary to say: If there were anywhere in the world an existential truth which could not be received by Christianity as an element in its own thinking, then Jesus would not be the Christ. And this is exactly what he says, and what the whole logos doctrine says, because then He would be one teacher alongside other teachers, of which there are many and each is limited and in error. But that is not what the early Christians said. The early Christians said – and we say and should say – that if we call Jesus the Christ, or the Logos (as the Apologists called Him), this means there cannot be, by definition, so to speak, any truth – Let us say, China, India, Islam, Judaism, mysticism, whatever you want to know, and certainly all philosophy – which cannot be taken in



principle into Christianity and is nevertheless truth. If this were possible, then the application of the term logos, as the Fourth Gospel applies it, to Jesus as the Christ would not be possible.. This does not mean that this Logos knew all truth; that is of course nonsense and would destroy His humanity, His human reality. But it does mean that the fundamental truth which has appeared in Him is essentially universal, and therefore can take in every other truth. For this reason the early theologians didn't hesitate to take in as much Greek philosophical truth as they could, and as much oriental mysticism as they could. They were not afraid of it, as some theologians today are.

There is, however, one difference in the appearance of the logos in Christ, namely that this appearance makes it possible that even the most uneducated human being can receive the full existential truth, while the philosophers may lose it in discussing it. Or in other terms: One of the main ideas of the Apologists is that Christianity is far superior to all philosophy – although there are Christians among the early philosophers – and it is superior because philosopher presupposes education. Only a few human beings are educated; are the others excluded from truth? And the answer is: On the basis of a merely philosophical form of truth, they are excluded; on the basis of a manifestation of the Logos as a living person, they are not excluded, they can have it as fully as any philosopher. Now this remains a problem for all the following discussions, but it is something which is even today decisive, that we can believe that: the message of Jesus as the Christ is universal not only in embracing all mankind, but universal also in embracing all classes, groups, and social stratifications of mankind.

Beyond this an argument is brought up, which is practical: the reality of the Church. In this group of human beings, small as it was at that time, one finds a degree of moral power and acting which is found in no other group. Therefore the congregations of Christians are not dangerous to the world power. They do exactly what the Roman Empire tries to do, namely, to prevent the world from falling into chaos. They are, even more than the Roman Empire, the supporters of world order. So Justin could say: "The world lives from the prayers of the Christians and from the obedience of the Christians to the law of the state. The Christians preserve the world, and on the other hand, for their sake God preserves the world." Now this is the main argument against the Roman Empire, which of course could be supported by innumerable practical evidences which show that far from destroying the orders on which reality is built, the Christians support it."

The philosophical idea of God is inborn in every human being. It is the idea of Being eternally, without beginning, needing nothing beyond passions, indestructible, unchangeable, invisible – all these characteristics which Parmenides attributed to Being are here attributed to God. But there is a point of difference between classical Greek philosophy and Justin's doctrine of God. This difference comes in through the Old Testament and changes everything. It is the statement that God is the almighty creator.: The moment this statement is made, the personal element enters the abstract and mystical description of God's identity. God as creator is acting, and almightiness means that He is the acting power behind everything which moves.

It is interesting to observe that in these early statements about God, Christian monotheism oscillates between the trans-personal element of Being and the personal element of God as creator, and of course saviour, etc. This oscillation is necessary in the moment in which the idea of God is made the object of thought. You cannot escape some elements of the eternal, of the unconditional, the unchangeable, etc. On the other hand, the practical piety and the experience of creatureliness in which we find ourselves, presupposes a person-to-person relationship, and between these two elements Christianity always oscillates and must oscillate, because these are two elements in God himself.

Between God and man, there are angels and powers, some of them good and some evil. But their mediating power is insufficient. The real mediator is the Logos. Now what is this Logos? I remember that in former classes the question was always asked: Now after all this speaking about "Logos", I would like to know what the word really means! And I hope that after the next four weeks, when you hear much more about the Logos, you can ask this question. But I will try my best, although the best is very poor in comparison with the difficulty of the problems, especially for the difficulty in the minds of people of whom I say they all are nominalists by birth! This makes it so difficult because, of course, a concept such as "Logos" is not the description of an individual being, but the description of a universal principle. And if one is not used to thinking in terms of universals as powers of being, then such a concept "as Logos remains impossible to understand. So I should do the following: to convert you, at least hypothetically, to medieval realism – to Platonism, if you want to call it thus – and then to speak about the Logos. But since time is limited, I will do this implicitly if possible, and cannot do it explicitly.

**Logos**, the principle of the self-manifestation of God. God manifest to himself, in himself: that is His Logos. Therefore whenever God appears, to himself and to others outside of himself, it is the Logos, the self-manifestation of God, which appears. This Logos is also, and in a unique way, in Jesus as the Christ. And this, according to the Apologists, is the greatness of Christianity. This is the basis for its claim for salvation, because if the Divine Logos in its fulness had not appeared in Jesus as the Christ, then no full salvation would be possible. This is the argument *ex existentia*, from existence, and not from speculation. Please remember what I said before, that all these seemingly speculative ideas into which we must now dive, are only seemingly speculative. Of course, speculative means "looking at" problems, and in this sense they are speculative. But they are not produced for the sake of speculation, but for the sake of making Christian salvation understandable. And in all decisive moments of the struggle between the different movements, we find that the classical theologians, who finally win the victory, refer to salvation and then say: If there shall be salvation: there must be this concept of the Logos. That is always their arguing. There is salvation; we have experienced it – so we must speak in this and that way about the Logos.

## Lecture 6: Logos and the Doctrine of God. Gnosticism. Marcion.

Yesterday I tried to explain what was the reason, in interpreting the meaning of Jesus as the Christ, for the Apologetic theologians' use of the concept of the Logos, taken from a long philosophical development beginning with Heraclitus and the Stoics and Philo of Alexandria. The answer was: because the Logos was considered already by Philo to be the universal principle of the Divine self-manifestation, and therefore in saying that this is so, that this is historical reality in Jesus, one said of Him that He is universal. I gave you an interpretation of this term "universal:" Nothing can in principle be excluded, even if it is not actually developed within Christianity

Now I come to the speculative side, to the combination of the Logos doctrine with the doctrine of God. The Logos is the first "work" or generation of God as father. The Father, being eternal mind, has in himself the Logos, since He is eternally "logical," as Athanasius, one of the Apologists, says. "Logical" doesn't mean that He can argue well; He leaves that to us. "Logical" means that He is *logikos*, namely adequate to the principles of meaning and truth; God is not irrational will. He is here called eternal nous (mind), and this means He has within himself the power of self-manifestation. This analogy is taken from our own experience. There is no mental process which is not going on in some way or other in terms of silent words. And so, the inner spiritual life of God includes the silent word in him.

There is a spiritual procession going on from the Father to the world in which He manifests himself to himself and to the world. 'But this procession does not produce separation. The Word is not the same of which it is the Word. But on the other hand, the Word cannot be separated from; that of which it is the Word, namely the manifestation: The Word of God is not identical with God; it is the self-manifestation of God. On the other hand, if you separate it from God, then it's empty, with no content. This tries to describe, in analogy with the mental processes of man, the meaning of the term Logos. Therefore the process of generation of the Logos in which the Logos is produced in God – eternally, of course – does not make God small; He is not less than He was, by the fact that He generates His Word. So Justin can say: "The Logos is different from God according to number, but not according to concept." He is God; He is not the God, but He is one with God in essence. (Justin) also uses the Stoic doctrines of the immanent and the trespassing

Logos. The Logos in God is logos endiathetos, "indwelling." But this eternal indwelling Logos, the Word in which God expresses himself to himself, becomes, with the creation, becomes logos proforikos the proceeding, the outgoing Logos. The Logos is now a word spoken towards outside, towards the creature., through the prophets and the wise men. The old meaning ("word") and the already actual meaning ("reason") – since Heraclitus oscillates – both are always meant. If one thinks in Old Testament terms, one would prefer to translate logos by "word"; if one thinks in Greek terms, as the Apologists mostly did, then one would translate logos by "reason" not by "reasoning," but by the meaningful structure of reality, which is reason. As the immediate self expression of the Divine, the Word, the Logos form or reason, is less, than the Divine Abyss, because the Divine Abyss is always the beginning, and out of the depths of divinity His self-manifestation and His manifestation towards the world come. The Logos is the beginning of the generations of God; there, everything starts. He has, so to speak, a diminished transcendence or divinity. But if this is so, how can He then reveal God fully? Now this was a later problem – which we have to discuss more fully soon. In the moment in which the Apologists used the term Logos, the problem arose and couldn't be silenced any more. If the Logos is the self-expression of movement, is He less than God or fully God? All this means that one continued to call Christ God. But such a statement – that a historical man, who lived and died, and perhaps was really in the "police files" of Jerusalem, is called "God": how can this be made understandable to the pagans?

The difficulty was not the incarnation as such. "Incarnation" is one of the most ordinary events in Greek mythology and in all mythology. Gods come to earth; they take on animal or human or plant form; they do something and then return to their divinity. This is not difficult. But this idea couldn't be accepted by Christianity. The problem and the difficulty was that the Son of God, who was at the same time a historical man and not a man of mythological imagination, is supposed to be the absolute and unique Son of God.

The incarnation is once for all, but it isn't a special characteristic or element in the Divinity which incarnates, but rather the very center of the Divinity. In order to make this problem clear, the Logos concept was used. The problem was to combine monotheism, which was emphasized so strongly against pagan polytheism, with the divinity of Christ – the humanity and the universality of His nature at the same time. This was the need for that time. The Apologists fulfilled that need and therefore they were successful.

Now the incarnation itself, in the Apologists, is not the union of the Divine Spirit with the man Jesus, but the Logos really becomes man. This transformation Christology becomes more and more important through the Logos doctrine. Existing before the Logos, He now, through the will of God, has become man. He has been made flesh, as Justin says.

This is the first clear decision for the transformation Christology over against the adoptionist Christology. If the Logos or the Spirit adopted the man Jesus, then we have a quite different Christology from the idea that the Logos is made, is transformed into, flesh.

Now I leave all this open. I hope you have many questions and many shakings of your heads about this, because it is certainly not easy, since the concept of Logos is for us not what it was for every reader of Justin among the educated pagans. We know God and we know man, but the idea of hypostasis, of powers of being in God, is extremely difficult for us. But this was the content of the old Christian Christology, and this is still present whenever we perform our liturgy, which all are dependent on this Christology.

The saving gifts of the Logos are gnosis (knowledge) of God, of the law, and of the resurrection. Christ is, as Logos, as reason, first of all teacher, but not a teacher who teaches us a lot of things he knows better than we, but teacher in the Socratic sense, namely, in the sense of giving us existential power of being.

The Logos gives us truth about God and gives us moral laws which we have to fulfill, by freedom. So a kind of intellectualization and educational elements come into the doctrine of the Christ. This was a possible consequence of the Logos doctrine, and this is the reason why there were always reactions against the Logos doctrine. But I don't want to go beyond this now because we come back to it again and again, and must now deal with another movement of great importance. The Apologists defend Christianity against the philosophers and the emperors. The dangers for Christianity were not only those from the outside – these were lesser dangers, even though persecution often resulted – but there was a much more essential danger, a danger from inside. And this was the danger of gnosticism. Now what is this? It is derived from the Greek word gnosis meaning "knowledge." It does not mean scientific knowledge. Gnosis is used in three ways: 1) as knowledge in more general terms; 2) as mystical communion; 3) as sexual intercourse.

You can find all three meanings in the New Testament. This means it is knowledge by participation. It is a knowledge which is as intimate as the relation between husband and wife. It is not a knowledge of analytic and synthetic research; it is not scientific knowledge. But it is knowledge of union and knowledge of salvation: it's existential knowledge. Therefore the Gnostics were the Greek intellectuals, but were people who wanted to live in the realm of participation with the Divine, and who understood the cognitive function of man as a functioning of participation.

The Gnostics were not a sect – if at all, they were many sects – but they were much more than this. They were a universal religious movement in the late ancient world. We call this movement "syncretism," usually. It was a mixture of all the religious traditions of that time. This general movement of religious mixture was spreading all over the world, and it was strong enough to penetrate into Greek philosophy, so that we call that period of Greek philosophy the religious period of Greek philosophy. It was strong enough to penetrate into the Jewish religion: Philo of Alexandria is a typical predecessor of Gnosticism. It was strong enough to penetrate into the Roman law and into Christian theology.

The elements of this religion of mixture are the following:

- 1) The negative presupposition, namely the destruction of the national religions by the conquests of Alexander and of Rome. The great world empires undercut the national religions.
- 2) The philosophical interpretation of mythology. When you read the systems of the Gnostics, you will have the feeling that this is rationalized myth. And this feeling is right.
- 3) The renewal of the old mystery traditions.
- 4) The re-emergence of the psychic and magic elements, as it appeared in the religious propaganda of the East; while the political movement went from the West to the East

(Rome conquered the East), the religious movement, this great syncretistic thinking and acting which we call Gnosticism, went from East to West and conquered, at least partly, even Rome. So when you read about the Gnostics, don't believe you know all about them; it is easy to dismiss them. It was an attempt to combine all the religious traditions which had lost their genuine roots, and bring them together in a system of a half-philosophical, half-religious character. The Gnostic

groups showed many similarities and many conflicts with original Christianity. They claim, against the public tradition of the Christian churches, to have secret traditions which are known only to the initiated; they are not public. They reject the Old Testament because it contradicts many of their fundamental tenets, especially the dualistic and ascetic tendencies. And the New Testament is not rejected but is purged. The man who did this first of all was **Marcion**. He tried to purge the Pauline canon. He leaves the ten main letters and the Gospel of Luke, which is most influenced by Paul. He rejects all other letters and gospels of the New Testament. Luke and ten Pauline letters, that's enough – because there, no elements are present which contradict the basic ideas of Gnosticism.

Marcion was a very interesting man. He was not a speculative philosopher – although he was that, too – but he was a religious reformer. He founded congregations of Marcionites which endured for a long time. The title of his book is Antithesis – (this is not an invention of Hegel's!). He was a gnostic namely, in his distinction between the God of the Old and the God of the New Testament, the God of the law and the God of the Gospel. He rejected the former and reaffirmed the latter. This problem shouldn't be seen in terms of the fantastic idea of two gods. This is much too easy. But it should be seen in the problem with which Harnack, the great historian of Christian dogma, wrestled at the end of his life: namely, the problem whether or not the New Testament is actually so different from the Old Testament that you cannot combine them.

In Church history, we always have Marcionism, or radical Paulinism, and we have it today in the Barthian school whenever they try to put the God of revelation against the God of natural law. In natural law, and accordingly in history, man is by himself, they say. They don't speak of a second God: such a fantastic mythology would not be possible today. But they speak of a radical tension between the natural world – including natural reason, natural morals – and the religious realm, which stands against all the other realms. This was Marcion's problem, and he solved it by a radical separation. The problem is: Gnostic dualism.

For the Gnostics, the created world is bad, and therefore the world must have been created by a God who is bad. And who is this God? It is the God of the Old Testament. Salvation, therefore; is liberation from the world, and this must be done in ascetic terms. There is no place for eschatology on the basis of this dualism because the end of the world would be always seen in the light of this dualism, and a dualistic fulfillment is not a fulfillment: it is a split in God himself.



The saviour is one of the heavenly powers, called aeons, eternities – the word "eternity" does not have the connotation of timelessness here, but has the connotation of cosmic powers, and as such it is always used. This higher aeon, the saviour aeon, the saviour power of being, descends to earth and takes on human flesh. But now it becomes obvious that the aeon, a Divine power, cannot suffer. So he takes on either a strange body or a body which only seems to be a body, but he does not become flesh. This of course was a very sensitive point for the early Christians and their conformity, and so they rejected the gnostics on this point. The saviour descends to the different realms in which the different astrological powers rule. This concerns especially the planets, which are considered as astrological powers even long after the Renaissance, even in Protestantism.. He reveals the hidden weapons of these demonic powers by trespassing their realm and overcoming them on his descent. He brings down the seals of their power, their names and their characters, and if you have the name of a demonic power, you are superior to it: you call it by name and then it falls down. One of the Gnostic texts says "Having the seals, I shall descend, going through all aeons. I shall recognize all mysteries. I shall show the shape of the gods. And the hidden things of the holy path, called gnosis, I shall deliver." Here you have a claim of the good God, of the mystery power which comes down to earth.

The demonic powers are the representatives of fate. The human soul which has fallen into their hands is liberated by the saviour and by the knowledge he gives. One could say: What the saviour does in gnosticism is somehow to use white magic against the black magic of the planetary powers, the same powers of whom Paul speaks in Romans 8 that they are subdued to Christ. Therefore the magic power of the sacraments as mysterious practices is acknowledged. In them the highest Divine power comes to earth. But besides these sacramental and speculative tendencies, the Gnostics had ethical values of community and asceticism. What is demanded is the ascent of the soul, following the saviour who also ascended, but then descended. The souls have descended; now they shall ascend.

The savior liberates from demonic powers for the sake of union with the highest itself, with the fullness, the pleroma, the Spiritual Word.

On the upward way, the human soul meets these rulers, and then the soul tells the rulers what it knows about them. He knows their name, i. e., their mysterious power, the structure of evil they represent. When he tells them their name, they fall down and tremble and cannot stop the soul any more.

Now what really is meant in these poetic images is a religion of salvation from the demonic powers, which was the problem of the whole period, inside and outside Christianity. Man is somehow better than his creator. Man can be saved from the powers of the demiurge, of him who creates the world. But not all men are able to be saved. There are three classes of human beings: the pneumatikoi, i. e. , the Spirituall; the psychikoi, those who follow the soul; and the sarkikoi, those who follow the flesh. The sarkikoi are lost; the Spiritual ones are saved; but the middle group, the psychikoi, can go this way or that way. In order to reach the elevation, man must participate in the mysteries. These mysteries are mostly mysteries of purification, therefore mostly connected with baptism. The Spirit in baptism enters the matter of the sacrament (water) and dwells in it. After the Spirit has been brought down by a special formula, namely the formula of the initiation of the sacraments., – it is the magic idea of the sacraments which was accepted by these Stoics...

All these ideas were a great temptation to Christians. Christ remained in the center of history. He is he who brings salvation. But He is put into the frame of the dualistic world-view of Hellenism. He is put into the context of the great syncretism.

The religious mood of this whole time is beautifully expressed in the Acts of Andreas , one of those apocryphal writings. He says: "Blessed is our generation. We are not thrown down, for we have been recognized by the light. We do not belong to time, which would dissolve us. We are not a product of motion, which would destroy us again. We belong to the greatness towards which we are striving. We belong to Him who has mercy towards us, to the light which has expelled the darkness, to the One from whom we have turned away, to the Manifold, to the Super-heavenly, by whom we have understood the earthly. If we praise Him, it is because we are recognized by Him." Now this is piety. It is not only speculation, as the critics of Gnosticism have said. This is really religion. And there are many people today who would like to renew gnostic religion as their own daily expression of their religious experience; and not because of the fantastic speculation, but because of the real piety in it, Gnosticism was a very great danger for Christianity, because if Christian theology had succumbed to this temptation, the individual character of Christianity would have been lost. The unique ground of the person Jesus would have become meaningless. The Old Testament would have disappeared, and with it the historical picture of the Christ. All this has been avoided by those men whom

we call the anti-gnostic Fathers, the Fathers who were fighting against Gnosticism and who threw it out of the Church.

Now there are a few minutes and I would like to see how difficult, especially the first part of the lectures, were. Perhaps you have questions.

Q. I think the Logos doctrine greatly resembles the gnostic doctrine of the aeons. They are both emanations from God. Is there any real distinction between them?

A. That is a very good question. The distinction is the following: In the Logos Christology, as it was developed further on, we have the emphasis on the absoluteness of this aeon, which is Christ. Perhaps I can give you a great help for the understanding of the struggle between Arius and Athanasius, to which we come later on. What Arius actually did was to make the Christ, the heavenly Logos, into one of the aeons; while the Church decided that whatever one may think about aeons, or transcendent powers of being, the Logos is above them. .. If we did not have one of the Divine principles in which the innermost heart of God is expressed, then our salvation would not be a complete salvation. But what you said is very well said: these powers of being are like the Logos, hypostasized, hypostasized in the bathos, the abyss, the depth of the Divine Life. There, everything is in and is born out of it. It is the birthplace of all aeons. But now the Church limited the aeons to two: the Logos and the Spirit. And everything else, whether it was called an aeon or not, was not of equal rank. This was the development of the Trinitarian doctrine of God.

## Lecture 7: Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus.

Last time we finished with the description of that great movement called Gnosticism and which, more exactly, should be regarded as the wave of religious syncretism running from the East to the West, existing in many groups and forms and entering also Christianity. I gave you some of their main ideas. In opposition to – and partly also in acceptance of – the Gnostic ideas, the first great Christian theologians developed their systems: **Irenaeus, Tertullian and Hippolytus**. The defense against attacks from outside was made in terms of the Logos doctrine. But now some of the spirit of the world which was conquered by Christianity, entered Christianity itself. The fight now had to be waged against a Christianized paganism. But such a fight is never simply a negation: it is always reception, also. The result of this partial rejection, and partial reception, of the generally religious mood of that time is what we call "early Catholicism." The people with whom we now have to deal are important because they represent early Catholicism, expressing these ideas which grew out of the acceptance and rejection of the pagan religious movement of that time.

In order to do so, they accepted the Logos doctrine created by the Apologists, but they now brought it constructively – and not only apologetically – into a framework of Bible and tradition. In doing so they partly deprived it of its dangerous implications, one of them of course being the possibility of relapse into polytheism – tri-theism or duo-theism. It is the greatness of these people, Irenaeus and Tertullian, that they saw these dangers, used the Logos doctrine, and developed constructively the theological ideas in relationship to the religious movements of their time.

The religiously greatest of the three men I named is **Irenaeus**, who more than most of the people of his time, understood the spirit of Paul. You will recall that I said that already in the Apostolic Fathers, John and Matthew and the "catholic letters" were effective, but that Paul was not very much effective for that time any more. Now a man came – Irenaeus – who again had a feeling for what Paul's theology meant for the Christian Church. But it was not so much the doctrine with which Paul fought against Judaism – the doctrine of justification through faith by grace – but it was more the center of Paul's own teaching, namely, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which was important for Irenaeus.

In some ways Irenaeus was nearer to the Protestant ideas of Christianity than most of early Catholicism. Nevertheless he was the father of early Catholicism and ultimately not a Protestant, insofar as this side of Paul – which I like to call the “corrective side” of Paul, namely the doctrine of justification by faith – was not in the center even of Irenaeus.

The other man who belongs to the Anti-Gnostic Fathers is **Tertullian**. He is the master of Latin rhetoric. He is the creator of the Latin church terminology. He had a juristic mind, although he was not a jurist himself. He was a very aggressive temperament and a great character. He understood the primacy of faith and the paradox of Christianity, but he was not artificially primitive: he accepted at the same time the Stoic philosophy, and with it the idea that the human soul is by nature Christian – *anima naturaliter christiana*. And he accepted the Logos doctrine of the Apologists, because he was not only accepting the paradox of Christianity, but was at the same time a sharp rational mind and didn't believe that Greek philosophy could surpass Christianity in rational sharpness and clarity.

The third man was **Hippolytus**, who was a scholarly man more than the other two, and who continued the polemics against/Gnostic movement in exegetic works and church-historical works. His refutation of the heresies is already history, more than the life-and-death struggle as in Irenaeus and Tertullian.

So we have these three men, who saw the situation of the early Church. It's important for Protestants to see how early most fundamentals of the Roman system were already present in the third century.

The problem of the period, as posited by the Gnostics, was in the realm of authority: the question whether the holy scriptures were decisive, or the secret teachings of the Gnostics. The Gnostic teachers said that Jesus, for instance in the forty days after His resurrection when He was supposed to be together with His disciples, had given them secret insights, and these insights came to the Gnostic theologians and formed the character of Gnostic philosophy and theology. Now against this the Anti-Gnostic Fathers first of all had to establish a doctrine of the Scripture. The Holy Scripture is given by the Logos through the Divine Spirit. Therefore, it's necessary to fix the canon, and this problem now arose. You see, all these things – and you will find that in my whole lecture – are not created by people who were sitting in their studios and were thinking about the problem, e. g., “Now what about the Bible?: What belongs to it and what doesn't?” But it was done by people who felt that the very foundations of the Church were threatened by the intrusion

of secret traditions which asserted quite different things from what the Biblical writings said. So the decision of the Church as to what shall and what shall not belong to the canon, was a part of the life-and-death struggle with Gnosticism, and can be understood only from there. And this is so with all the statements of the early Church. We have an example in our own time: The restatement of the Lutheran confessions in modern form by the German synods was not a matter of conferences of theologians who were interested in restating the old confessions in a little bit revised form – that was tried, and without any effect or success – but it was done exactly as in the ancient Church: In the moment in which the so-called German Christians – namely the Nazis, who in many respects had similarities to the Gnostic movements – entered the Christian churches; and now the Christian Church had to state formulas of resistance. It was that resistance movement which the Germans could and did put up: namely, resistance of the churches against the intrusion of a pagan, half-gnostic philosophy into Christianity. It is in this way that you must think of the development of Christian dogma. Don't think of it in terms of professorial studies, as sometimes the theology of the Ecumenical Movement seems to develop... (The danger to the ecumenical movement) is not so much from the Communist side – they are on the outside – as it is if, for instance, a struggle develops between two halves of the Western world, the European and the Anglo-Saxon, where from the one or the other side, the attempt will be made to identify Christianity with, let us say, the American ways of life, as understood by some leaders of the present-day Congress.

Now if this happens, then there would be a real situation of life-and-death struggle: Christianity would have to fight for its very existence. This is what I mean with the serious and realistic character of the theological , development of the early Church, and also with the fixation of the canon.

They said the present period is poor in Spirit, and therefore we must always return to the classical period. The Apostolic period is the classical period of Christianity, and what has been written at that time is valid for all times. – We shall see later that this statement was not always acknowledged by Christian theology, but here it was for the first time really fixed. Therefore something really new cannot be canonic. This was one of the reasons why we have in the Biblical literature so many books which go under Apostolic names, although they were written in the post-Apostolic period. But that which is canonic, is canonic in an absolute sense, even in the letters of the text. Here Christianity simply followed the legalistic interpretation of the Law in Judaism where every Hebrew letter of the Old Testament text has an open and a

hidden meaning, and is absolutely inspired. But this was not enough – as it never was, either in Protestantism or in any other people in which the Bible was made the ultimate norm...because the Bible must be interpreted. And the Gnostics interpreted the Scriptures differently from the official Church. Another principle therefore must enter: TRADITION. The tradition was identified with the *regula*, the rule of faith. When this happens, not the Bible but the rule of faith becomes decisive, exactly as the creeds of the Reformation 50 years and later, after the Reformation, are the decisive canon for theological teaching, and not the Bible.

The rule of faith was also called the canon of truth, and it is true because it comes from the Apostles. It is *traditio apostolica*, apostolic tradition, which is mediated through the presbyters or bishops. This however, is still too much. There are many elements in the tradition, ethical and dogmatic, so it must be concentrated in one creedal form, and the summing up of the Bible in the rule of faith and the rule of faith in the creed, was made in connection with baptism, the main sacrament of that time. The confession of baptism is the creed.

This, of course, presupposes that the bishops who are responsible for the rule of faith and its summary, the creed, have the gift of truth. Why do they have it? Because they are the successors of the apostles. Here you have the clear expression of the episcopalian doctrine of apostolic succession.

The apostolic succession is most visible in the Roman church, which according to the anti-Gnostic Fathers, to Irenaeus and Tertullian, is founded by Peter and Paul. Irenaeus says about this church: "To this church all nations must come, because of its greater principality, the church in which the Apostolic tradition has been always preserved." Now please imagine: This is not a statement of the early 1870's but of the third century.

The unity of the Church everywhere, is based on the tradition of the baptismal creed, which is guaranteed by the apostolic succession. Therefore, Irenaeus demands obedience to the presbyters of whom he says they "have the succession from the Apostles." In this way the episcopate became the dogmatic guarantee of the saving truth.

So we have the Bible, the tradition, the rule of faith, the creed, the bishops: they all together are a system of guarantees, a very impressive system created in the fight against the Gnostics. And what we can be astonished about is how early all this happened.

Now against this a reaction took place. I want to deal with this before I go on with an elaboration of the doctrines of the anti-Gnostic Fathers. It was a reaction of the Spirit against the order. This reaction was represented by a man called MONTANUS, and his group the Montanists. This reaction was very serious, so much so that one of the two greatest anti-Gnostic theologians, Tertullian, himself became a Montanist. And it is important for us because Montanistic reactions against the ecclesiastical fixation of Christianity go on through all of Church history. So the fact that this group was not very successful historically doesn't mean that it was not very important from the point of view of Christian theology.

This group had two ideas: the Spirit, and the end. The Spirit was suppressed by the organization of the Church, and the fear of Spiritual movements because of the Gnostic claims to have the Spirit. It was denied that prophets necessarily have an ecstatic character. A churchman of that time wrote a pamphlet about the fact that it is unnecessary that a prophet speak in ecstasy. The Church couldn't understand the prophetic Spirit any more. It was afraid of it. And understandably, because in the name of the Spirit all kinds of disruptive elements came into the Church.

The other idea is that of the end. You remember that I said that already the Apostolic Fathers, and even already Paul, to a certain extent, started to establish themselves in this world, after the expectation of Jesus and the apostles that the end was very near and would come in their generation, was disappointed. Now this disappointment led to great difficulties and to the necessity of creating a worldly church, a church which is able to live in the world. Against this also, continuously in Church history, reactions set in. But they experienced what the earliest Christians experienced: the end they expected did not come. So the Montanists had to do the same as the church did: to establish themselves. And in the moment they established themselves, they also became a church. But it was a church in which much of the sectarian types of the churches of the Reformation and the later sects, was anticipated – namely, a strict discipline. They believe that they represent the period of the Paraclete, after the period of the Father and the Son. And this is always something the sectarian revolutionary movements in the Church claim: that they represent the period of the Spirit.

But then it always happens – even to the Quakers it happened, after their first ecstatic period – that if you want to fix the content of what the Spirit has taught them, it is of extreme poverty; it is nothing new, in comparison with the Biblical message, and what is new is usually a more or less rational moralism. This



happened to George Fox in his later development, and to his followers, and happens to all ecstatic sects: in the second generation they become rational, moralistic, legalistic, and the ecstatic element is gone, and not much comes out in terms of creativity as we have it in the classical period of apostolic Christianity.

They fixed these poor contents in new books and in the idea of a prophetic succession, which of course is self-contradictory because succession is an organizational principle and prophecy is an anti-organizational principle, and the attempt to bring them together was unsuccessful and always will be unsuccessful.

Now the Christian Church excluded Montanism; it conquered it. But such victories are always losses. Let's see the four ways in which this loss is visible:

1) The canon was victorious against the possibility of new revelations. – The solution of the Fourth Gospel that there are new insights, which of course are under the criticism of the Christ, was at least reduced in meaning and power.

2) The traditional hierarchy was confirmed against the prophetic spirit. – This was a very serious thing because since that time the prophetic spirit was more or less excluded from the Church and always had to flee in sectarian movements. Most of the so-called sectarian movements, ever since the defeat of Montanism; are movements into which the prophetic spirit fled because it couldn't find a place in the Church.

3) Eschatology became less interesting than it was in the Apostolic age. – Establishment was much more important, and the expectation of the end was reduced to an appeal to every individual that his end can come at any moment – which is how you usually handle it in your preaching. But the idea of an end of history was not important any more since that time.

4) The disciplinary strictness of the Montanists was lost, and a growing laxity took place in the Church. – Here again something happened which has happened all through Church history again and again, that new, small groups with disciplinary strictness arose, were regarded with great suspicion by the church, and developed themselves into larger churches only to lose the disciplinary power in themselves.

So you can say the result of the Montanist struggles was that traditional theology and above all its safeguards, were victorious against any danger, and that the conservative establishment of the Church was victorious against any eschatological radicalism and expectation. These two consequences are there, and now we must

ask: What was taught in the framework of these very strict safeguards given by the anti-Gnostic Fathers of the early Catholic church?

There is first one point which is obvious if you think of it as I said in connection with the Gnostics, namely the contrast between the father-God and the savior-God. One called the Gnostic theory *blasphemia creatoris*, the blasphemy of the creator-God. Now such blasphemy of the creator-God is something which should be kept in mind by all neo-orthodox theologians of today. There is much Gnostic Marcionism in them, much dualistic blasphemy of the creator-God. They put the savior-God so much over the creator-God that, although they never fall into a real heresy about it, they implicitly blaspheme the Divine creation by identifying it actually with the sinful state of reality.. Against all this – of today and of the past – people like Irenaeus said that God is one, and there is no duality in Him; law and Gospel, creation and salvation, are derived from the same God.

This God is known to us not speculatively but existentially. He expresses this: "Without God, you cannot know God." God is never an object. But in all knowledge, He is He who knows, in us and through us. Only He can know Himself, and we may participate in His knowledge of Himself, but He is not an object whom we can know from outside. According to His greatness, His absoluteness, His unconditional character, God is unknown. According to His love, in which He comes to us, He is known. Therefore in order to know God, you must be within God, you must participate in Him. You never can look at Him as an object outside of yourselves. This God has created the world out of nothing. This phrase "out of nothing" is not a story about the way in which God has created, but is a protective concept which in itself is only negatively meaningful, that there was no presupposed resisting matter out of which God created the world – as we have it in paganism.. This is the meaning of this doctrine. God has created the world "out of nothing" means God was not dependent on a matter which, (as the Greek matter, against the Demiurge), resisted the form which the Demiurge, the world-builder, wanted to impose on it. This is not Christian. The Christian idea is that everything is created directly by God, without a resisting matter; He is the cause of everything. His purpose, the immanent telos of reality, is the salvation of man. Therefore the result is: the creation is good, and the creator-God is the savior-God: they are not two. If you know a little of Church history and of our present situation, you will see immediately that these ideas are not old-fashioned problems of the past, but are very modern problems. In Puritanism, religious or secular, there is much blasphemy of the creator-God. We should always realize that that this blasphemy of

the creator-God is always based on the confusion of created goodness with the distortion of creation. You only need to think of the sexual problems to know what I mean.

Now this one God is a trius, a trinity. The word trinitas appears first in Tertullian – since God, although one, was never alone. Irenaeus: "There is always with Him the word and the wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, through which He has made everything freely and spontaneously." Here we still have the motives of the transcendent trinity, of the trinity in God. God is always a living God, and therefore He is never alone, never a dead identity with Himself. He has always with Himself His word and His wisdom, symbols for His Spiritual life, His self-manifestation and His self-actualization." It would be good if we sometimes went back to people like Irenaeus, to look into the motives of those doctrines such as the Trinity, which have become holy pieces to be adored on the altar and to be used in liturgical formulas, and never understood that they shall really say something about God as living, and make understandable the presence of the Divine as a living, creative ground.

According to Irenaeus, these three are one God, because they have one *dunamis*, power of being, essence, potentiality – you can use all these words. (Potentiality and dynamics are the Latin and Greek words, respectively ; "power of being" is perhaps the most exact translation.)

Tertullian speaks of the one Divine substance which develops in the triadic economy, i. e. , "building up"; the Divinity builds itself up eternally in a unity. Any polytheistic interpretation of the Trinity is sharply rejected. On the other hand, God is established as a living God and not as dead identity. Thus *una substantia, tres personae* , as Tertullian calls it, who used the formula first, and which ever since has been used. Man of course, contrary to Gnosticism, is created good. He is fallen by his own freedom. Man who is immortal by nature was supposed to be immortal through obedience to God, remaining in Paradise and participating in the food of the gods, in the tree of life. But he lost this power by disobedience to God. So it must be regained. Immortality – I said this already in connection with Justin and Ignatius – is not a natural quality but is something which must be given, out of the realm of the eternal: namely, the Divine. There is no other way to get it. Sin is spiritual as well as carnal. Adam has lost the possible *similitudo* (similitude) with God, namely immortality, but he never has lost the natural image, because the natural image makes him man. This is Irenaeus' famous distinction between *similitudo* and *imago*. These two words are used in the Vulgate translation of the

first verses of Genesis, that God made man in His similitude, in His image. This repetitious sentence is translated in two ways. This is long before the Vulgate and Irenaeus, who makes something theological out of it, which you cannot do from the Hebrew, which has only one word. But the interpretation is theologically very interesting. The one is the natural image of God, which every man has: man as man, man as rational being, man as able to have relationship to God, man as finite. . . is the image of God. Similitudo is a possible development of man, namely, becoming similar to God. And the main point in the similarity with God is eternal life, because that's what God has and if somebody gets this, then he overcomes his natural mortality and participates in the eternal life in terms of a gift of God. Again, I say, that if we had a Church council deciding between the traditional idea of the immortality of the soul.--so popular especially in this country.--and my own position that this is non-Christian and not even genuinely Platonic. . then I think if we could call Ignatius, Justin, Irenaeus to decide which of us were heretic, I think they would decide for me, and against those of you who would defend the natural immortality of the soul. The one is classical theology; the other is a popular remnant of the theology of the Enlightenment, where the three ideas of God (in terms of a moral ideal), of freedom (in terms of a possible moral decision), and of immortality (as a guarantee in terms of moral progress) were in the center of rational theology. This was not Christian, but more or less misunderstood Platonism, and it is something which is still much more powerful than any Christian eschatological idea in the popular religious feeling of this country. And I emphasize this so much because it has so many other consequences theologically.

## Lecture 8: Covenants, Church Fathers.

We began the discussion of the Anti-Gnostic Fathers, Irenaeus and Tertullian, and I emphasized that the main point was the doctrine of the creator-God (put forth) against the creator-God in Gnosticism, namely, the separation of the creator from the saviour.

The history of salvation is described in three or four covenants. The first covenant is that which is given with creation, the natural law, which is ultimately the law of love and which is innate in man. Everybody has this natural law within himself. Secondly, the law re-stated, after it has faded away when man lost his immediate innocent participation in it. The third stage, again, is law, but now law reestablished in Christ, after Judaism distorted the law of Sinai. It's always the same law, it's always ultimately the law of love, it's always that which is innate in man by nature. God doesn't give arbitrary commandments, but he restates those commandments which are identical with man's essential nature, and which therefore are valid under all circumstances. This doctrine is very important and we must keep it in mind.

Then in Tertullian, insofar as he was a Montanist, we have a fourth covenant, the covenant with the Paraclete, the Divine Spirit, which gives the new law at the end of the days. This means the history of salvation was understood as the education of mankind in terms of a law. This was a very powerful system of thought. It made it possible to understand why the Old Testament belongs to the Christian Bible, why philosophy belongs to Christianity: they all are stages in the one history of salvation; they are not negated by the revelation in Christ, but confirmed. This should never be forgotten in Christian theology, that the problem of dualism was solved in terms of a history of salvation in different covenants. One can say that it is the Biblical idea of *kairos*, the "right time." At any time the revelation must do something special. There is not only one revelation. There is revelation adapted to the situation first that of Paradise; then that of the elected nation; then that of the followers of Christ; and, sometimes, that of the Divine Spirit. There is, in all cases, a different *kairos*, a different right time. Such a kind of thinking liberates Christianity immediately from a narrowness in which its own revelation is declared to be the only one, and it is not seen in the context of the history of revelation, and which finally leads in

Marcion as today, partly at least, in the Barthian school to an isolation of revelation over against the whole history of mankind.

Now Christologically, Irenaeus, for instance, says: "The invisible of the Son is the Father; the visible of the Father is the Son." And this is eternally so. There is always something which potentially is visible in God or we would perhaps better say "manifest" in God and there is something which remains as mystery and abyss in God. These are the two sides which symbolically speaking are distinguished as Father and Son. Eternally the Son is the visible of the Father and the Father is the invisible of the Son, but it becomes manifest in the personal appearance of Jesus as the Christ. The Anti-Gnostic Fathers, because they had to do with Christian polytheistic tendencies, emphasized more the monotheistic element in Christianity than it was emphasized by the Apologists, whose discovery of the Logos doctrine brought them into some dangerous approximation to polytheistic, or tri-theistic, elements at least (if the Spirit is treated in the same way, in which the Logos is treated).

In the line of thought leading from John to Ignatius to Irenaeus, the Logos is not so much a lesser hypostasis, a lesser form or power of being in God, but is much more God himself as revealer, as his self-manifestation. Irenaeus calls salvation *anakephalaiosis*, or *recapitulatio*, recapitulation, pointing to Ephesians I: All things in heaven and earth alike should be gathered up in Christ. Irenaeus constructs the idea of the history of salvation in connection with these words of Ephesians. For Irenaeus it means that the development which was broken in Adam namely the *similitudo* or immortality is taken up again by Christ and is fulfilled in him. In him the new mankind has started, that which mankind was supposed to become, namely a decided and tested new reality: this, mankind has become in Christ, after Adam had not been able to bring it about. But it's not only mankind which finds its fulfillment in the appearance of the Christ, but it is the whole cosmos. But in order to do this, Christ had to participate in that nature which broke away from this straight development, namely, in the nature of Adam. To fulfill it, he had to participate in it. So he has become the beginning of the living, as Adam has been the beginning of the dead. Adam is fulfilled in Christ, which means that Christ is the essential man, the man Adam was essentially, and should become but did not become. That which Adam i. e., mankind as a whole, seen essentially has not reached but from which mankind has broken away, that is now the work of the Christ: to actualize this in himself. Adam was not fulfilled in the beginning; he could not have borne fulfillment, as Irenaeus says; he lived in childish innocence.

Now here we have a profound doctrine of a (let me call it) transcendent humanism, a humanism which says that Christ is the fulfillment of essential man, namely of the Adamic nature, but that this fulfillment was necessary because it didn't occur in a straight way a break occurred, and this break in Adam, who fell away from what he essentially was supposed to become, was fulfilled in Christ. The childish innocence of Adam of course has been lost, but now the man who is tested and decided can become what he was supposed to become, namely fully human, and he can become so because we can participate in this full humanity as it has appeared in Christ. And don't forget that this always includes eternal life. It means similitude with God with respect to participation in infinity. That's what Christ does, and that's what we can do too.

I always am surprised, when I go into these matters, how much better the old Christian theology was than the popular theology which developed in the 19th century how much profounder, how much more adequate to the paradox of Christianity without becoming irrationalistic or nonsensical or absurd. It never did. Of course, there were absurd elements on the borderline, on the edge, with respect to miracles, etc. But the central position was as profound as possible, namely an understanding of Christ not as an accidental event or as a transmutation of a highest being, but as fulfilled or essential humanity, and therefore always related to Adam, I. e., to man's essential being, and to what Adam did when he broke away from himself his fallen state.

In this context, Tertullian gave the fundamental formula for the Trinity and Christology. He used a skillful juristic language which became decisive for all the future. It entered the Roman Catholic creeds which were written of course in Latin and had the power of the right word, which also has its *kairos* and the words of Tertullian had their "right time" in which they could "hit" and express what was going on. "Let us preserve the mystery of the Divine economy which disposes the unity into trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, three not in essence but in grade; not in substance but in form." In these words we have for the first time the word *trinitas*. Tertullian introduced it into the ecclesiastical language. He also speaks of the unity in the trinity, denying any form of tri-theistic tendencies. Instead of that he speaks of "economy," a very important word in all ancient Christian theology. Today it is the method of producing the means of life; but economy is derived from *oikos*, meaning house; thus, building a house in this case, building God's full life itself. God develops Himself eternally in Himself, and builds up His manifestation in periods of history. It is "economy," building in a

living and dynamic way the Trinity in historical manifestation. But this Trinity does not mean there are different essences; there is one Divine essence. If you translate "essence" by power of 'being, then you have what these people meant. There is one Divine power of being and each of the "economic" manifestations of the power of being participates in the full power of being. God has eternity, the ratio (reason), the logos in Himself. It is an inner word. And this is of course the characteristic of spiritual existence. If you say God is Spirit, you must also say He is trinitarian, namely He has the inner word within Himself, and has the unity with His self-objectivation. It proceeds from God, like the beam of the sun proceeds from the sun. This happens in the moment of creation. In this moment the Son becomes another one, a second person, and then a third person. But when Tertullian uses these words, we must not be misled by words, from the very beginning of our more difficult analyses which will inescapably come in the next weeks, concerning the Trinitarian and Christological problems. The words "substance" or "essence" mean power of being; the Divine power of being is in all of them. ... And "persona" is not our "person"; "persons" are you and I; each of you is a person for himself. We are persons because we are able to reason, to decide, to be responsible, etc. This concept of person was neither applied to God this, not at all.,-nor was it applied even to the three hypostases in God, although the word "person" was applied not to God but to the Father, the Son and the Spirit. What did this word mean? *Prosopon* is "face," "countenance," or *persona*, the mask of the actor through which a special character is acted out. So we have three faces, three countenances, three characteristic expressions of the Divine, in the process of the Divine self-explication.

These are the classical formulas of a Trinitarian monotheism, which uses these formulas often, even in Tertullian probably, to cover philosophical implications with which he didn't want to deal. But the Greeks wanted to deal with the implications they were philosophers and so they tried to interpret what the real meaning of these words is. But let me repeat: *persona* is never applied to God before the 19th century; He never was called person. Secondly, in all classical theology, the term *persona* is applied to the three faces, or countenances, or self-manifestations of God: God as abyss, or Father; God as form, or Logos; God as dynamics, or Spirit. But this immediately shows that *persona* in this sense does not mean the juristic or ethical personality which it means today, but it means the independent self-manifestation of God, the countenance, or if you want, the mask, but not mask in order to veil something, but to reveal something, namely a special character.



Now I hope these interpretations have at least given you a little shock, if you run ahead without thinking about the (meaning of "person", in the phrase "God is personal," and "I cannot pray to a personal God", etc... Don't say it so easily. . . .) . . . .

It is not only true with respect to the idea of God, especially Trinity, that Tertullian gave fundamental formulas; he did it also with respect to Christology. "We see a double essence, not confused but united in one person, in God and the man Jesus." Now in such a statement we have the formula of the doctrine of the two natures or powers of being in the one person, namely Christ. This smooth formula of Tertullian, the juristic mind, covers centuries of problems which came out after the formula was found. But his formula prevailed over against everything which followed. Here again we must be clear about the words here persona is meant as one individual face or characteristic being of personal character namely Jesus. And in this person two different powers of being are united, namely the power of being which we call Divine and that which we call human. Each of these powers is dependent; none of them is confused with the other; it has its own standing nevertheless they are united in the unity of a person. If we ask how is this possible, then we are in the later discussions to come.

The question whether the incarnation is a metamorphosis that God becomes man or the acceptance of a human essence: Tertullian decides for the second, because he is certain, as were most of the theologians, that God is ultimately unchangeable, and that the two powers of being must be preserved. Jesus as man is not a transformed God, but he is a real man, he is true man, and therefore can be true God also. He is not a mixture. If the Logos were transfigured or transformed into something else, then He would have changed His nature, but the Logos remains Logos in the man Jesus. So he decides much more in the line of adopting of a human nature by the Logos, instead of a mythological transmutation idea.

The saving power, according to Irenaeus, is the Divine Spirit who dwells in the Church and renews the members out of what is old, into the newness in Christ. He gives them life (zoe) and light (phos) He gives them the new reality. This is God's work in man, which is accepted by faith. Therefore no law is needed, since we love God and the neighbor. This is the Pauline element, but it is not strong enough to overcome the anti-Pauline elements. Finally, the New Being is mystical-ethical. It is in this sense the highest form of early Catholicism, but it is not Protestantism, where the renewal is by justification through faith.

Irenaeus thinks of the process of salvation in terms of a mystical regeneration into immortality. Against this, Tertullian speaks of a wholesome discipline as the content of the Christian life. He speaks of a process of education by the law, and the reality of obedience to it is eternal life. Here we have the Roman who is a jurist and likes the law, and at the same time the ascetic pietist, who became a Montanist. We have in Irenaeus mystical participation; and in Tertullian subjection to the law: the two sides of early Catholicism, the two sides which were always effective. The second was decisive, before the Protestant break. But the Protestant break denied also the Irenaeian form and returned to the one side of Paul, namely justification by faith. So we have always similar problems arising as early as that. We have the relationship to Christ more spiritual mystical participation, more legal by accepting Him as the new law. And these two sides are going on also in Protestantism.

In Tertullian we have the Roman Catholic form of Jewish legalism. The relation to God is legal. Christianity is merely the new law. Christianity returns to the religion of the law but is prevented from becoming simply another Jewish system of laws and rules by the sacramental salvation. Therefore one can say: "the evangelion, the Gospel, is our special law." Trespassing has the consequence that guilt is produced and punishments demanded. "But if we do His will, He will make Himself our debtor. Then we gain merits."

There are two classes of demands: precepts and counsels. In this way every man can acquire a treasury of holiness in which he returns to Christ what Christ has given him. The virtue of the Christian is crowned. The sacrifice of asceticism and martyrdom moves God to do good to us. "In the measure in which you don't spare yourselves, in this measure, believe me, God will spare you." This of course has a lot of Roman Catholic ideas. This was at the end of the second century. We have now already the difference of precepts for everybody, and counsels for the monks; we have already the idea of Christ as the new law. Roman Catholicism came quickly, and the reason for this is that Roman Catholicism was the form in which Christianity could be received including all the Roman and Greek forms of thinking and living.

Baptism is still the most important sacrament. It removes past sins. It has two meanings here again we come deeply into Roman Catholic ideas. The one is the washing away of the sins, and the other is the reception of the Divine Spirit a negative and a positive element. This of course presupposed the baptismal

confession of the creed; it presupposed the consciousness of one's sins and the certainty of the Savior.

Characteristic for baptism are the following activities:

1) One lays the hand on the baptized, and gives him sacred oil, the medium which makes the reception of the Spirit possible.

2) One refutes the Devil, with all his pomp and angels. One leaves the demonic sphere. You must remember how important this way; the New Testament is full of the idea that Christianity has overcome the demonically ruled world. Therefore the refutation of the Devil is something which was extremely important: it meant really the end of participation in paganism. And it was not simply a moralistic formula; it went much deeper: it was the breaking of the religious neurosis which is paganism, the religious limitation to polytheistic limits, to demons, in other words. They could be thrown out. I remember from my own confirmation in Germany that, as a 14-year old child, this was the formula we had to say: I reject the Devil and all its pomp, etc... For us at that time this was some kind of romantic, dark and mysterious feeling about powers from which one goes away definitively. It was not what it was for a pagan who went over from a world which was really ruled by strong demonic powers: into a world of love. But it still was something. The symbol of the Devil was still alive even at that time.

3) The third element in baptism is the unity of forgiveness and regeneration, I. e. , the pagan existence has come to an end; the Christian existence begins. In this moment the preparatory stage has come to an end and those who are baptised are called the *telaioi*, the perfect ones, those who have reached the *telos*, the inner aim, of the introduction into the Church, the inner aim of man's existence itself; and the universal aim: to be fulfilled in what one's own being demands.

With respect to the theory of baptism, the Anti-Gnostic Fathers said that the Spirit is united with the water as it was in the Gnostic mysteries. The Spirit and this was easy especially for Tertullian as a Stoic is so to speak a material force in the water. This force some physically extinguishes the former sins and gives, physically, the Spirit. Here we have contradictory statements, but these statements were made. It is the famous "materialism" of Tertullian, who thought in these terms. This was very important because it made infant baptism possible. If the water is the saving power, then the child can be saved as much as the adult.

Now it was not without hesitation that Tertullian accepted this doctrine, but Christianity had to accept it in the moment in which one ceased to baptize individuals called out of all paganism, and baptized all nations. Then you cannot exclude the children. But if you include the children, then you must have a completely objective theory, because children are not subjects who can decide. And this is what people of that time saw, and what Luther and the Reformers saw therefore the strong emphasis on baptism in order to make it possible for everybody to participate in it.

The Lord's Supper is for Irenaeus the physical mediation of immortality; the union of heavenly and Divine elements take place. Participation in it is continuous reincarnation.

Now these ideas are the Roman church, and they are ideas which became extremely influential in the long run, and have finally conquered all other ideas. The Catholic church was ready about the year 300, I. e., it needed only a very short time to be brought into fulfillment because all the motives were ready, they were ready in paganism, and paganism couldn't receive Christianity without these elements. Therefore we shall not say that Protestantism is the restatement of the early centuries. It simply is not. The Catholic motives were very strong from the very beginning. And this is one of the reasons why the "middle way" of the Anglican church, which in itself would be an ideal solution for the split of the churches, doesn't work because the so-called agreement of the first 500 years is certainly an agreement of that period, but it is by no means with the principles of the Reformation. Therefore if someone says let's unite by going back to the development, let us say, from Irenaeus to Dionysius the Areopagite, then I would say you can do that, but you had better become a Catholic, because Protestantism simply cannot do that. And in everything I said today, you have a lot of such elements which Protestantism simply cannot accept especially in the doctrine of the Church, of the authorities, of the sacraments; not so much with respect to Trinity and Christology, although the implications are present there also.

The end of Greek philosophy is a state in which philosophy has become religion, and religion mystical philosophy. When now many philosophers became Christians, they could use a philosophy which was already half religious. When you hear about the relationship of philosophy and theology, which is often discussed in these rooms here around, then you must not forget that this is not the kind of philosophy which is taught by empiricists, logical positivists, naturalists, etc., as it is done

today. But philosophy in the period of the Bible was in itself a religious attitude. It was not simply a discussing of elements, but it was something which had in itself fundamental decisions which had mystical-religious character. This is the reason why Christianity had to deal with philosophy at that time, not only as a nice pastime for intellectually gifted people to whom we leave that pastime, but it was another religion. The name of this religion was **Neo-Platonism**. In Neo-Platonism, Platonic ideas and also Stoic and Aristotelian ideas were brought together in a system which was philosophical and religious at the same time. Neo-Platonism and the development towards it, expressed the longing of the ancient world for a new religion. It expressed the dissolution of all special religions and it expressed at the same time the catastrophe of autonomous reason, the impossibility of reason to create by itself a new content of life. Therefore these philosophers became mystics, and as mystics, they tried to create under imperial protection (Julian the Apostate) a new religion (ca. 250). In doing so, they had to clash with Christianity. Now I come to that point where Christianity had not only to do with general philosophical tradition in Greece we discussed this already in the Apologists and in Irenaeus and Tertullian - -but Christianity was the rival religion with a philosophical religion, with a philosophy where the beginning and the end is religious. This is what Neo-Platonism is. With this, and the way in which the great Alexandrian theologians, Clement and Origen, put this into reality and used the philosophical religion of the Neo-Platonists to express Christianity, we will deal more fully next week..

## Lecture 9: Neo-Platonism: Plotinus. Clement of Alexandria. Origen.

Neo-Platonism is not only important because it was the philosophy which deeply influenced the first great theological system, that of Origen, but it was also the philosophy which influenced (through Dionysius the Areopagite, of whom we shall hear more later) all forms of Christian mysticism and most forms of classical Christian theology, especially with respect to the doctrine of God, world, and soul. Therefore it is impossible to understand the development of Christian theology without knowing something about this last great attempt of paganism to express itself in terms of a philosophical theology, or theological philosophy, which was both science and life for the ancient mind.

The man who is mostly responsible for the system of Neo-Platonism is Plotinus, who according to his dependence on Plato, is called "neo-Platonist"; but it is not he alone, it is a whole school of greatest influence. There is not only a scientific and religious side but also a political side to it: the emperor Julian the Apostate tried to introduce, against Christianity, the Neo-Platonic system, which shows that he considered it not only as a science but as the all-embracing system of religious elevation of the soul. All these things make it necessary to dwell on this system more than perhaps you think it necessary, for a philosophical non-Christian system.

God, for Plotinus, is the transcendent One, the One which transcends every number; also the number "one" insofar as it is a number which includes 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. It is that which is beyond number, and for this he uses the word "one." So when you hear, in all mystical language through all the centuries, the word "one" in the mystical expressions, don't take it as one beside others, but as that which transcends numbers.

It points especially to that which is beyond the basic cleavages of reality, which are the cleavages between subject and object, between self and world. The One is beyond that; there is neither subject nor object, neither self nor world. Therefore the Divine is the abyss of everything special, the abyss in which everything definite disappears. But this abyss is not simply something negative; it is the most positive of all because it contains everything that is. Therefore when you hear, in mystical literature, something about the transcendent nothingness, don't take it as "nothing" but as "no-thing", namely "no something", nothing definite, nothing

finite, the ground of everything finite but itself no-thing, nothing finite and definite. Since it is without differentiation within itself, it is immovable, unchangeable, eternal. But out of this eternal ground of everything, in which everything disappears, everything has its origin at the same time. The whole system is a description of the way in which the world and all its forms originate in the ultimate ground of being. The first, which radiates like the light out of the sun, is what in Greek is called the nous – which can be translated by "spirit" (small "s") or "mind." It is the second principle after the ultimate principle, after the ground of being out of which it has emanated. This second principle, that of the nous (or mind or spirit) is the principle in which the first, the eternal ground, looks at itself. It is the principle of the self-intuition of the eternal; God being manifest to Himself, in the principle of nous. This self-intuition of the Divine, in the principle of nous, is the source of all forms and structures, of all possibilities, of all that which Plato called "ideas" and what, as I hope you have learned in the meantime, means essences of being, essential potentialities of being. Everything beautiful, everything true, is contained in the nous, in the Divine mind and His eternal self-intuition.

Not only are the universal essences – tree-hood, redness, etc. – in the eternal mind, but also the essences of the individuals. Let me make this clear by saying that in God is the form of each of us, independent of the changes in every moment of our life, that form which a great painter would see and express in his picture of us. All this is in the eternal mind, in the eternal spirit or nous.

But now it comes to a third principle: he calls it soul. "Soul" is the principle of life in all Greek thinking. It is not an immortal substance, first of all, but it is the principle of movement, the principle which moves the stars: therefore the stars have souls; the principle which moves the animals and plants: they also have souls; the principle which moves our bodies: so we have souls; the principle which moves the whole universe: so there is a world-soul, the soul which is the moving principle of everything that is. This is the second principle, after the ultimate.

This soul-principle is midway between the nous on the one side, and the bodily reality on the other. It is the productive power of the existing world; it forms and controls matter, as our life-principle forms and controls every cell of our body. The soul of the world actualizes itself in many individual souls. Everything has an individual soul. These individual souls give movement and life to everything, but they all have their common principle in the world-soul.

Now this principle of "soul", universally and individually, is the principle of ambiguity. Plotinus knew what I try to teach now for weeks in this room each morning at 9 o'clock (in the course on Advanced Problems in Systematic Theology,) that life is ambiguous, that ambiguity is a definite characteristic of life. He describes the ambiguity of the principle of the soul in the following way: the soul is turned both towards the spirit (or mind) and towards matter. It has, so to speak, two directions in which to look: it looks always to the meaningful contents – we call this in our language man's spiritual life, in knowledge, esthetics, ethics, and everything else; and at the same time (to) the relationship to our bodily existence and the whole world of material embodiment. The soul has this ambiguity; it has these two sides.

In this system of hierarchies, coming down from the ultimate, (which is beyond anything definite) to the mind (soul), everything which is has a place. This was very important because in this way Plotinus could place the whole mythological world, after it was purified by philosophy, into his system. The gods of the pagans are limited powers of being which have their place in the whole of reality. This world is a harmonious world; it is directed by the principle of providence. Here, first, providence and harmony are united, – the main principle of the Enlightenment, of the modern belief in progress in this country and everywhere, the basis of an optimistic world view. This optimism immediately makes itself felt in another statement of Plotinus, namely that the planetary forces, i. e., the demonic forces, are an illusion; they have no independent power; they are subjected to providence, (exactly as Paul describes it in Romans 8, except that Plotinus derives this same statement from his philosophy of cosmic harmony, while Paul derives it from the victorious fight of the Christ against the demons.)

There are many different souls in the cosmos: mortal souls, such as plants, animals and man; and immortal souls, such as the half-divine and divine beings as have appeared in mythology. In this way the pagan powers of being have found a place to rest on; they are reestablished not as gods in mythological terms, but as powers of being. And therefore not contradicting each other, not imperialistic – one god wanting to be the God of all gods – but brought into a system of hierarchies where they have their definite place.

The principle which orders this whole world, in terms of providence, is the logos. It is the rational side of the nous, the mind. Now you will have some difficulty in distinguishing these three concepts, perhaps, so let me repeat this because it is



important for the later development of the Logos doctrine. After the abysmal One, beyond every number and everything special, we have the nous. We can call it perhaps the principle of self-consciousness in which God has present all the potentialities of being, all the essences which appear in reality. The second principle, the soul, the principle of movement, of life, also of person. The third principle is not another hierarchy but is only the dynamic side of nous, the principle of reason or logos, which organizes everything providentially, and gives it its place. It is the natural law, to use a modern expression, to which everything is subjected, in physics and in living bodies. The nous is not the logos; it is, so to speak, the source of all contents, but the logos gives order to them. The logos is the more dynamic principle, which is the providentially working power which directs the natural laws and the ethical laws.

Now I come to the next step in this system. The soul, because of its ambiguity, is the dynamic force which now changes the whole consideration. The soul is able to turn away from the nous, and with it from its eternal source in the abysmal One; it can separate itself from its eternal origin and can turn to the lower realms. Nature is the realm of the unconscious, between matter and the conscious soul, but nature has unconscious souls, while in man alone the soul is completely conscious. This turning away of the soul from the nous towards matter, towards the bodily realm, is the source of evil. But evil is not a positive power, it is the negation of the spiritual. It is participation in matter; it is participation in non-being, in that which has no power of being by itself. When the soul turns to non-being, then evil arises. But evil is not an ontological reality: this, neither Greeks nor Christians could admit; this was the Manichaean heresy that there is a Divine ground of evil, a Divine being which produces evil. Evil is non-being. Now if I say this, I know that many of my dear colleagues, and some of my even dearer students, would say: "So you say that evil is nothing, sin is nothing, sin is non-being; so you don't take sin seriously!" Then you should at least say that Plotinus or Augustine, who said the same thing, do not take sin seriously. Now it is a little hard to say this of these people if you see their further developments, especially Augustine. Nevertheless, the sound of the word "non-being" conveys to some of us the imagination that sin is not real. But a distortion of something which has being is as real as the undistorted state of that being, only it is not ontologically real. And that is what Plotinus says here, and that is what Augustine says, and that is what every Christian who is not a Manichaean heretic, also must say, because if sin is ontologically real, this would mean that there is a creative principle of evil -- as we have it in Manichaeism -- and that is what the doctrine of creation denies. "Esse qua esse

bonum est," being as, namely as the distortion of the good creation. And that is what even being is good, said Augustine and also the anti-Gnostic Fathers. Therefore when you hear people say sin is non-being, or the turning of the soul towards non-being, this does not mean at all that sin is nothing. On the contrary, it takes sin extremely seriously Plotinus means. He describes this non-being (m on) (as) that which is matter and can become being and not non-being (ouk on). . . . This non-being of which he speaks (m on) for the Greeks, m is that which has not yet being and resists against having being. So he calls it that which lacks measure, limit, form. Then he describes this non-being: it is always in want, indefinite, hungry, it is the absolute poverty. In other words, evil is the presence of this non-being in our bodily existence. It is the absence of the power of being, which is the power of the good.

The soul has turned towards this non-being because it believed that with the help of it it could stand upon itself, and has separated itself from the ground and from the nous towards which it looked, originally. But soul looks back and yearns for the ground from which it comes. Lovingly, the soul ascends to that which is worth being loved, namely the ground of being itself, the origin. If the soul has the intuition of this ultimate aim of its longing, and if it has reached this aim, it has become like God. He who has the ultimate intuition of the Divine has become one with God.. But this way is hard. This way goes through the virtues first, to the ascetic purification next. And the ultimate union with God cannot be reached, either by morals or by asceticism; it can only be reached in this life by grace, namely when the Divine power of the transcendent One grasps the mind in ecstasy . This happens only rarely, only in great experiences which cannot be forced, which happen or don't 'happen.

In the highest ecstasy occurs what Plotinus calls the flight of the one to the One, i. e., of us who are individual ones to the Ultimate One which is beyond number, and in which the telos, the aim, is reached for which all Greek philosophy always has asked: What is the telos, the inner aim, the goal, the purpose, of man's being? The answer was already in Plato: homoiosis to theou kata to dunaton, i. e., becoming similar to God as much as possible. This was also the aim of the mystery religions, in which the soul was supposed to participate in the eternal One. This is the Alexandrian scheme of thought. It is a circle, starting in the abysmal One, going down in emanation to the hierarchies until it comes to the ambiguous situation of the soul, then through the soul falling into the power of the material world, which

is determined by non-being. Then the elevation of the soul back through all these different grades up to the highest one, and in ecstasy this goal is reached.

Now keep this system in mind; you cannot understand the relationship of Christianity to mysticism, to Greek philosophy, or to anything of the period out of which Christianity came, without having this system in your minds.

This system was developed in Alexandria, and it was the same teacher, Ammonius Saccus, who taught Origen that taught Plotinus; Origen was the great Alexandrian theologian and philosopher. But before we come to him, we must look for a certain time at this school in Alexandria, of which he was by far the greatest teacher. This school was called a school for catechetes, for people who should instruct the future ministers how to teach the people, to introduce them into Christianity. It was a kind of theological seminary, and the earliest – in spite of Union Seminary! – and up to now the most famous in the history of Christianity. The first great teacher in it was Clement of Alexandria. We already quoted from a Clement among the Apostolic Fathers, who is usually called Clement of Rome, and has nothing to do with Clement of Alexandria. Clement uses the Logos doctrine very radically. In this respect he is more dependent on Stoicism than on the Platonic school. But there are many Platonic elements in later Stoicism anyhow. All these schools converged slowly in Neo-Platonism. God is the One and beyond one-ness, in numbers. The Logos, however, is the mediator of everything in which the Divine becomes manifest. He calls the Logos the man-loving organ of God, and therefore the educator of mankind in past and present. There is always a working of the Logos in human minds, there is always self-manifestation of the Divine. The Logos has prepared the Jews by the law, the Greeks by philosophy. But he has prepared them; he has prepared all nations. The Logos is never lacking; God is never without self-manifestation. When Clement speaks of philosophy, he doesn't think so much of a special philosophy – although probably Stoicism has influenced him most – but he thinks of the result of this converging movement in philosophy: that which is true in all philosophers. Therefore in his writing, many Greek materials are mixed with Biblical materials. He quotes whole sections from Stoic sources. Some people have tried to distinguish a genuine from an amended Clement, but there is no generally accepted conviction about this. In any case the way in which he was given to us is that in which he was always influential.

What he did was to introduce Christianity not only into philosophy but also into a philosophical life – we would say a civilized or educated life, also. Philosophen was

defined by him as striving for a perfect life. It was not defined as sitting at home and calculating possible logical figures. But living philosophical life was the striving to become as near to God as possible, in late Greek development. Therefore his system is not basically ascetic, but he accepts the bodily reality and the intellectual culture. His idea is to live according to the logos, in unity with the logos, a logikon life – perhaps best translated by a "meaningful" or "reasonable" life, a life in terms of objective meanings. Christians start first with faith, pistis, a word which is only badly translated by "faith." It is a state of being in faith. Faith in this sense is a state of participation in the reality of the new being. Faith in this sense includes conversion, ascetic tendencies, passions and hope. This is the presupposition of all other developments within Christianity. And here he deviates from all Greek philosophers. Living according to the logos means participation in the realm of faith and love, namely the realm of the congregation of the church. The Alexandrian theologians were not free philosophers -- it is doubtful whether there were any anyhow, but certainly they were not. They were leading members of the Christian Church and therefore they all belonged to the state or stage of faith, which is the presupposition for all knowledge. But the state of faith is not sufficient since – and here the first Catholic sound appears – it is only understood as assent and obedience. But this is not sufficient. A real participation demands more. It drives beyond itself towards knowledge. This knowledge is called gnosis. The Christian is the perfect gnostic, and therefore he can reject Gnosticism. It is cognitive faith, as he calls faith: a faith which develops its own contents cognitively. It is a scientific explanation of the traditions, ("scientific" not in the sense of natural science, but in the sense of methodological.) Everybody is on the way of this development. . . Only a few reach the aim. The perfect ones are only those who are, as he says, "Gnostics according to the ecclesiastical canon.." Keep this phrase in mind; it means that philosophers, with all the means of philosophy, are at the same time bound by the ecclesiastical tradition which they accepted when they entered the Church. The highest good of these perfect Gnostics is the knowledge of God. But this knowledge is not a theoretical knowledge in terms of arguments or analyses, but it is participation in God. It is not epistem , scientific knowledge; it is gnosis , mystical or participating knowledge. This is what he also calls anti-gnostic knowledge. It is a gnosis of participation, in the congregation and in God. It is not a gnosis of a free speculation. The tradition remains the canon, i. e., the criterion, and the Church is the mother without which no gnosis is possible.

Now this is what we have to know about Clement. It is worthwhile reading him. But in any case, here you have one great example of Christian thinking and Greek philosophy forming a synthesis.

Before I come to Origen, I want to say that Christianity had to cope with this universal and extremely impressive system of Neo-Platonism, in which all the values of the past were united. Christianity had to use it and to conquer it at the same time. This was done by the school of which Clement was the first important head. It was the elevation of Christianity to a state of highest education. Let us look at the Neo-Platonists. One of the most important for theology is Porphyry, who acknowledges the high educated standing of the school of Alexandria, especially of Origen. But he regrets that Origen lived in a barbaric and irrational way as a Christian. Participation in the congregation was incomprehensible to the Neo-Platonist Porphyry, The philosophical creativity of Origen was completely acknowledged by him, and of this philosophical creativity Porphyry said that he "hellenized" in his thoughts, especially by interpreting the strange myths by Greek thought. What these people were – Clement and Alexandria – can be stated in these terms: they were both passionate Greek philosophers and faithful and obedient members of the Catholic church of that time. And they were not in doubt that it is possible to combine these two sides.

Now the way in which Clement did it, with respect to predominantly Stoic ideas and educational principles, we have noted. We now come to Origen and his system. Here we have the fulfillment of this program. Origen begins his system with the question of the sources. (By the way, his system is the first complete system of Christian theology, even over against Irenaeus and Tertullian). He takes these sources much more seriously than Clement ever did. The sources are the Biblical writings and their summary in the ecclesiastical teaching and preaching. The old "rule of faith" gives the systematic scheme for his system, but the basis of all the contents are the Biblical books. Therefore, as in Clement, Origen says that the first step for the true theologian is the acceptance of the Biblical message. Nobody can be a theologian who does not belong to the congregation; a free-soaring philosopher is not a Christian theologian. But this is not all that is needed. In order to become a theologian, you must also try to understand, and that means, for him, philosophical and especially Neo-Platonic understanding. This is the answer to the same problem, very similar to that of Clement, but as we shall see, much more developed and elaborated and infinitely important for all later Christian development.

## Lecture 10: The Theology of Origen

Neo-Platonism is not only important because it was the philosophy which deeply influenced the first great theological system, that of Origen, but it was also the philosophy which influenced (through Dionysius the Areopagite, of whom we shall hear more later) all forms of Christian mysticism and most forms of classical Christian theology, especially with respect to the doctrine of God, world, and soul. Therefore it is impossible to understand the development of Christian theology without knowing something about this last great attempt of paganism to express itself in terms of a philosophical theology, or theological philosophy, which was both science and life for the ancient mind. The basic authority for Origen is Scripture. He introduces the famous distinction of the three meanings of the Scripture:

- 1) The somatic, or literal, philological sense, (from soma, "body"), which everybody can understand and which is identical with the historical truth.
- 2) The psychic or moral sense: "psychic" in the original sense of that which belongs to the soul. The moral sense means the application of the Biblical text to our situation. It is the existential application of the Biblical texts to ourselves.
- 3) The spiritual sense: it is understandable only to those who are perfect, not morally but in the sense of being completely introduced into the meaning of Christianity; it is the mystical sense. There are some cases in which the Biblical text has only a mystical sense; then this is at the same time the literal one. But ordinarily it is a literal sense distinguished from the mystical sense. The way in which the mystical sense is to be found is through the allegoric method, the method of finding the hidden sense behind the texts.

Now this doctrine of the allegorical method, or of the mystical meaning of the texts, has been strongly attacked by the Reformers, and it is something strange in our realistic philological mind. What is the reason for it? The reason for it is easily understood: it is the authority of a text, which is not adequate to our own situation but still has absolute authority. In order to make it applicable to the situation of the interpreter, it is necessary to find a meaning which is not the literal meaning. This is always done; every sermon does it with the Biblical texts, and today it is done on a large scale by some interpreters of the Old Testament who make out of it the New

Testament in interpreting every word of the Old Testament as a Christological pronouncement. But this is exactly the same situation; it is something which is almost inescapable: if you have a text which is absolute authority and you know its literal meaning, and this literal meaning doesn't say anything to you, then you use, consciously or unconsciously, a method which transfers the original meaning into an actual or existential meaning. Of course this can lead to a complete undercutting of the authority of the text. And for this reason the Lutheran Reformation reestablished the genuine or philological or literal text as the genuine authority. But when we look at the dogmatic statements and their proof which has been taken from the Bible, in Orthodox or Fundamentalistic writings, we find immediately that they don't do anything else except what Origen did here: they find a method for interpreting the Bible beyond itself. Only if you are scientifically completely honest can you have the literal text and then say: "This doesn't say anything to us," or "We say something else; we recommend beyond the text, and we don't mean to express a hidden meaning of the text. 'This, I think, is the only consistent attitude. But think of another example: The American Constitution and the formulas of their Amendments: they have absolute, even legal, validity; but in order to make this tolerable, there is the Supreme Court which interprets, ultimately. And interpreting always means applying to the present situation. Now the jurists of the Supreme Court do not apply the allegoric method, but rather use a method of adequacy, and the result is exactly the same. They speak of the "spirit" of the law, and the spirit of the law may often, even in evident things, contradict the letter of the law. . .

There are two classes of Christians: 1) The many simple ones, who accept on authority the Biblical message and the teachings of the Church without understanding them fully. They take the mythological elements, – of which Origen knew as well as Bultmann – literally and primitively, or, as he said, they prefer the healing stories to the story of Jesus with three apostles going to the mountain of transfiguration. This is an allegoric, or metaphoric, expression for those who go beyond the literal interpretation to the transformed meaning of it.

He calls the attitude of the primitives. . . "only faith", "mere faith", which is a lower degree of Christian perfection. This degree is something in which first of all all participate, because all are somehow imperfect. But on this common basis, it never shall be given up – here, Origen is exactly as we found it in Clement. To some people the charisma of gnosis is given (i. e., the grace of knowledge) as a special grace. In this way the converted, educated Greek becomes the perfect Christian, but

he can become the perfect Christian only on the basis of Christian conformity to what he calls "the faith."

Now if we, as Protestants, look at this concept of faith, then we must see immediately that its meaning is: acceptance of doctrines, while in Protestant faith it is: acceptance of the reuniting grace of God. Therefore the first step is authority, in which every Christian, even Origen himself, lives. And the second step, which is not a recanting of the first but which is possible only on the basis of the first step, is the autonomous rational understanding of the Biblical message.

Now this solves the problem with which you always have to deal in your congregations, the problem of the simple ones who take the myths literally – and you have many of them – and the educated to whom you cannot speak in terms of literalism, otherwise they will turn away from you, not because of the Christian message but because of the way you give it to them. This was the same problem with which Clement and Origen had to deal and they solved it in terms of these two forms of participation in the Christian communion.

The first doctrine in Origen's system, as in every system, is the doctrine of God. God is being-itself, and therefore beyond everything that is. He is beyond knowledge, because knowledge presupposes the cleavage between subject and object. He is beyond change. He is beyond passion. He is the source of everything. But now He has His logos, His inner word, His self-manifestation. This self-manifestation makes Him first manifest to Himself and then to the world. The Logos is the first and creative power of being. All powers of being are united in Him. The whole spiritual world is united in the Logos. The Logos is the universal principle of anything special, of anything (that has) being. This Divine Logos radiates eternally from the Ground of Being, from the Divine Abyss, as splendor radiates from the source of light. Therefore one is not allowed to say, "There was a time when the Son did not exist." To say this is to deny the eternity of the Logos. Therefore it never should be said. There never was a time in which the Son, namely the eternal Logos, did not exist..

The eternal Logos is eternally generated out of the Divine substance. He is not created; He is "out of nothing." He is not finite. Therefore He has the same substance with the Father. Here the term *homoousios t patri* (being equal with the Father) first arises. In spite of the eternity of the Logos the Logos is less than the Father. The Father alone has no origin. He is not even generated. He is *auto theos*,



God by Himself, while the Son is God by the Father. The Son is the picture of the goodness or essence or nature of God, but not God Himself.

So we have two trends in this Origenistic thinking: On the one side, eternity of the Father and the Son; on the other side, a kind of lesser validity and power of being in the Son than in the Father. The Son is the highest of the generated realities, but the Son is less than the Father. The same is true of the Spirit, who is working in the souls of the saints. This is His function. Although the regula, the religious tradition, of the Congregations demand the trius (the three) as the object of adoration, the Spirit is called less than the Son and the Son less than the Father. And sometimes even the highest Spiritual beings are called gods.

Now all this means that two principles are in conflict in Origenistic thinking: the one is the Divinity of the Savior, who must be Divine in order to be able to save; the other is the scheme of emanation: the lower degrees are lower; only the Absolute, the Father, is first. The cut between the three and the other Spiritual beings is somehow arbitrary.

We can perhaps describe the whole thing in three circles. The largest circle is that of the Father, who embraces everything, who is by Himself and without genesis. Then within, this larger circle there is a narrower one, namely the Son and the Spirit, both of them generated but not created. And then there is an even narrower circle, namely all the things which are created.

The rational natures, i. e., the spirits, who are eternal but created and not generated, were originally equal and free, and fell away from their unity with God in different degrees of distance. In consequence of their revolt in Heaven against God, they have fallen into material bodies: this is their punishment and at the same time the way of their purification. The mediation between these fallen spirits and the human body is the human soul. The human soul is, so to speak, Spirit which has become cold, i. e., the intensive fire, which is the symbol for the Divine Spirituality, is reduced to a life process. The fall, which has all these consequences, is a transcendent fall. It precedes our existence in time and space. And it is a free fall, it is decided in freedom. The Freedom is not lost by the fall, but it is actual, present, in all concrete actions. In these concrete actions the transcendent fall becomes historical reality. We can say that the individual act represents the eternal nature of the fall. Or in other words, our individual existence in time and space has a prelude in Heaven. The decisive thing about what we are has already happened when we appear on earth.

This refers especially to sin. Sin is based on the transcendent fall. This doctrine of the transcendent fall is hard to understand for people who, as most of you, have grown up in nominalistic thinking. It is understandable only if you know that transcendent powers are realities and not individual things – if you take them this way, everything becomes absurd. But there is a profound meaning in this doctrine which I think makes it necessary as a symbol for all Christian theology: our human existence and the existence of reality as a whole is considered not only as creation but also as guilt and judgment.

When we look at the fallen world, we see that the fallen character is universal, and penetrates through everything, penetrates even through the nature outside of man. When we ask where did it come from? – of course every individual is guilty, but why is this universally so? Why are there no exceptions? – then the answer is: because the Fall precedes the Creation, as the Fall follows the Creation. Origen has two myths of the Fall: one transcendent, which is not, mythologically, in space, etc... but which is the eternal transition from union with God to separation from God; and the immanent inner-historical in which in special acts this transcendent Fall becomes reality. Sin is spiritual, but the bodily and social existence strengthen sin. It is transcendent and is a destiny which, as every destiny, is united with freedom.

As in Plotinus, sin is in Origen a turning away from God. It is not something positive. *Malum esse, bonum carere*, (being evil means being without goodness.) Sin, therefore, has a double relation to creation: With respect to the creation of the free and equal spirits, creation precedes the Fall. With respect to the bodily world, creation follows the Fall and follows the freedom of the spirits. Because of the freedom of the spirits, even in eternity it is possible that the Fall may happen again. The end of this world process is not necessarily the end of history. The Fall may repeat itself, and then the whole thing starts again. You see in these ideas the cyclical thinking of Greek philosophy with respect to history has not yet been overcome, This was done by Augustine.

Now we come to the most difficult part: his christological system. The Logos unites itself with the soul of Jesus, who is an eternal spirit as everybody is. He is pre-existent, as all souls are. But He unites Himself just with this soul. The soul of the man Jesus has received the Logos completely. The soul of Jesus has merged into its power and light. This is a mystical union which, however, can be repeated in all saints. In this the soul mediates between the Logos of God and the body of man. In this way there are two sharply separated natures united in Jesus. The word of the

Fourth Gospel that he became flesh. is a bodily, i. e., a literal, kind of speaking. But the truth is that He took on flesh so much so that He became it. This is more (like) adoptionistic thinking. Popular feeling in the East wanted a God on earth who walks with us; it didn't want a Divine transcendent Power who takes on flesh only. and returns after He has taken on flesh. But for Origen this was an impossible idea because the Logos never can cease to be also outside of Jesus. He is the form of all forms in everything. Homo esse cessavit. He ceased to be a man; but this is somehow the case with all Spiritual beings, who for this reason are called gods. But if they are gods, where is the cut between them and God? What does the cut after the third Person of the Trinity mean? This problem was never solved. and could not be solved on the basis of the doctrine of emanation. If we have a doctrine of emanation. then there is a continuous going down and returning. But Christianity belonged to monotheism. This often-abused term, the "Judeo-Christian tradition," has at least this in common: that monotheism must be maintained in all circumstances. How can this be done if there are two emanations which are lower than God and at the same time Divine? Men, when they follow the example of the Logos-God. .. , become *logokoi* themselves, determined by meaning, reason and creative power. Then they are led back to deification. But something more had to be done by Jesus in order to give us this possibility. He had to give His body as a sacrifice. To whom does He give it? To Satan. as ransom. Satan demands that price for letting the others go free, but Satan was betrayed. He couldn't keep Jesus because He was pure. and therefore not under the power of Satan.

This idea of the betrayal of Satan is not only a theological idea which appears in such a high place as in Origen's thought, but it is also a popular idea. The Middle Ages is abundant with stories of how the peasants. and especially their wives. betrayed the Devil when he came, and he had to let them alone. This seems for us to be a grotesque mythology and certainly it is, if taken literally. But it is a religious idea of profound insight behind it. namely that the negative never can ultimately prevail, and it cannot prevail because it lives from the positive. When Satan takes Jesus into his power. he cannot keep in his power that from which he lives. namely. the Divine nature. Thus the ultimate futility of everything sinful: it cannot keep indefinitely the positive power of being, because this power of being is derived from the good, and good and power of being are one and the same thing. So if you laugh at this doctrine of Origen, you had better go behind it and see what he means. It means the impossibility of Satan to prevail ultimately. because he lives from that against which he wants to prevail.

Origen introduced an idea into the practical piety. which idea had a tremendous effect on the whole of Christian history after him, namely the interpretation of The Song of Songs, in terms of the mystical love of the soul and Christ. The human soul is the bride of the Logos – that is what this love song means. The soul receives the bridegroom in itself. It is sometimes visited by the Logos, i. e., the Divine Spirit is sometimes experienced by us; sometimes the soul is left alone. no one visits her from the eternal.

This is the first mystical interpretation of The Song of Songs. related to an individual.

In Judaism it was interpreted for God and the synagogue. Here you see again an important example of the necessity for allegoric interpretation. The Song of Songs itself is nothing more than a Jewish love song perhaps a wedding song which was performed at weddings or festivals. It is in the canon; it has Divine authority; what to do with it? The answer of the Jews was: It is the relationship between God and the nation. And in my old Luther Bible – which I love dearly, because I got it when I was born, for my baptism – there is always something said in the "head-lines" of The Song of Songs about the relationship between God and the Church.

Here we have a third, the mystical, interpretation from Origen: the relationship between the Logos and the soul, the mystical marriage between Christ and the soul All this of course is mystical, but it is a very important transformation of non-Christian mysticism. It is concrete mysticism, The soul, being grasped by the Spirit of God, does not go beyond itself into the abyss of the Divine, but the Logos, the form, the concreteness, of the Divine comes into the soul, This was the first step for what I have called in my seminar on the theology of Christian mysticism, in former years, the "baptising" of mysticism. And this certainly is an important event – mysticism introduced into the Church by becoming concrete. If Origen and later on Bernard of Clairvaux, speaks of the mystical marriage between the Logos and the soul, then the centered personality is not destroyed, it is preserved, as in a marriage there is a complete union and nevertheless the person is not destroyed, Now this is the imagery in which the pious life, in mystical terms, is described by Origen.,

The last important point in his theology is eschatology, the doctrine of the final end of history and the world, He interprets it Spiritualistically The rough descriptions, with their primitive imagery, are interpreted in Spiritual terms. The Second Coming of Christ is the Spiritual appearance of Christ in the souls of the pious. He comes back to earth again and again. but into our souls. not in a dramatic

appearance in physical terms such as with clouds, thunder, etc. The pious people are fulfilled in a spiritual experience, This spiritual body, of which Paul speaks, is the essence or the idea of the "material body" It is that which is painted by a great portrait painter – that is what is meant with the participation of the body in the eternal It isn't this body here, and especially not in this moment, but it is a body which is our body during all our life – it is its essence, its idea (i.e., originally meaning "image"). The punishment for sin – Hell, in traditional eschatology – is the fire which burns in our conscience, the fire of despair because of our separation from God, But this is a temporary status, a status of purging our soul Finally everybody and everything will become spiritualized; the bodily existence will vanish, Origen called this famous doctrine the *apokatastasis patorum*, the restitution of everything, with the possibility that the whole thing starts again because freedom is never denied, Origen was thoroughly a philosopher of freedom, and this is what distinguishes him from Augustine, his great rival in greatness of theological thought/

But this spiritualization of eschatology was the reason why he became, partly at least, a heretic in the Christian Church although he was their greatest theologian. The simple ones revolted against this greatest system of scientific theology – the monks and others, who couldn't and didn't want to get away from their literalism with respect to the future life, the endocatastrophe, the eternal judgment, etc, The motives for the simple ones were partly realistic, in the Jewish sense of realism of bodily existence: anti-Greek, dualistic And partly they were something else: they were ideas of revenge against those, who were better off on earth, and now they wanted to be better off than they, but how can, this be without bodily 'existence? So they fought for it, and for a very realistic and literalistic idea of judgment, final catastrophe, and heaven, The Church took their side and condemned not the whole of Origen, but the heretic side of him,

But there were other reactions against the Logos Christology, which was introduced by the Apologists – and already, somehow, by the Fourth Gospel – and which found in Origen its greatest and most important expression. Again the laymen were the ones who revolted, not only against Origen but against the whole Logos Christology. The laymen, the simple ones were not interested in the cosmological implications of the Logos concept; they wanted to have God Himself on earth in Christ. This group was called the monarchianists, from *monarchia*, meaning one man's rule. They wanted to have only one ruler, one God, not three, as they felt the Logos Christology would make it. They emphasized, against the Logos as a second

God, the "monarchy" of the Father. We can say that this movement was a monotheistic reaction against the tri- or duo-theistic danger of the Logos doctrine. The Logos doctrine was dangerous because it hypostasized the Son beside God, and the Spirit a God beside all of them. A man named Theodotus, a craftsman from Rome, thought that Jesus was a man upon whom the Divine Spirit came in baptism, giving him the power of his Messianic vocation. But this did not make him God. Therefore these people from the school of Theodotus were very much interested – as were many later, especially Protestants of the 19th century – in those passages of the Gospel dealing with Jesus as man. There is perhaps a connection (Theodotus) and a group in Asia Minor called the Alogoi, who denied the doctrine of the Logos. And since the doctrine of the Logos appeared in the Fourth Gospel, they rejected it. They tried to find the true text and emphasized the literal interpretation against the allegoric. They were predecessors of many later movements, of the Alexandrian school which fought against some issues, at least, of the high Christology; and they were predecessors of some trends in Rome which always were on the side of the Antiochian school; and they were predecessors of modern liberal theology. They all emphasized the humanity of Jesus over against the Logos becoming God. We call this the adoptionistic or the dynamic Christology, where the man Jesus is adopted and the Logos or the Spirit fills him--but that is all; he is not God Himself. This is the one wing of the Monarchic monotheistic reaction against the Logos Christology. And this is not something of the past; it is something which we have to face always in the whole history of Christianity. Even in the east these ideas found a representative, Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, and was in the same line. He says: Logos and Spirit are qualities of God, but they are not persons. They are eternal powers, they are potentialities in God, but they are not persons in the sense of independent beings. Jesus is a man who was inspired by this power from above. The Logos power inhabited in Jesus as in a vessel, or as we live in houses. The Logos is the inner man in Jesus. The unity this man Jesus has with God is the unity of will and love, but it is not a unity of nature, because nature has no meaning with respect to God. The more Jesus developed his own being, the more he received. (Finally), he was eternally put into union with God and then he became the judge and received the Divine dignity. Now he is God, but somehow he had to deserve to become God.

This of course is the negation of the Divine nature of the Savior. This shows what made him a heretic, although many people of that time and perhaps even of today would prefer to follow him.

## Lecture 11: Monarchianism. Sabellius. The Arian Controversy. Nicaea.

We finished yesterday with a special type of reaction against the Logos Christology, namely what is called dynamic monarchianism. I know that these lectures are the most difficult in the whole course, and so I will not shy away from repetition.

The Logos Christology, as invented by the Apologists and carried through to a full victory by Clement and Origen, is a method of making the universality and uniqueness of the event Jesus understandable to the Greek mind. The only way in which this could be done at that time was to establish a Divine power within God Himself which appears in the historical Jesus. We find this early in the Fourth Gospel, we find it in all Gnostic literature, and we find it in a most philosophical form in the Apologetic attempt to defend Christianity. Then we find it in the context of a universal philosophical system derived from the Alexandrian scheme of emanation and return of the soul, by Origen.

This was one line of thought in the early Christian Church. It was a line of thought which, as many Christians believed, is more "Athens" than "Jerusalem." For this reason they resisted it, and they did so in the name of what is called the Divine monarchy: God alone rules and God alone must be seen in Christ. This is the meaning of the Monarchianistic reaction against the Logos Christology. It is in some way a reaction in which Old Testament feelings react against Greek ideas. But this is too simple, as the subject of the Forum is too simple in its formulation, and perhaps for this very reason most interesting.

The Monarchianistic movement itself was split. There was one (movement) which followed the adoptionistic Christology, which says that God, or the Logos, or the Spirit, has adopted a fully human being and made him into the Christ, and gave him the possibility of becoming fully deified in his resurrection. But this adoptionist Christology, which we find especially in the West – Theodotus of Rome – and which influenced the basic Roman feeling to a great extent, also had a representative in the East, Paul of Samosata. This Christology started with human existence, tried to understand humanity and to emphasize the Biblical words in which the humanity is emphasized, and then to show that this man was driven by the Divine Spirit and was finally elevated into the Divine sphere.

But there was another type of this Monarchianistic thinking which became more and more influential because it was much more in the line of the basic feeling of the masses of the Christians. This is modalistic Monarchianism. Modalism means God Himself appears in different modes, different ways. It was also called patripassionism a word you must learn – the Father Himself has suffered. It was also called Sabellianism, from its main representative Sabellius. This was a very widespread movement in the East as well as in the West. It was a real danger for the Logos Christology.

The fight between these two types was going on in the East and West In the West there was a man, Praxeas, with whom Tertullian was fighting. The idea was that God the Father Himself was born through the Virgin Mary; that God the Father Himself, who is the only God, has suffered and died. To be God means to be the universal Father of everything. If we say that God was in Jesus, this means the Father was in him. Therefore these people attacked the so-called ditheoi ,those who believed in two Gods, and the tritheoi , those who believed in three Gods, and they fought for the monarchy of God and or the full Divinity of Christ in whom God the Father Himself has appeared. Both ideas had very large popular support because what the popular mind wanted – and what the popular mind perhaps still wants today – was to have God Himself present on earth, a walking God, a God who is with us, who participates in our fate, whom we can see and hear when we see and hear Jesus.

The main representative of this whole development. was Sabellius. This name plays a tremendous role in all Christian theology, and I know of Christian theologians who even today accuse other Christian theologians of Sabellianism. So you see this is not a dated issue but is something very important.

Sabellius says: "The same is the Father, the same is the Son, the same is the Holy Spirit. They are three names, but names for the same reality.. Do we have one or three Gods?" (meaning, of course, that we have only one God, the Divine monarchy). Father, Son, and Spirit are names, they are prosopa (countenances, faces), but they are not independent beings. They cannot be applied in the same way; they are effective in consecutive energies. One follows the other, but they are always the same in different faces. It is God in three countenances, acting in history in different faces and in different acts. The prosopon (countenance) of the Father appears in His work as creator and law-giver. The prosopon of the Son appears from the birth to the ascension of Jesus. The countenance of the Spirit appears, since the



ascension of Jesus, as the life-giver. But it is always the same monarchic Father-God. Therefore it is not adequate to speak of a trius in Heaven. There is no transcendent, no heavenly Trinity. The Father is equal with the two others. But it is always the same. And something else happens in this way of thinking: the Trinity is historical, instead of being transcendent; it is "economical," in the sense of oikumene, building a house – the Trinity is "built up" in history. It is a very important idea for the future, where we often have the idea of a historical Trinity.

If Sabellius says that the same God is essentially in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and that there are only differences of faces, of appearances, of manifestations, then of course he means to say, with this, that they are all homo-ousios, they have the same essence, the same Divine power of being, as one could call it. They are not three beings, but they have the same power of being, and three manifestations. This trend was strong, although it was finally condemned, but it never disappeared. And it reappears as a strong monotheistic trend, even in Augustine, and through him in the whole of Western theology. This was the opposition to the Logos Christology. If you are able to distinguish these two basic trends, then you have an insight into what was going on in these seemingly incomprehensible and sophisticated fights about an iota in homoousios and homoiousios. There was much more than abstract concepts behind it. There was a monotheistic trend against a trend to establish Divine hierarchies between God and man. The East, very much dependent on Plato, Plotinus, and Origen, was interested all the time in hierarchical essences between God and man. (This of course would make Christ a half-God, as we shall see.) The West, and some groups in the East, were interested in the Divine monarchy on the one side, and the humanity of Jesus on the other. These two tendencies fought – the Trinitarian struggle and the Christological struggle. We, as bearers of the Western attitude, feel immediately nearer to the Western type of thinking, and the whole difficulty for you in these lectures on the history of Christian thought in understanding what is really going on, is largely based on the fact that we are Westerners and not Easterners, in this sense; that for us the problem of hierarchies is an abstract one, and not a problem of living realities. But in order to understand what was going on in these fights, we must understand first of all the Eastern world-view, the hierarchical world-view.

Now I come to the Trinitarian struggle itself. First we must see how the Trinitarian problem developed after Origen in the sphere of Origenistic thinking. Origen was so great in his constructive power that he conquered all competitors, also the Monarchianistic and Sabellian theologians. But more than this, his Christology was

so much impregnated with mystical piety that his formulas could become formulas of a creed. This is very important to understand. Don't forget that when the Greek thinkers produced a confession, a creed, this seems to us abstract philosophy, but for them it was the mystical intuition of essences, of powers of being. For instance, in Caesarea in Asia Minor a creed was already used which added to the symbol used in baptism Origenistic mystical formulas. This confession stated: "We believe in Jesus Christ, the Logos of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, first-born of all creatures, generated out of the Father before all generations." Now this is philosophy and at the same time mysticism. It is that way of philosophy which was ruling at the end of the ancient period. It is Hellenistic and not classical Greek philosophy. And Hellenistic philosophy is united with the mystical traditions of the East. Therefore such seemingly abstract philosophical concepts could become mystical confessions.

This combination was endangered when the emanation system of Origen became questioned from the point of view of Christian conformism. For instance, the eternity and the pre-existence of all spirits, or the idea of the transcendent fall, or the idea of the spiritual bodyless resurrection and of the spiritualized eschatology. In this moment the whole Logos Christology, especially the place of the Logos, became questioned. Common sense and conformism, supported by the Monarchianistic reaction, demanded nothing less than God on earth. The theory of emanation in degrees, in hierarchies of powers of being, demanded something less than that which is ultimately transcendent and the One beyond everything given.

Out of this conflict a division occurred in the school of Origen, and everybody was in the school of Origen in these decades. It was a division into what one has called the Origenistic "right" and the Origenistic "left," the right-wingers and the left-wingers of the Origenistic school. The right wing said: Nothing is created or subjected in the trius; nothing has been added which had not been in it before; there is no inferiority in the Son to the Father, and in the Spirit to the Son. – These were words of representatives of a kind of ecclesiastical traditionalism who wanted what is today called a "high" Christology: nothing shall be less in God, so that Jesus is not less than the Father Himself. It is the same trend we saw in the Monarchianistic movement.

The left wing was against the traditionalism of the right wing; it was scientific and modernistic. They said the Son is essentially strange to the Father, and being something that is made He had no being before He was generated. This means the

Logos Christology in terms of hierarchies – there is God the Father, the highest hierarchy, the eternal One beyond everything; there is the Logos, the second hierarchy, but as the second, lower than the first; and the Spirit is the third hierarchy, and lower than the second. The immortal spirits are the fourth hierarchy, lower than the three others. These were the two wings in the great struggle which almost ruined the Christian Church.

But besides the theological differences, there was politics and the attempt to find a practical way to solve a problem without going into its theoretical depths. This is not only American pragmatism but also Roman eclecticism. This was Rome. Rome, following its eclectic tradition, gave the directive for a solution which avoided the depths of Greek thinking and tried to find a way out of this conflict. There was a Pope, Dionysius, in Rome, who declared: "Two things must be preserved: the Divine trius and the holy message of monarchy." These are the two main terms of the two wings, The holy message of the monarchy, which stood against the Logos Christology; the Divine trius, which expressed the Logos Christology. So what Pope Dionysius in Rome did was to take the main formulas of both groups and said that they must both be preserved. But he didn't say how! This was practical Church politics. And this finally prevailed, as we shall see But it prevailed only after a tremendous fight of almost 80 years, a fight in which the whole situation of the Church changed, as we shall see, and in which finally something was decided which is valid for all periods of Christianity. The event of which I am speaking now is the so-called Arian controversy

This controversy is a unique and classical struggle, and caused by many motives. In it is involved the politics of the emperors, who needed unity in the Church which in just these years had become the state religion of the Roman Empire, and now the Church itself threatened to split the whole Empire into pieces. There were involved personal feuds of bishops and theologians. There were in conflict narrow traditionalism and unrestrained speculation. There was included an overemphasis on theoretical solution and popular monastic fanaticism.

But this is not the whole story. Besides all these motives, the really decisive issue, its meaning and permanent significance, is the answer to the question, "How is salvation possible, in a world of darkness and mortality?" This alone was the question. This was the question, as we have seen already in the Apostolic Fathers. It was the question ever since, and it was the question in the period of the great Trinitarian and Christological struggles.

Athanasius, the great foe of Arius, formulates that it is possible only under one condition, namely Jesus "was made man that we might become God." But this was possible only if the Logos is eternal, if it is really God who has appeared to us, as God is Father only because He is the Father of the Son. Therefore He is without beginning. Eternally the Father has the Son. The Son is Son eternally, as the Son of the Father. And the Father is Father eternally, because He is the Father of the Son. Only if they are co-eternal can Jesus, in whom the Logos is present, give us eternity. He can make us like God, which always means, make us immortal, and give us eternal knowledge, the knowledge of eternal life. Not even the highest of all created spirits can give us a real salvation. He is less than God, but we are separated from God, we are dependent on God and must return to him So God Himself must save us.

Now this is the religious motive behind the Alexandrian trend in theology. Therefore the West and their allies in the East could not accept the theology of the Alexandrian presbyter Arius. According to him, only God the Father is by Himself and without beginning. The Logos, i. e. , the pre-existent Christ, is a creature. He is one of the creatures He is created out of nothing, and there was a time when He was not. You remember the famous saying of Origen: there was no time in which He was not. Against this, the left-wing Origenistic theology says there was a time in which He was not. This time was before our temporal existence, but it was not eternity; the Logos is not eternal. The power of God who works in Jesus is not the eternal Divine power itself but a limited reduced hierarchy. This Logos is strange to the Divine nature, unsimilar in every respect to the Father's essence. This Logos can neither see nor know the Father completely and exactly. He becomes God only in the way in which every saint can become deified. This deification happened as it happens in every saint, through his freedom. He had the freedom to turn away from God, but he didn't. This Logos, therefore, is a half-Divine power. This half-Divine power is the soul of Jesus, and it becomes the anxiety and suffering of Jesus. . This means Jesus is not fully man, with a natural human soul. Mary gives birth to this half-God, who is neither God nor man. This was the solution of Arius, a solution which is very well in line with the hero cult of the ancient world; the world is full of half-gods, of deteriorized gods, of gods who even in Heaven (Olympus) are not fully gods but derived forms of God, and one of them is Jesus – but it is not God Himself.

Now this Christology has been rejected in the first and most important of all Christian councils, that of Nicaea, in June, 325. The text of the decision of Nicaea:

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible." – let me stop here for a moment, because all these words are very important. "Invisible" means the Platonic "ideas." God is the creator not only of the things on earth, but also the creator of the "essences," as they appear in Plato's philosophy. "And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only begotten of the essence of the Father, God of God, and Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, being of one substance (homoousios) with the Father, by Whom all things were made in Heaven and on earth, who for us men and our salvation came down and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, ascended into Heaven. From thence He comes to judge the quick and the dead. . . and in the Holy Ghost." Then it goes on to say: "And those who say there was a time when He was not, or He was not before He was made, and He was made out of nothing, and out of another substance or thing, or the Son of God is created or changeable, or alterable: they are condemned by the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." Now this is the first and fundamental Christian confession. I will give you immediately its significance, but before this a few words of comment: The central phrase is "of one substance with the Father" (homoousios to patri). Then the important thing is that nothing else is said about the Holy Ghost. This was the reason for further struggles and decisions. Then the condemnations are interesting: The first and all-embracing one: "Those who say there was a time when He was not. . . are condemned by the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." Now let me give you, point by point, the significance of this decision for world history and the history of the Church:

1) The main possible Christian heresy was overcome. Christ is not one of the many half-Gods; He is not a hero. He is God Himself appearing in Divine essence within a historical person. – This was the definite negation of paganism. In Arianism, paganism again raised its head after it was defeated in the anti-Gnostic struggle, and it raised its head very strongly – Christ, one of the many powers of being – this would have made Christianity one of the many possible religions

2) This fundamental statement was expressed in terms which were more pleasing to Rome and the West than to the East. The East did not like the homoousios; it wanted a ladder of hierarchies. The West, Rome, and her allies in the East, insisted on the homoousios. For this reason the decision of Nicaea was immediately attacked and somehow transformed into something else by the East, in 60 years of struggle and theological work. Only in 381 did this struggle come to an end, and then in

terms which pleased the East more than the original formula did, and in new theological interpretations.

3) The decisive statement is: "Being of one substance with the Father." This is not in the scheme of emanation but in the scheme of Monarchianism. Consequently it was accused of being Sabellian. And so were the main defenders. . . , Athanasius and Marcellus.

4) The negative character of the decision is especially visible in the condemnations. The creatureliness of Christ is negated. He is of no other ousia than the Father.. But what the homoiousios is, is not explained. . It was not decided whether the three prosopa are really differences in God, and if so whether they were eternal or historical. And no doctrine of the Spirit was given. But one and only one thing was decided: Jesus Christ is not an incarnated half-God; He is not a creature higher than all others; He is God, and God is creator and unconditional – this negative decision is the truth and the greatness of the decision of Nicaea. And you should not forget what I said in the beginning about the dogma; the dogma is a negative decision against ideas which perhaps could undercut the conformity of the Christian congregation, which can undermine the basic statement that Jesus is the Christ. And every synodal decision worthwhile being mentioned is and was such a decision. The dogmas are not invented because people wanted dogmas, but they developed because people had to protect a religious substance. And in this light you must see the limited meaning of the dogma and of such a decision, and at the same time its greatness.

5) Beside this basic element some consequent implications must be mentioned. The statements had been made in philosophical, non-biblical terms. So some Greek terms were taken into the dogma. They were taken in not so much as classical philosophy as mystical philosophy of religion.

6) The unity of the Church from now on is identical with the majority of the bishops. A conciliarism has developed in hierarchical terms, and the majority of the bishops from now on replace all other authorities. And only much later did the Roman bishop claim and receive a special standing among the bishops, and finally the majority of the bishops as authority was abolished.

7) The Church had become a state Church This was the price which had to be paid for unity. The emperor did not command the content of the dogma, but he exercised pressure. Therefore revolts occurred against it, and the emperor after

Constantine had to exercise even more pressure. All this meant a new development of Church history, and even of world history.

## Lecture 12: Athanasius, Marcellus, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, John of Damascus. The Christological Problem.

We have discussed the significance of the Council of Nicaea and the reasons why it was attacked by many Eastern theologians, for religious, philosophical and political reasons. The main defender of the decision of Nicaea was Athanasius. He was first of all a great religious personality and therefore he was able, because his religious foundation was unchangeable, to change the scientific means and the political ways in which he fought for his basic religious conviction. His style is clear, he is consistent, cautious, and sometimes for the reasons just mentioned even compromising in his terminology. He was expelled several times from his episcopal see in Alexandria, he was persecuted, but he was finally victorious over heretics and emperors. It was he who saved the decision of Nicaea but in order to do so he had to compromise with a more Origenistic or, as one called it at that time, scientific interpretation of the formulas of Nicaea.

Let's look at the negative and the positive side of his beliefs. Sin is overcome by forgiveness; and the curse of sin, death, is overcome by the new life – both given by the Christ. The new life includes communion with God, moral renewal, and eternal life, as a present possession. Eternal life is, positively speaking, deification, becoming similar to God as much as possible, (as I quoted from Plato.) So two things are needed: the victory over finitude, and the victory over sin – participation in the infinity of God and participation in the holy, over against sin, must be provided. How? It can be provided only by Christ who, as true man, suffers the curse of sin and, as true God, overcomes death. No half-God, no hero, no relative and limited power of being can do that. They cannot do the one, they cannot do the other. Only as historical, could he change history; only as Divine could he give Divinity. There is no half-forgiveness or half-eternity. Either our sins are forgiven: then they are fully forgiven; either we are eternal or not: if we are, we are fully eternal. Therefore no religious half-God could be the saviour. The problem of Christology, as always in all Christological and Trinitarian struggles, is salvation, and from this point of view you must understand them; from this point of view they become meaningful, even in the moments of greatest confusion and in the expressions of greatest abstraction.



The Christ who performs this work is not understandable to the human mind except through the Divine Spirit. Only through the Spirit can we come in unity with the Christ. This implies that the Spirit of Christ must be as Divine as Christ Himself is. When after the Nicaean decision groups arose which denied the Divinity of the Spirit, they were called semi-Arians. Athanasius fought against them and said: they are wrong. they want to make the Spirit into a creature but if the Spirit of Christ is a creature. then Christ also is a creature

The Spirit of Christ is not the human spirit of the man Jesus. as a historical individual; the Spirit of Christ is not a psychological function; but the Spirit of Christ is God Himself in Him and. through Him. in us. In this way the Trinitarian formula which in Nicaea was left open with respect to the Spirit. becomes filled up. The same thing which was said about the Son is now said about the Spirit. In order to be able to unite us with Christ. the Spirit must be Divine as Christ Himself is Divine – and not partly Divine. not .half-Divine. but fully Divine.

One of Athanasius' supporters was Marcellus. in whom the Monarchianistic tradition entered the discussion. He was a man always in intimate friendship with Athanasius, always accepted by him. although finally. after Athanasius' death. condemned by the more Origenistic theologians who didn't like his Monarchianistic trends. His emphasis was on monotheism. Before the creation, God was a monas a unity without differentiation. His Logos was in Him, but was in Him only as a potential' power, only as a possibility for creation, but not yet as an actual power. Only with the creation does the Logos proceed and become the acting energy of God in all things, through Whom all things have been made. In this moment something has happened – the Divine monas has become broader; it has become a duos, the unity has become a duality.

In the incarnation. in the act in which the Logos took on flesh – not became flesh but took on flesh – the second "economy" is performed. An actual separation has occurred between Father and Son. in spite of the remaining potential unity. so that it is now possible for the "eyes of faith" to see the Father in the Son. And then a further broadening of the monas and of the duos occurs. when after the resurrection of Christ the Spirit becomes a relatively independent power in the Christian Church.

But all this separation is only preliminary. The independence of the Spirit and of the Son is nothing final. The Son and the Spirit will finally return into the unity with the Father, and then the flesh of Jesus will wither away. The potential, or eternal,

Logos should not be called the Son. He becomes the Son only through the incarnation and resurrection. In Jesus a new man, a new manhood, appears, united with the Logos by love,.

Now this is a dynamic Monarchianistic system. The Trinity is dynamized, is put into movement, (approaches) history, and has lost the static character it has in the; genuine Origenistic thinking. But this system was rejected. It was accused of being Sabellian, of representing that kind of Monarchianism in which God the Father Himself appears on earth. Origen and the system of degrees and hierarchies triumphed, against Marcellus,

But the fight went on. The Origenistic protest against the homoousios, against the one substance between Father and Son, led not only to a fight against a man like Marcellus or a man like Athanasius, it led finally to a fight against the Nicaenum itself – only in the east, of course, but there, with strongest power and passion, not only Marcellus but also Athanasius were condemned. The Origenists, who were overwhelmed by the pressure of the emperor in Nicaea, gathered again and gathered such strength that they insisted, against the Nicaenum, on three substances, and could get away with it” It was – if you want to call it so – a pluralistic interpretation of the Trinity; it was an interpretation in the, scheme of emanation, of hierarchies, of powers of being. The unconditional is seen in degrees; but only the Father is, in an unlimited way, unconditional. He alone is the source of everything; eternal and temporal. This was the mood of the Eastern theologians and of the Eastern popular piety It prevailed again and again, in some cases under strong support of the emperor, who defied the decision of his predecessor Constantine and now tried to press the supporters of the Nicaenum against the Nicaenum.

But there was a shortcoming in Eastern theology. It was united only negatively; it was not united in a positive decision. So it was easy to split it and reduce its power of resistance against the Nicaenum. There were some in the East who practically returned to Arius; they were called the anhomoioti, which means: Christ is not even similar to God; He is completely a creature. There were others who mediated between the Nicaenum and the mood of the East. They were called the homoiousianoι, those who believed not in the homoousios but in the homoiousios, (the latter is derived from homoios (meaning "similar" and ousia, "essence.")... So we now have the struggle between the homoiousiote and the homoiousiote. The hostile pagans in Alexandria made jokes about this fight going on in the streets and

barber shops and in the different stores and everywhere: the Christians fight about the iota, the smallest letter of the alphabet – the only letter distinguishing homoousios from homoiousios. But there was behind it more than an iota; there was behind it another piety. For the homoousianoι Father and Son are equal in every respect, but they have no identical substance. This group interpreted the Nicene formula homoousios, which they couldn't remove any more, in the sense of homoiousios, and even Athanasius and the West finally agreed that this could be done, if only the West accepts the formula homoousios. The West accepted the eternal generation of the Son – a formula which comes from Origen and which the West didn't like so much before – and with it they accepted the inner Divine, the non-“economic”, non-historical Trinity, which is eternal.

The East, on the other hand, accepted the homoousios after it was possible to interpret it differently, namely in the light of the homoiousios. And the East also accepted under these conditions, the homoousia of the Spirit. Now this means that theological formulas had been discovered which were able to overcome the struggle in theological terms, but theological terms are never able to overcome the religious difference itself. And we shall see how this worked itself out in the later developments of the Eastern and Western churches, in the coming fights and struggles and in the final separation. But for the time being the Synod of Constantinople (381) was able to make a decision in which East and West agreed, in which homoiousios and homoousios could come together, because the one could interpret homoousios as real homoousios, and the others could interpret it as homoiousios.

But in order to do this, new theological developments were needed. These developments are represented by the three great Cappadocian theologians, Basil the great, Gregory of Nyssa, his brother, and Gregory of Nazianzus, his friend. Basil the Great was bishop of Caesarea. He was many things in one person: a churchman, a bishop, a monk, the great reformer of monasticism, a preacher, a moralist. He fought against the old and neo- and semi-Arians, against everything which followed the idea that Christ is a half-God and a half-man. He died, however, before the favorable decision of Constantinople was given.

His younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa was called “the theologian.” He continued the Origenistic tradition and its scientific methods. He worked scientifically on his (Origen's) basis. After the victory of Christianity in Constantine, after the fixation of the dogma in Nicaea, it was possible that now again a great theology could come

and reestablish a union of Greek philosophy and the dogma. But it no longer had the freshness of the first great attempts – the Apologists and especially Origen. It was much more determined by the ecclesiastical situation and the creed of Nicaea, and therefore was more a matter of formulas than of material creativity. But most important for the development was the third man, Gregory of Nazianz. He brought the doctrine of the Trinity to its definitive formulas, and was called “the theologian,” among the Fathers of the Church. In Athens, where he and Basil studied, he became an intimate friend of Basil. They were united not only because of their common theological convictions but also because of their common asceticism. Gregory of Nazianz became bishop and was president of the synod of Constantinople for a certain time.

Now what was the step taken by these theologians – especially the latter one? It was a sharper distinction between the concepts which were used, and had to be used, for the Trinitarian dogma. I give you now two series of concepts where each side has three words, meaning the same.

The first series is: One Divinity One essence (ousia) One nature (physis)

The second series : Three substances (hypostasis) Three idiotetes (properties) Three prosopa (personae)

If you have these three terms, on each side, you could perhaps best use the following in the one case: *mia ousia* (one essence) and three substances. The Divinity is one power of being – that is what *ousia*, essence, nature, means. But this one power of being, which is Divine, has three forms in which it expresses itself, three independent realities. This means the Divinity is not a species, (as man is a species, for three of you who are sitting here in the class, but under one and the same power. Son and Spirit come out of the same Abyss, of the Father, and always remain in it even if they become independent. All three have the same will, the same nature, the same essence, Nevertheless the number three is real: each has His special characteristics or properties. The Father has the property of being ungenerated; He is from eternity to eternity. The Son has the characteristic of being generated, although in eternity. The Spirit has the characteristic of going out, of proceeding from the Father and the Son. But these characteristics are not differences in the Divine essence, but only in their relations to each other. Now this was complicated and very abstract philosophy, but it was the formula which made the reunion of the Church possible – one essence, three persons; one nature, three faces or countenances.

The Council removed the condemnations, which were added to the Council of Nicaea, because they didn't fit the new terminology any more; and it did something else that was important and which was lacking in Nicaea, namely they said about the Holy Ghost: "And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified." Of course the latter phrases are more mystical and liturgical; but these abstract formulas mean more than they would mean for us, or for a logical positivist. They mean mystical power, at the same time, and therefore they can be used liturgically.

This decision ends the Trinitarian struggle. Arius and Sabellius and many of their mediating followers were excluded. The homoousios stands now against Arius in all subsequent Church history. But it was interpreted as homoiousios (as similar with God) against Sabellius.

Now in all this the negative side of the decision is clear, but its positive side, the implications for a development of the Trinitarian doctrine, are extremely difficult. I will show you the four main difficulties.

1) The Father is, on the one hand, the ground of Divinity. He is, on the other hand, a special persona, a special hypostasis. Now if you take these two points of view together, then it is possible to speak of a quaternity instead of a trinity, namely to speak of the Divine substance as the one Divine Ground, and the three persons, Father, Son and Spirit, as the manifestations of this Ground. Then we have a quaternity instead of a trinity. And there was always an inclination in this direction, and Thomas Aquinas still had to fight against it. Usually theology said: He who is the Father is at the same time the source of all Divinity, and that means, of the other manifestations also.

2) The distinctions in eternal Trinity are empty. The Trinity was created in order to understand the historical Jesus. As long as this was kept alive, there was a difference between God and him very evident. But now we are in the realm of a transcendent Trinity. How can differences be made there? They are made by words: like non-generated, generated, and proceeding. But what do these words really mean? They are words without content, because there is no perception of any kind which can confirm their meaning. And to anticipate something of Augustine: Augustine said these differences are not expressed because something is said with them, but in order not to remain silent about the differences. This means: If the motives of Trinity are left and lost, then the formulas become empty.

3) The Holy Spirit remains even now an abstraction. He is brought in concretely only if He is defined as the Spirit of Christ, namely of Jesus as the Christ, but if He is put into the transcendent Trinity, then He is more an abstraction than a person. Therefore He never had very great importance for Christian piety. At the same time in which He was deified, in the same sense in which Christ was deified, He was replaced in actual piety by the Holy Virgin, who as the one who gives birth to God, received Divinity very much herself, at least for popular piety.

4) The three hypostases, the three different personae, could lead to tri-theism. This danger became much more fully real when the philosophy of Aristotle replaced that of Plato. Plato's philosophy is always the background of what the medieval called mystical realism, namely that the universals are more real than their individual exemplars. But in Aristotle the thing is different: Aristotle calls the individual thing the telos, the inner aim, of all natural development. Now if this is the case, then the three powers of being in God become three independent realities – or more exactly, the three manifestations of God become independent powers of being, become independent persons. This is something which I believe is one of the great difficulties in your understanding of the Trinitarian dogma. You are nominalists by education: everything which is must be a definite thing, limited and separated from all other things. For mystical, realistic thinking -- as we have it in Plato, in Origen, in the Middle Ages – this is not so. There the power of being in a universal can be something quite superior and different from the power of being in the individuals. Therefore the danger of tri-theism was very small, as long as Platonic philosophy interpreted the Trinitarian dogma. It became rather dangerous in the moment in which Aristotelian categories came in, and with it, some nominalistic trends, some emphasis on the individual realities. Then the Son and the Spirit could become, so to speak, special Individual beings – and then we are in the realm of tri-theism.

The last great theologian, John of Damascus, of whom I hope Father Florovsky will tell you a little more, protested against this consequence. He emphasized the unity of action and being within each other of the three manifestations of God. But something else happened. For practical piety, the Trinitarian dogma became just the opposite of what it originally was supposed to be – it was supposed to be an interpretation of Jesus as the Christ; it was supposed to mediate this understanding to the Greeks, with the help of the Logos doctrine. But the consequences of the Logos doctrine became so dangerous in Arius especially, that traditional theology reacted against it. It was still used, but it was somehow broken in its philosophical meaning. And that's something which has often happened with Christian theology.

In this way – and here Athanasius is mostly responsible – the Trinitarian dogma became a sacred mystery. This sacred mystery was put on the altar and adored; it was put into the ikons, the pictures (which are important for the cult in the Eastern church); it was put into liturgical formulas and hymns, and there it lives ever since. But it has lost its power to interpret the meaning of the living God.

Now this is the end of the Trinitarian struggle. I come back to it once more when I shall speak about Augustine's interpretation of it, which is typically Western, but for the time being I will now introduce the next great struggle, the Christological one:

The Christological problem is historically a consequence of the Trinitarian problem. But in principle it is the other way around. The Trinity is the answer to the Christological problem. But it is an answer which seems in its final formulas to deny the basis on which it has arisen. The question was: If the Son is of one substance with the Father, how can the historical Jesus be understood? This was the purpose of the whole Trinitarian dogma, but now if the Trinitarian dogma was formulated as it was in Nicaea, is it still able to make Jesus understandable? How can He who is of Divine nature, without restriction, be a real man at the same time? The answer to this question was given – or at least one attempted to give it – in the Christological struggle which, according to its importance, lasted for almost three centuries and again brought the Christian Church to the edge of self-destruction.

There were always two main types of Christological thought: Either, God as Father (or as Logos or as Spirit) has used the man Jesus of Nazareth, begetting and inspiring and adopting him as Son – this is the one possibility; or a Divine being, the Logos, the eternal Son, has become man in an act of transformation. The Nicaenum, with its homoousios and with the Monarchianistic trend, favors the former solution. And so does the Roman theology. The emphasis on the Divinity of the eternal Son makes the emphasis on the humanity of the historical Son much easier. A half-God can be transformed; God Himself can only adopt man.

But this former solution was not in the line of Origenism. In Origen the eternal Logos is inferior to the Father and has, by His union with the soul of Jesus, in eternity, the traits of the historical Jesus. Therefore He can easily be transformed into Him with the help of the body, and a transformation Christology can be developed. In the Trinitarian struggle, no sharp distinction between these possibilities has been made. The homoousios could be interpreted nearer to Sabellius or nearer to Arius. So the Christological interpretations could be more in

the sense of adaptation, or in the sense of transformation. This uncertainty was discovered by some theologians and became a matter of controversy when one man acted in the Christological struggle as Arius did in the Trinitarian struggle, namely drawing the consequences of the Origenistic position. This man was Apollinarius of Laodicea, of whom we have to speak more next time.



## Lecture 13: School of Antioch. Theodor of Mopsuestia. Apollinarius. Nestorius. Cyril. Chalcedon.

The West never followed the Alexandrian line, of which Apollinarius was the first and most radical expression, and was rejected for this reason. How is salvation possible if in Jesus the humanity is not more or less swallowed into the Divinity, so that we can adore Him as a whole, so that His mind is identical with the Divine Logos? The answer was: It is impossible. Therefore the general trend goes in the direction of what was later called Monophysitism – one Divine nature, into which the human nature is swallowed.

Against this the West and the school of Antioch protested. And let me say something about the school of Antioch and their general attitude. The first is Theodor of Mopsuestia. This whole school has very definite characteristics which distinguish it from most of the Alexandrian tendencies and which make them the predecessors of the emphasis on the historical Jesus in modern theology.

- 1) They had a very strong philological interest, and gave a most exact interpretation and emphasis on the historical picture of the Christ. So they had the same half-philological interest which historical criticism developed in our days.
- 2) They had a rational tendency – just as liberal theology also had – in the sense of Alexandrian philosophy.
- 3) They had strong ethical-personalistic interests – instead of mystical-ontological – exactly as Rome and the Stoics had.

Rome, the West, was not always on their side, but on the whole Antioch represented some main Western trends, although it itself developed in the East. It was the great ally of Rome in the East which made it possible that Rome – i. e. , the emphasis on history, personality – was victorious over against the mystical-ontological interest of the East.

But the popular religion was on the whole on the side of Alexandria, and not of Antioch. And since Antioch, beyond this, was broken by the basic structure of the dogma, coming from Origen, much more in the line of Alexandrian than of Antiochean thinking; since it further was broken by politics and by lack of moral

resistance against the superstitious level of Christianity – which developed largely at that time everywhere in Christianity – Antioch could not prevail. The personalities were not great enough to resist the demands of the people for a magically working God who walks on earth and whose human nature is only a gown for his Divine nature. Nevertheless, Antioch, in alliance with Rome, has saved the human picture of Christ in its religious significance. Without Antioch, probably the Church would have lost completely the human picture, and this means the history-conscious West never would have been able to develop.

In this way Antioch also has defended the main part, at least, of the Church against the Monophysites, which according to the human character of Christ being swallowed up, has produced infinite sacramental magic superstitious things. In doing all this, Antioch paved the way for the Christological emphasis of the West. Now it was very fortunate that you heard a representative of the East because it is perhaps impossible for somebody who comes from the West fully to understand what the religious meaning of the East is. And I believe this is even more difficult for you than for me, because in Europe we are much nearer to the East, not only geographically but also in history. The mystical-ontological elements permeate the whole Western culture in Europe, but they don't in this country. Therefore you should be all very grateful for your heritage to the Antiochean school. . . and to Rome which in alliance with this school was able to save that kind of attitude which is natural to all of you.

Theodor emphasizes, against Apollinarius, the perfect nature of man in unity with the perfect nature of God. He says: "A complete man, in his nature, is Christ, consisting of a rational soul and human flesh; complete is the human person; complete also the person of the Divinity in him. It is wrong to call one of them impersonal." This was what finally prevailed in many sections of the East, in everything Monophysite, that only one nature is personal, namely the Divine, and the human is not. Therefore he says: "One should not say that the Logos became flesh." You remember I came to this again and again already in the Apostolic Fathers. He says this is a vague metaphoric kind of talk and should not be used as a precise formula, but one should say: He took on humanity. "The Logos had not been transformed into flesh." This transformation, or transmutation, idea was felt by him as pagan, and so he rejected it. But the pagan spirit of superstition wanted to have a transformed God walking on earth. But of course this brought Theodor into a very hard problem. If each side in Christ, the human, and the Divine, are themselves persons, is He not a being with two personal centers? Is He not a

combination of two sons, a monster with two heads, as his enemies told him? Theodor tried to show the unity of the two persons. He rejected the unity in essence or nature. In essence they are absolutely different because the Divine nature cannot be confined to an individual man. The Logos, as follows from the Fourth Gospel, is always universally present. Even when Jesus lived, the flowers were blooming, the animals living, men were walking, culture was going on. All this is Logos. How can the Logos be only the man Jesus?,, he says; that is impossible. He speaks, therefore, of a unity by the Holy Spirit, which is a unity of grace and will. In this way he establishes in Jesus the analogy to the prophets, who were driven by the Spirit. But it is a unique event because in the prophets the Spirit is limited; in Jesus the Spirit is unlimited.

The union of the two natures started in the womb of Mary. In it the Logos has connected a perfect man with Himself in a mysterious way. This Logos directs the development of Jesus, His inner growth. But it does not do so by coercion. Jesus, as every man, has grace, even unlimited grace. But grace never works through coercion, but through the personal center. In this way Jesus increased in perfection, by the grace of God. So he says we have one person, but the natures are not mixed. He denied that he spoke of two sons, but he affirmed that he spoke of two natures. The Divine nature does not change the human nature, in its essence; but it was a human nature which by grace could follow the Divine nature. The Divine nature does not change the human nature. Therefore one can speak of Mary as giving birth to God – you remember this was the decisive formula. This is against the tradition of the Antiocheans, but they couldn't deny at least the phrase – Mary giving birth to God. He justified the acceptance of this phrase by saying that Mary also gave birth to a man, and this is the direct and adequate (way of) speaking; the other, that she gave birth to God, is only indirectly adequate, because the body of Jesus was united with God the Logos.

In the same way, he agrees that the human nature must be adored and, conversely, that God has suffered. But he says all this can be said only of the unity of the first person. In this unity one can say this because what you can say of the unity, you can say of the whole being. But not because of a transformation of the Logos into a human being – this he rejects.

Now this is the Antiochean theology. It is very near to us, and this is not by chance; the West was near to these ideas.

The oneness of nature, the Western theologians said, is reached only when Christ is elevated at the resurrection to the throne of God, where the body and the human soul are glorified and transformed. But this event of the human part being swallowed up, is something transcendent. This happens in Heaven, but not on earth. So he says: Only the flesh, i. e. , the historical person, has suffered and died, not the Divinity in Him. It is blasphemy to say that Divinity and flesh belong to one nature. Having both natures, He suffered in His human nature, Ambrose said.:The same grace which accepted the human nature in Christ and made Him the Son of God, made us also justified before God and His children.”

This means we see here two allies: Rome with the empirical personal and historical interest; Antioch, which has the same interest and uses it for philological studies and for philosophical considerations, which however were less successful than the historical criticism.

This alliance of Rome and Antioch could have led perhaps – we don’t know – to a full victory of the Antiocheans over the Alexandrians. But this did not happen. And it did not happen because Rome had no direct theological interest. It had only a political interest – not political in the state sense, but in the Church-state sense. Rome was the great (center of the Church’s movement) and as such it did not want to surrender Christianity because of a theological formula.

One of the members of this school for (whom) we should have great (respect), is Nestorius. He preached in 429 against the theotokos doctrine, that Mary gave birth to God. Mary gave birth to a man, who became the organ of Divinity. Therefore not the Divinity but the humanity of Christ has suffered. Therefore one could even say, as he does, that Mary is Christotokos. But if this is the case, that Christ is Christotokos – and only indirectly, later, did he accept that Mary can become theotokos – this was not really meant; he really meant that here is God, the Logos, coming down; there is Mary giving birth to a man: and they are united. But it is not a divine being coming down and becoming; a man, in terms of a transmutation myth.

The two natures preserve their qualities in the personal union. They are connected in the humanity of Jesus, but He is not deified in it. The unmixed connection of the natures: that is what he teaches. He who terms Jesus or Christ the only begotten or the Son, he means the one person. The term “man” describes the one nature in Him; the term “God,” “Logos,” the other nature. But these ideas brought him into heresy. They were consistently in the Antiochean school, but with him the

Antiochean school became suspect and finally rejected. . . . Nestorius actually was a victim of the fight between Byzantium and Alexandria.

But some other developments supported the Alexandrian cause:

1) Already for a long time the Mary-legend – for which there is very little basis in the Bible – produced out of and against the Biblical reports legendary stories of a pious imagination. This figure of Mary attracted the novelistic mind of all those who talked about her, and so a whole Mary-legend developed.

2) The second reason for the predominance of Alexandria over Antioch was the high valuation placed on virginity, which came together with an ascetic trend which increased in strength

3) There was also a spiritual vacuum in the life of that time, an empty space which like all other empty spaces in the spiritual life soon are filled – namely, the desire to have a female element in the center of religion. This was the case in Egypt, in the myth of Isis and Osiris, the goddess and her son, but it was not in Christianity. Following Judaism, every female element was thrown out. The Spirit could not replace the female element; first of all He appears, in the early reports of the birth of Jesus, as the male element, in respect to her as the female element. And beyond this the Spirit is an abstract concept. It was so even for those days” So the Divine Spirit never could replace, in the popular mind, the different forms of male-centered religion coming from the Old Testament.

4) The popular appeal of the transformation Christology, which was represented by Alexandria. Imagine a simple-minded human being: she wants to have God. Of course if you tell her: “There is God, on the altar. . . , go and have Him there,” then she will go – this fills the Catholic churches because there you have God on the altar. But how is this possible? Because of the Incarnation, for in the Incarnation God became something whom I can have, with whom I can walk, whom I can see, etc, . . . All this is popular feeling, and this feeling was decisive against the Alexandrians.

What Cyril wanted was to show that the human nature is taken into the unity of the Logos, who remains what He was” Therefore he could say that the Logos Himself experienced death, since He has received His body, namely, in Jesus. In the formula “out of two natures, one,” he accepts the abstract distinction of the natures, but actually there is no difference between the natures This makes it

possible for him to be the protagonist in the fight about the theotokos. The religious motive is: It is not a man who became king over us, but God, who has appeared in human form. If Nestorius were right, then only a man, not the Logos, would have died for us, (because the Logos cannot die.) Only if the natures were so united (as Cyril wanted), he could say they were united and that they can represent the duality. "If Nestorius is right, then we eat in the Lord's Supper the flesh of a man," What the people wanted was the physical presence of the Divine. This underlies the sacramental development, and was the whole Alexandrian theology.

First it seemed they could be united. Then the Alexandrians reacted, but they reacted so much and so victoriously that Rome took the side of Antioch. But Rome put a condition to the Antiocheans. They had to remove Nestorius because he was now too much suspect. After a synod in Ephesus in 431, in which a compromise was prepared and (also) many further synods – the famous latroceneum Ephesum, the synod of "gangsters," as they were called, because they came with sticks to drive each other out, and they transported hundreds of monks to the doors of the church where the synod took place, in order to threaten everybody who would deny the theotokos of Mary, God walking on earth.

After all this, the final and most famous synod, that of Chalcedon, took place in 451, the only other date (together with Nicaea, 325) which I would like you to know. In the Synod of Chalcedon, the alliance of Rome and Antioch proved its strength. They were very much supported by the fact that one of their opposition, the bishop of Alexandria, Eutychus, put forth such a radically Monophysitic attitude that he was condemned. This condemnation of Alexandria was at the same time the victory for Antioch.

How does this decision of Chalcedon look? Decisive for the actual outcome of this synod was that the Roman pope, Leo I, wrote to a synod in Ephesus a letter which was not even read by the victory-drunken Alexandrians, In Chalcedon, however, the letter was accepted as a basic document. There Leo says: "Thus the properties of each nature and substance were preserved entire, and came together to form one person. Humility was assumed by majesty, weakness by strength, mortality by eternity." "There was one true God in the entire and perfect nature of true man. The Son of God therefore came down from His throne, from Heaven, without withdrawing from His Father's glory, and entered this lower world, because of the unity of the person in each nature, which can be understood that the Son of Man came from Heaven, and conversely that the Son of God has been crucified and

buried." Here again you have the same phenomenon as in the Antiochean theology: on the one hand a radical statement, and combining them rather easily with traditional ideas. The decision of Chalcedon was made on this basis. It was not passed in significance by Nicaea, and together with Nicaea passes all the other synodal decisions. Today no one can study systematic theology who does not know something of this decision. In it the problems discussed are mentioned all together and brought into paradoxical formulas. Everything discussed in the main synods, etc., were brought together into paradoxical formulas.

- 1) "Therefore, following the Holy Fathers, we all with one consent teach men to confess one and the same Son of God, Jesus Christ, the same complete in Godhead and also complete in manhood."
- 2) True God, and at the same time true man, of a reasonable soul and body.
- 3) He is consubstantial with the Father, according to His Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to His manhood – in all things like unto us, apart from sin,
- 4) He is begotten of the Father both before all worlds, according to His Godhead, and also in these latter days, on account of us and our salvation, of the Virgin Mary, the God-bearer, according to His manhood.
- 5) One and the same Christ, Lord, only begotten, is to be acknowledged in two natures, but these natures must not be confused. And they are natures without any change, without division, without separation.
- 6) The distinction of natures, being in no way annulled by the union, the characteristic of each nature being presented and coming together to form a person and a substance. It is not parted nor is it divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only begotten God. . . . the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here you see, as in many of these documents, how easy these philosophical terms had a transition into a liturgical and poetic language. This was always the case. And it makes them much more beautiful. . . .

Again the negative side was clear. The positive side was doubtful. The Roman way was victorious, but different interpretations were possible. The East was disappointed by this decision. The Alexandrian delegates did not subscribe. They said what most Russian delegations today would say, if they subscribed to

something so much against the popular demand: they would say they would be killed if they signed this document and came home. They would not be able to live any more because of the fanatic monks who would beat them to death. Therefore the reaction of the East was unavoidable. This reaction against Chalcedon by the East, in its radical consequences, was strong enough to divide East and Rome in such a degree that it became an easy prey to the Islamic puritan reaction. This is especially true of the Monophysitic churches of Egypt and neighboring countries. They were all swallowed up by the reaction of Islam, which I would call a puritan reaction, against the sacramental superstitious form into which Christianity fell more and more. It is a thesis I have that the attacks of Islam never would have been successful if Christianity had taken into itself the element of personality and history. But it didn't They fell down deeper and deeper into popular superstition, and so they were surprised...

The decision of Chalcedon was partly denied, partly put aside. From 482- 590, the first schism occurred between the East and the West, the latter maintaining Chalcedon, the other trying to reinterpret it. After the reunion, Monophysitism became victorious in Alexandria. It was a radical return to Cyril and his emphasis on the unity of the natures'; . . . After the union, only one nature is there; Christ is one, according to His composite nature, according to His person, according to His will. After the union there is no duality of natures or energies. Chalcedon and Leo, who assert two natures and two energies, should be condemned. The more radical Monophysites taught that with the conception in Mary the flesh of Christ became progressively deified. They really made Mary already a goddess. The radicals said their enemies adored something mortal. But both are united in the opposition to the two natures. They wanted nothing except God on earth, and without human relativity.

An alliance of the emperor, who wanted a union with the Monophysites and a new theology, solved the problem for a long time for sections of the East. The man was Leontius of Byzantium, who combined Cyril and Leo with a new scholastic thought.

He said:

1). The human nature in Christ is neither an acted hypostasis nor without hypostasis; it is anhypostasis. Here you have reached Scholasticism...(Hypostasis means being an independent being.) (When) :one understands hypostasis, one understands non-hypostasis. But when it comes to the formula enhypostasis (one hypostasis in the other), then we don't know any more what that really means. The



reason why it was invented is clear. The question was: Can two natures exist without an independent head? The answer was, they cannot; therefore Christ must be the representative. . .

2) The being of the human nature is in the Logos: This meant the condemnation of the whole Antiochean theology, including Theodor, who was attacked by him. The religious meaning of this theology became visible in the fight about the suffering of God which was expressed in liturgical and theological formulas. The treis-hagion (thrice holy) was also enlarged to the formula: "Holy God. . . Almighty. . . immortal, who for us was crucified, have mercy upon us." And the theological formula: One of the holy trius has suffered in the flesh. - - Both things are carried through in spite of Rome's protest. All this was dogmatized in 553 in Constantinople, in the 5th Ecumenical Council. The Council expressed itself in fourteen anathemas. . . It decided that He who did the miracles is the same. . . The unity is not a matter of energy, etc., or honor, but it was an indirect one, or a unity by mercy. But it was a union of the personal with the Divine power.

The natures, Divine and human, are only distinguished in theory, not in practice. The person of the Logos has become the personal center of a man. The human nature has not personal characteristics of its own. This was the decisive point; because if it has not, how can He help us? The crucified is the true God and Lord of glory and one of the Trinity. The identification of Jesus Christ with the ethical Logos is complete. Like the icons in which Christ appears in gold-ground (setting), the human personality has disappeared. This is the meaning of all this.

But the West could not be conquered so easily. A new reaction of the West occurred. The question was whether the one person, Jesus Christ, has one or two wills. One speaks in this time of monoteletis and duoteletis. They fought with each other, but finally this time the West prevails. Christ has two independent natures; the human nature is not swallowed up by the Divine.

You can grasp this development if you use the key of the problem of salvation and how salvation is related to the individual, to history, to personal life. Here the West was clear; the East was not.

The last fight in the east was about the icons. Ikon means image, the images in the churches of the Fathers and Saints. The icons deserve veneration and not adoration. But if one asks what this actually means, we must say that in popular understanding veneration always develops into adoration. . . . This was perhaps for

us not the greatest thing the East gave the West – although I would say that the salvation of human nature is something extremely great – but there is still something else in the East, namely the development of mysticism. To this we will go tomorrow by dealing with the classical early Christian mystic (ca. 500), Dionysius the Areopagite , who influenced everything in West and East after Chalcedon.

## Lecture 14: Dionysius the Areopagite (Pseudo-Dionysius)

Yesterday I gave a survey on the rise and further fate of the Christological doctrine as formulated in the Council of Chalcedon. Today I want to bring to an end the discussion of the Eastern church. I must say something which has been experienced in several years of giving these lectures, that there is a hidden protest against the emphasis on the Eastern church in some of you, probably even now. I understand this because it does not have the actuality, let us say, of the Reformation or of modern theology. The situation is thus: As long as you know the fundamentals of the early development and have really understood it – which is not so easy – then everything else is comparatively easy. But if you know only the present-day things and don't know the foundations, then everything is in the air, and you always are in a state of a house built from the roof and not from the foundations. That's really why I myself and of course some of my colleagues – e. g., Prof. Richardson – think that the foundations of Christian theology, as given in the early Church, are really foundations; they are foundations immediately after the Biblical foundations, and as such they must be considered. For this reason I gave almost half of our whole time to the Greek church. I give also this hour to it, and then we will go to the Roman church of the Middle Ages.

Yesterday I tried to show you that the doctrine of Chalcedon is something which, however we think about the use of Greek terms in Christian thinking, has saved one important thing for our Western theology, even in the East, namely the human side of the picture of Jesus. It was almost at the edge of falling down completely and being swallowed by the Divine nature, so that all the developments of the West, including the Reformation, would not have been possible. This is the importance of the Synod of Chalcedon and of a decision, which the East never really accepted, which (it) transformed after it, which (it) first of all swallowed up in (its) sacramental kind of thinking and acting.

If you understand this, then perhaps the single steps of the Christological doctrine are easy to understand. Always have two pictures in your mind if you want to understand them:

- 1) The being with the two heads, where there is no unity: God and man.

2) The being in which one head has disappeared, but also humanity has disappeared.

The one head is the head of the Logos, of God Himself, so that when Jesus acts it is not the unity of something human and something Divine, but-it is something else: it is the Logos who acts. So all the struggles, all the uncertainties, the despairs, the loneliness, and all this which we have in the Gospel picture, is only seemingly and not really so. It has no consequences: it is inconsequential. This was the danger of the Eastern development, and the fact that this danger has been overcome is the great importance of the decision of Chalcedon, for which we must be very grateful to the Eastern church that it was able to do this against its own basic feeling. But the power of the Old Testament and the power of the full picture of the human side in Jesus, was such that the East couldn't fail in this respect.

I come now to one of the most interesting figures in Eastern church history, Dionysius the Areopagite (Pseudo-Dionysius), who was also of extreme importance for the West. (Cf. Acts 17:34, where a man called Dionysius followed Paul who was speaking in the Areopagus; he is called Dionysius the Areopagite, in the tradition. His name was used by a writer writing between 480-510, probably ca. 500. He called himself Dionysius the Areopagite, namely the man who was with Paul and who received much wisdom from him. This man was accepted as the real Dionysius who talked with Paul, when he gave to his books this name. This was of course in our terminology a falsification. But it was the usage of ancient writing, so it was not a betrayal in any technical or moral sense; but it was a matter of launching books under famous names. Not until the 16th and in some cases even the 19th century was this falsification scientifically discovered. Not even the Catholics doubt about it. It is a historically established fact that the man who wrote these books wrote actually about 500 and that he used the name of the companion of Paul in Athens in order to give authority to his books. He was translated into Latin by the first great Western theologian of the New World, namely Scotus Eriugena, ca. 840.

This Latin translation was used in all the Middle Ages and had many Scholastic commentators. For us he has all the main characteristics of the Byzantine end of the Greek development. He is the mediator of Neoplatonism and Christianity, the father of most of Christian mysticism. Therefore we must deal with him very carefully. His concepts underlie most Christian mysticism in the East as well as in the West, and some of his concepts – such as hierarchy, which he invented – entered

the ordinary language and helped greatly to form the Western hierarchical system of Rome.

We have two basic works of his: "On the Divine Names", and "On the Hierarchies." The latter book is divided into the Heavenly and the ecclesiastical hierarchies. The word "hierarchy" probably was created by him; at least we don't know if anyone else used it before. It is derived from hieros, holy, sacred; and arch principle, power, beginning, etc. – thus, a holy power. The word hierarchy is defined by him as a holy system of degrees with respect to knowledge and efficacy. This characterizes all Catholic thinking very much; i. e., it is not only ontological, but also epistemological; there are degrees not only in being but also in knowledge. The system of holy degrees is taken from Neoplatonism, where it was first fully developed, after Aristotle and Plato (Symposium). The man who is most important is Proclus, a Neoplatonic philosopher who has often been compared with Hegel; he has the same kind of triadic thinking, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, and brings all reality into such a system of holy degrees.

The surprising thing about Dionysius is that this system, which was the end of the Greek world, the summary of everything Greek wisdom had to say about life, was introduced into and used by Christianity. Shortly before, this system was used by Julian the Apostate in order to fight Christianity, in order to bring paganism in again in a large system, which is the basis for all Greek thinking, and for the new religion of the educated to which he wanted to introduce Christianity. So Julian and the Christian theologians who were fighting with each other in a life and death struggle, now were united in a Greek Christian mystic and theologian, Pseudo-Dionysius. Dionysius created Christian mysticism by using the system of degrees. This is what "hierarchy" means. The other book is "On the Divine Names." The term "Divine names" is also a Neoplatonic term, which was necessary for the Neoplatonists when they brought all the gods of the pagans into their system. How could they do this? Because they followed the philosophical criticism of hundreds of years, and no educated Greek of that time believed literally in the pagan gods. But there was still the tradition, there was the popular religion, and so something had to be done about these Divine names. What they tried to show was that the qualities of the Divine were expressed in these names. These names cannot be taken literally. They express different degrees and powers in the Divine ground and Divine emanation; they point to principles of power, of love, of energy, and other virtues, but they are not something which in terms of "name" could be understood as special beings. This meant they discovered, in present-day terminology, the

symbolic character of all our speaking about God. The writings about the Divine names can be found in all the Middle Ages; all theologians did this; they spoke about the symbolic meaning of everything we say about God, They didn't use the word "symbol" at that time, but used the word "name," i. e., expressing a character or quality. And when you today have a popular discussion or a bull session, and someone tells you, "Now what we say about God is only "symbolic," you can say that this "only" is very wrong, and as long as a real thinking theology exists, people have understood the symbolic character of what we say about God, and the wrong is on our side that we haven't followed in this respect the insight of classical theology – of the Greek and of the Western church – but that we have fallen into a literalism against which all the Reformers, especially Calvin, were fighting. The symbolic interpretation of everything we say about God corresponds to the idea of God Dionysius develops. First of all, how can we know about Him? He answers: There are two ways of recognizing Him, the affirmative theology: all names, as far as they are positive, must be attributed to God because He is the Ground of everything; so He is designated by everything, everything points to Him, This is the positive theology, and this has to be done. God must be named with all names,

But then, at the same time – there is a negative theology which denies that He can be named by anything whatsoever. He is even beyond the highest names theology has given to Him. He is beyond spirit, He is beyond the good. He is, as he says, super-essential, i. e., beyond the Platonic ideas, beyond essences; super-exalted, i. e., beyond all superlatives; He is not the highest being but beyond any possible highest being; and He is super-Divinity, i. e., He is beyond God, if we speak of God as a Divine being. Therefore He is "unspeakable Darkness", In both cases he denies the possibility, by His very nature, that He can be seen, that He can be spoken. Therefore all names disappear, after they have been attributed to Him, even the holy name "God." Perhaps this is the source, unconsciously, for what I say at the end of my "Courage to Be," about "the God above God," namely the God above God which is the real ground of everything that is, which is above any special name we can give, even to a highest being. It is important that the positive and the negative way lead to the same end. In both cases the forms of the world (are) negated. If about God you say everything, you can equally say you don't say anything about Him, namely, anything special. That is, of course, the first thing which must be said about God, because that is what makes Him God, namely, that which transcends everything finite. In this sense Dionysius says that even the problem of unity and trinity disappears in the abyss of God. Since that which super-essential, beyond the Platonic "ideas," is also beyond all numbers, it is even beyond

the number one – so that there is no difference between three or one or many, in this respect. When you hear that God is "one," don't think of numbers; always translate this by the sentence that God is beyond numbers, not only against two and three and four and five, but beyond all numbers. Only on this basis can we then speak of "trinity," and of the infinite Self-expression in the world. First of all, "one" means beyond one and two and three and four; it does not mean one against two and three and four – this is a complete misunderstanding.

From this abysmal "one," which is the source and substance of all being, the light emanates, and the light is the good in all things. The word "light" is a symbol not only for knowing but also for being. "Hierarchy" for Dionysius is a system of degrees not only for our knowledge but also for being itself.

It is the same as the earliest Greek philosopher Parmenides said, that where there is being there is also the Logos of being. This light, which is the power of being and knowing, is identical with itself; it is unshaken, it is everlasting. What the first Greek philosopher Parmenides said, the last, Dionysius, said. In this the East was consistent in its whole development.

There is a way downwards and a way upwards – we have this already in Heraclitus who says that in everything there is a trend from earth over water over fire to air, and an opposite trend from the air to earth, i.e., every living being is a tense reality, in which there is a fundamental tension, a tension of the creative power of being going down, and the saving power of being going up. The three stages of the way upward are purgation, or purification (this is the ethical-ascetic realm); illumination (this is the realm of mystical understanding); and union or perfection (this is the return into the unity with God. In this last stage something takes place which became the foundation of the modern world through Nicholas Cusanos, namely what Dionysius calls the mystical ignorance; what Cusanos called the learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*). Of this the two men say that it is the only ultimate true knowledge. And again this word "ignorance" says we don't know anything special any more when we have penetrated into the Ground of everything that is. And since everything special is changing, it is not ultimate reality and truth. But if you penetrate from everything changing to the ultimate, then we have the rock of eternity and we have the truth which only can rest on this rock.

Now this fundamental reality is represented in degrees called "hierarchies." The line from above to below is the line of emanation. The line from below to above is the line of salvation. The hierarchies represent both ways. They are the way in which

the Divine abyss emanates. They are, at the same time, the revelations of the Divine abyss, as far as it can be revealed, in the way upwards – in the saving union with God.

From the point of view of the way upward, they have the purpose to create the most possible similarity and union of all beings with God. Here again the old Platonic formula which I already gave you, "being equal to God as much as possible," is used by the Areopagite – coming nearer and nearer to God and finally uniting with Him.

Every hierarchy takes its light from the higher one and brings it down to the lower. In this way each hierarchy is active and passive at the same time. It receives the Divine power of being and gives it in a restrictive way to those who are lower than it. But this system of degrees is ultimately dualistic. I already said this when I spoke about the title of the book on hierarchies. There are two fundamentally different hierarchies, namely the Heavenly and the earthly. The Heavenly hierarchies are the Platonic essences or ideas, above which is God, but which are the first emanations (and) are from God, but which in Dionysius are interpreted as hierarchies of angels. This is a development which already occurs in later Judaism; the two concepts, the concept of angels – which is a symbolic personalistic concept – amalgamates with the concepts of hypostatized essences or powers of being: they become one and the same being and they represent the Heavenly hierarchies. If you want to give a meaningful account about the concept of angels to your people, and perhaps even to yourselves, always interpret them as the Platonic essences, as the powers of being, not as special beings. If you interpret in the latter way, it becomes crude mythology; if you interpret them as emanations of the Divine power of being in essences, in powers of being, then it becomes a meaningful concept and perhaps a very important one – but of course not in terms of the sentimental winged babies which you find in pictures of angels. This has nothing to do with the great concept of Divine emanations in terms of powers of being.

This is the one hierarchy, and as an image of this hierarchy we have the ecclesiastical hierarchy which is on earth. The angels are the Spiritual mirrors of the Divine abyss. They always look at Him, i. e., they are the immediate recipients of His power of being. They always are longing to become equal with Him and to return to Him. And they are with respect to us the first revealers. Now if we understand it in this way, we can understand again what it means that they are the essences in which the Divine ground expresses itself first.



There are three times three orders of angels – which is of course a Scholastic play – making it possible to give a kind of analogy to the earthly hierarchies. The earthly hierarchies are powers of Spiritual being. Here you can learn something about medieval realism. The earthly hierarchies are:

- 1) The three sacraments: baptism the Lord's Supper, confirmation
- 2) The three degrees of the clergy: deacons, priests, and bishops.
- 3) The three degrees of non-priests: the imperfect, who are not even members of the congregation; the laymen; and the monks, who have a special function.

These nine earthly hierarchies mediate the return of the soul to God. They all are equally necessary and all are equally powers of being. You will immediately ask, as children of nominalism, "what does that mean, that here the sacraments are equal, as hierarchies, with people; namely, the clergy, laymen, etc." This you can understand only if you understand that the people are not people here but bearers of sacramental power, bearers of power of being. And so are the sacraments. That is the point .of identity which makes it possible that he calls all nine of them hierarchies. But in order to understand this, you must know what arch , power of being, means. They all are sacred powers of being, some of them embodied in persons, some in sacraments, some in persons in the congregation with the function only of being believers in the congregation, with no special function. "

This brings the earthly world into a hierarchical system because earthly things – especially in the Sacraments – are used to express themselves – sounds, colors, forms, stone, etc. All reality belongs to the ecclesiastical reality, because the ecclesiastical reality is the hierarchical reality as expressed in the different degrees of being and knowledge of God. In the mystery of the Church, all things are interpreted in terms of their symbolic power to express the abyss of Divinity. They express it and they guideback to it. The ecclesiastical mysteries penetrate into the interior Divinity, into the Divine Ground of all things. And so a system of symbols in which everything is included potentially, is established. This is the principle of Byzantine culture, namely to transform reality into something which points to the eternal – not changing reality, as it is in the Western world, but interpreted reality, penetrating into its depths.

Therefore the understanding of the Eastern hierarchical thinking is much more an understanding of the vertical line, going into the depths of theology, while the

Kingdom-of- God theology, for instance in Protestantism, is a horizontal theology, and we can say, looking at the situation in East and West, that the East is missing, (with respect to) transforming reality, and therefore became first the victim to the Islamic attack, and then a victim to the pseudo-Islamic Marxian attack, because it was not able itself to work in the horizontal line, transforming reality.

On the other hand, when we look at our culture we can say – without too much doubt about this – that we have lost the vertical dimension to a great extent; we always go ahead; we never have time to stand somewhere and to look above and below.

These are two types. Here I give you a system of hierarchies which is completely vertical and has very little horizontal. In order to understand what I mean with making everything transparent for the Divine ground, we should look for a moment at art. The most translucent religious art is the Byzantine mosaics. They don't want at all to describe anything which happens in the horizontal line; they want to express, in everything which appears on the horizontal level of reality, on the plane of time and space, to make it a symbol pointing to its own depths: the presence of the Divine. This is the great(ness) of the mosaics. There are a few examples of them in the Metropolitan Museum, which you should look at. There you have the expression of Divine transcendence, even if the subjects are completely earthly – animals, trees, men of politics, women of the court. Every expression has its ultimate symbolic meaning, and therefore. . . the last great fight in the Byzantine church was a fight about pictures, because the Byzantine culture believed in the power of pictures to express the Divine ground of things. And the danger was very great that the popular belief would confuse the transparency of the pictures with the power of the Divine itself, which is effective through the pictures, but which is never identical with them. And the whole fight, especially coming from the West against the East, and on the other hand coming from Mohammedanism against the East, was a fight about the meaning of the transparent power of the pictures. For the East, this was essential and still is; therefore most of the great art came from there and then conquered the West. But from the West the danger was so great that after Rome partly capitulated, it finally was attacked again by Protestantism, especially Reformed Protestantism, in a way which removed the pictures from the churches again. Therefore in Calvinism natural objects have lost their transparency – that is the meaning of all iconoclastic (image-destroying) movements. You can understand this when they saw the superstitious way in which many Catholics

prayed to their pictures, etc... But when you understand what else was thrown out in the same act, then you are not so sure about it - -namely, that natural objects have lost their transparency: they are simply objects of technical activity, and nature became de-divinized, its Divine character, its representative character for the Divine, became lost. This is part of the whole problem. So we can say that what the Byzantine culture effected was the spiritualization of all reality. Please don't: confuse that with idealization --t hat is something quite different. Idealization is the picture of Hoffman's in Riverside Church, an idealized Jesus. A Byzantine Jesus is a transparent and never idealized Jesus. There is the Divine majesty which is visible throughout, but not a nice human being with ideal, manly handsomeness. That is not what great Christian art wanted to do. Therefore don't confuse it. And I would say that this Eastern church represents something which has been lost, and therefore I am especially happy that it was possible and still is possible to communicate with this church - but it is not possible with the Roman church - namely to take them into the World Council of Churches, and I hope we will not believe, because we are the big majority and are the dynamic power there, that we have nothing to learn from them. We have much to learn from them. . .

This may happen in centuries of more intimate contact, and then it might be that the dimension of depth will again enter the Western thinking, more than it does now.

The system of Dionysius was received by the West. There were two things which made this possible, and which Christianized, or baptized, it. The one was that emanation was not understood in a natural but in a personal picture. God has given existence to all beings because of His benevolence. This goes beyond pagan thinking. Here the personalistic element comes in and the Neoplatonic dualism is removed.

Secondly the system of mysteries is built around Christ, and around the Church. All things have the power of illuminating and uniting only in relationship to the Church and to the Christ. Christ does not become one hierarchy beside others. This was prevented by Nicaea. But He becomes God manifest, appearing in hierarchy and working through every hierarchy. In this way the system of pagan divinities and mysteries, which lived in Neoplatonism, was overcome, and in this way the Western church could receive the system of hierarchies and mysteries.

Consequently medieval mysticism never was in contrast to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. They all worked together, and only much later did conflicts arise.

This brings to an end my interpretation of the East, and tomorrow we start with the transition towards the West.

## Lecture 15: Tertullian. Cyprian. Augustine.

We finished the discussion of the Eastern development of Christian theology and we are now looking at the West, with the intention to remain there until the end of these lectures – which is perhaps not absolutely fair to the East, because there were developments there which one must certainly study if one wants to understand the situation in present-day Russia, for example, but our limitations are so great that I cannot go into this.

The two men who lead us from the East to the West, and with whom we must deal first, are Tertullian and Cyprian. We already discussed Tertullian to some extent in connection with the Montanistic movement of radical spiritualism and radical eschatology. He was its greatest theological representative. We also spoke about him in connection with his ability to create those formulas which finally survived, in a very early stage, those formulas about Trinity and Christology which, under the pressure of Rome, finally conquered all the other suggestions made by the East. Further, we have seen that he was a Stoic philosopher and as such he was fully aware of the importance of reason and carries through his rational system in a very radical way. But the same Tertullian is also aware of the fact that on the basis of his philosophical attitude there is something else, namely the Christian paradox, He who said that the human soul is naturally Christian (*anima naturaliter christiana*), a phrase you should remember, and is the same who is said to have said, at the same time – though he did not actually say it – that “I believe what is absurd,” (*credo quia absurdum est*). What he really said was: “The Son of God is crucified; it is not a shame because it is a matter of shame. And the Son of God had died; it is credible because it is inadequate And the buried (was) resurrected; it is certain because it is impossible.”

Now what you find in such paradox is a mixture of an understanding of the surprising, unexpected – and that means, in Greek, “paradoxical” – reality of the appearance of God, or God-man unity, under the conditions of existence; and at the same time it is a rhetorical expression of this idea, in the way in which the Roman educated orators used the Latin language. So you must not take it as a literal expression but as a pointing – by means of paradox – to the incredible reality of the appearance of Christ. Now people have added to this, *credo quia absurdum est*, “I believe because it is absurd,” but this of course is not Tertullian. He never would

have been able to give very clear dogmatic formulas and (be) a Stoic, believing in the ruling power of the Logos.

In Tertullian also appears something which is important later in the West, namely the emphasis on sin. He speaks of the *viciū originis*, the original vice, and identifies it with sexuality. In this way he anticipates a long development of Roman Christianity, the depreciation of sex and the doctrine of the universality of sinfulness.

Another thing can be derived from him and partly from his Stoic background: for him the Spirit is a kind of fine substance, as it was in Stoic philosophy. This fine substance is called grace or Spirit – which is the same thing in all Catholic theology; usually the third concept is love: (grace, spirit and love are actually the same in Catholic theology.) Therefore Roman Catholicism can speak of, infused grace, infused like a liquid, like a very fine substance, into the soul of man and transforming it. This is the non-personalistic element in all Roman Catholic sacramental thinking, and in the way in which the fine substance of the Spirit, or of love or grace, can be infused into the soul, . . into the oil of extreme unction, into the water of baptism, into the bread of the Lord's Supper. Here you have one of the sources of this kind of "spiritual materialism," if you want to call it like this, which played such a great role in the Roman church.

Finally he represents the idea that asceticism, the self-denial of the vital reality of oneself, is the way to receive this substantial grace of God. He uses the juristic term "compensation" for sin; asceticism, compensation for the negative side of sin. Or he uses "satisfaction": by good works we can satisfy God. Or he uses "self-punishment" and says that to the degree in which we will punish ourselves, God will not punish us. All this is legalistic thinking. And although he himself was not a lawyer, every Roman orator and philosopher was potentially a lawyer, as every American is a philosopher! . . . This use of legal categories was another fundamental characteristic of the West and it became decisive, for the later development of the Roman church in the movement in which the second and great important element was put into the foreground, namely the Church, and this was Cyprian.

The North African bishop Cyprian's greatest influence was on the doctrine of the Church. The problem which he discussed was also a very existential one – as in all Church history very few people were mere scholars; most of them had very fundamental existential affairs and concerns, and out of that arose their doctrines. In the moment in which a theology says something which you cannot existentially

realize any more, either the theology is bad or you have not yet had a special experience – both things are possible. But usually, I would say, the theology then is bad, or these parts of a theology are bad. And I believe – this is self-criticism – that in every theological system there are, besides those elements which are creations of existential concern and therefore full of blood and power and speaking to others, sections which are like lines drawn out in order to fill the system up, but not created on the basis of existential concern. And I believe that most of you are very sensitive to this; that is the reason why for a teacher every lecture should be a matter of fear and trembling – at least it is for this teacher! And just for this reason, because I never know, with absolute exactitude, (whether) something I tell you in systematics – and my whole “history of Christian thought” is very much systematic, as you know – is existential or not. That is the meaning of the word “existential.” Nietzsche called it “spirit”, and then he has said: Spirit is the life which cuts into its own life; out of its own suffering it produces its own creativity... He doesn't use the word existential, but that's what it means.

For the people like Cyprian, the problems of the Church were existential problems. There were the persecutions; there were those called the lapsi those who were fallen either by recanting Christianity or at least by surrendering books to the searching servants of the pagan authorities, or who denounced others in a trial such as those we see now in this country. All this was a matter of great concern for the Church, and of course each of them who did this was so to speak under Divine judgment. And these people wanted to return to the Church and overcome the weakness which got hold of them. No one can judge them who is human. But not everybody could be returned into the Church; in cases where there was not human weakness but malignancy or lack of depth, it was not possible for the Church to re-accept. Now the question was: Who decides, in this situation. The ordinary doctrine was: those who are “spirituals,” i. e. , those who had become martyrs or had in any other way proved that they were fully responsible Christians.

But against this, which was a kind of remnant from the period of Christianity in which spirit was still fighting with office and office was not yet prevailing, now the office didn't want this remnant of the past and wanted to take over this decision too. The episcopalian point of view said that the bishop, who is the Church, must decide about it. And he must decide in a very liberal way. He must take those who fell even more than once. In the same way, other mortal sinners must be received. The Church had become a country Church, a territorial, a universal Church, the

Church of the Empire, and so no one could be easily excluded. The decision was now in the hands of the bishop.

But on the other hand the doctrine was still powerful that the Spirit must decide whether or not someone can belong to the Church. So Cyprian said that the bishops are the Spirituall, those who have the Spirit, namely the Spirit of succession from the early Apostles, apostolic succession. In this way the Spirit became the qualification of the office This was the greatest triumph of the office, that now the Spirit is bound to the office and the Spirit is called the Spirit of succession. This was a transition, and shortly after it became clear that the clergy has the graces which belong to it by ordination, and that the highest clergy, finally the Pope, embodies the Divine grace on earth. But this was the transition to it.

A similar very existential problem was the problem: What to do with people who are baptized by heretics and schismatics. You know the difference, I hope. Heretics are people who have a different faith, who have deviated from the order of the Christian congregation. Schismatics are people who follow a special line of church-political development, those who split from the church, perhaps because two bishops fight with each other, or some groups don't want to accept the Roman bishop. So the separation of the Eastern and Western churches is always called schisma. The Eastern church is considered by Rome not as a heretic church but as a schismatic church. Protestantism is considered by Rome not as a schismatic church but as a heretic church, because their foundations of faith are at stake and not only the non-acknowledgment of the Roman bishop.

Now the question was: How was it possible to receive into one's own congregation people who are baptised by one of these groups. The answer was, again: It is the objective character of baptism which is decisive, and not the person who has performed it. We will see how Augustine carried this through.

Now behind all this stands Cyprian's idea of the Church:

1) He who has not the Church as Mother, cannot have God as Father. "There is no salvation outside the Church" – *extra ecclesia nulla salus*. The Church is the institution in which salvation is reached. This again is a change from the early Christian period where the Church was a community of the saints and not an institution for salvation. Of course salvation was going on within it and those who could be saved, and were saved, from paganism and from the demons were gathered in the Church. But the Church itself was not considered to be an institution of



salvation but a community of the saints. This is the first emphasis of Cyprian. It is very consistent with the legal thinking of the West.

2) The Church is built on the episcopate. He says the Church is built over the bishops. This is done by Divine law and therefore it is an object of faith. "Therefore you must know that the bishop is in the Church and the Church is in the bishop, and that if somebody is not with the bishop, he is not in the Church." Now this is purest episcopalianism – though somehow different from what is called today by this word.

3) The unity of the Church is correspondingly rooted in the unity of the episcopate. All bishops represent this unity. But in spite of the equality of all of them, there is one representative of this unity: this is Peter and his See. The See of Peter is the principle Church, "from which the priestly unity has arisen, the womb and the root of the Catholic Church." Now this is before Augustine. The consequence of this, although not yet in Cyprian's mind, was unavoidably the principate of Rome in a much more radical way than he expressed it.

4) The bishop is sacerdotus (the Latin word for "priest"). The priest's main function is the sacrificial function. The priest sacrifices the elements in the Lord's Supper and repeats the sacrifice on Golgotha by doing so. He imitates what Christ did; he offers a true and perfect sacrifice to God the Father within the Church. Here again it was not yet the later Catholic Mass, but it unavoidably would lead to it – (the more so in the primitive nations, with their realistic thinking and tendency to take as real what is symbolic. . . .). Many of the fundamentals of the Roman church existed as early as about 250, Cyprian's time. And whatever we say against the Roman church, we should not forget that the early developments of Christianity led this way, as early as the year 250, let us say, as an example. And when today one speaks of the agreement of the first 500 years, this is entirely misleading. Of course everybody agrees in the big synodal decisions – Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox – but this agreement is only seemingly an agreement, because the living meaning of all these things was absolutely different from what the Reformers built up as the Protestant doctrine. And if you take a man like Cyprian, then you can see the difference. No Protestant could accept any of these points.

Let me sum up some of the points characteristic of the Occidental tradition:

1) One could first mention the general practical activist tendency in the West, the legal relations between God and man, the much stronger ethical impulses for the

average Christian, not with respect to himself but with respect to the world; and include in this point the eschatological interest, without mystagogical and mystical emphasis. We can say: More law, less participation: that characterizes the West from the very beginning.

2) The idea of sin, even original sin, is almost exclusively occidental. The main problem of the East, as we have seen, was death – therefore immortality; and error – therefore, truth. The main problem of the West is sin, and salvation. In a man like St. Ambrose, the estimation of Paul – who is the main teacher on sin and salvation – is accepted. He has been called by St. Ambrose the doctor gentium, the teacher of the nations. Paul has the keys of knowledge; Peter has the keys of power. And there was going on through the whole history of the Middle Ages a struggle between Peter and Paul – between the keys of knowledge, which finally prevailed in the Reformation, and the keys of power, which always prevailed in the Roman church. Grace, therefore, is, according to St. Ambrose, first of all the forgiveness of sins and not, as in the Platonic attitude of the East, deification.

3) This has the following consequences: Western Christianity emphasizes the historical humanity of Christ, his humility, and not his glory. e. g., on the door of St. Sabina in Rome, before which I stood with great awe, I must say, there you find in wood-cut relief the first picture or sculpture of the crucifixion. The door is world-famous, coming from the fourth century. Here the West shows that it deviates, or can deviate, from the Christ in glory which you find in all mosaics but you never find the Christ crucified. This is more symptomatic for the difference of East and West than many theological formulas. But it is of course also expressed in the theological formulas: If I now return to this most difficult lecture I gave on Chalcedon, I now can illustrate it with the two doors, or with a mosaic in, let us say, Ravenna, which was under Byzantine influence at that time; and on the other hand the door in Santa Sabina.... There you find the two Christologies clearly expressed in picture. In one you have always the tremendously powerful Lord of the universe, in all glory as the Judge of the world or of the resurrected, in His majesty surrounded by angels, man, animals, and inorganic parts of nature, which all participate in His glory. And then you have this very wonderful, in some way poor, (presentation) of the suffering Christ on the door at Santa Sabina. The one is Antiochean, Roman theology, which emphasizes the humanity more than anything else, including the suffering humanity of the Christ; the other is Alexandrian Christology which makes Christ a walking God. . . – the bodily existence is swallowed up by the Divine form. Now this can give you an example of the difference in feeling. And so we have in the

whole history of painting in the West, since that time, the most wonderful, the most cruel, and the most destructive representations of the Crucifixion. The early Gothic crucifixes, of which there are many, are such that perhaps a modern church trustee wouldn't allow them to be hung in his church, because they are so ugly – supposing that the crucifixion was a beautiful thing. It was ugly. And that is what the West accepted, and could understand.

4) The last point I want to make is the Church. The idea of the Church is much more emphasized than in the East. The Church is built somehow according to the legal structure of the Roman state, with the principle of authority, with the double law – the canon law and the civil law. All this is characteristic of the West. One element I want to add is the hierarchical centralization of power in the Pope, and the personal participation of everybody, including the monks, in the sacrament of penance.

Now this gives you some ideas about the difference. Now I come to the man who is the representative of the West more than anyone else ever since, even the Reformers, and who is so to speak the foundation of everything the West had to say, in an ultimate formula, Augustine.

Augustine lived from 354-430 after Christ. His influence overshadows not only the next thousand years but all periods ever since. In the Middle Ages his influence was such that even those who were struggling against him in theological terminology and method – the Dominicans, with the help of Aristotle – quoted him often; as a Catholic theologian in Germany has counted, 80% of all the quotations of Thomas are from Augustine, and Thomas is the great opponent of Augustinianism in the Middle Ages. Now if you quote your enemies in the amount of 80% of all your quotations – affirmatively, of course – then this enemy is not simply an enemy, but you live on his basis, and the difference is one in emphasis and a change in method, but it is not a substantial difference. The whole Middle Ages are full of this.

In Augustine we have also the man to whom all the Reformers referred in their fight with the Roman church. We have in him the man who influenced deeply the modern philosophical movement insofar as it was Platonistic – i. e., Descartes and his whole school, and including Spinoza. He influenced deeply our modern discussion, and I would say, almost unambiguously, that I myself, and everything you get theologically from me, is much more in the line of the

Augustinian than in the Thomistic tradition.

So we have a line of thought from Augustine over the Franciscans in the Middle Ages, over the Reformers, over the philosophers of the 17th and early 18th centuries, over the German classical philosophers including Hegel, to the present-day philosophy of religion, insofar as it is not empirical philosophy of religion – which I think is a contradiction in terms – but a philosophy of religion which is based on the immediacy of the truth in every human being.

Now this is the greatness of Augustine, and this we have to understand. Now I am sorry that we are so late now, because that lecture has to be given as one. But I must start and will dwell on one special problem and will continue next Tuesday.

In order to understand Augustine, we must look at his development, his development in seven different steps, and then an eighth step which is negative, with respect to content.

1) The first of these seven steps, which may help us to understand the immense influence of this greatest of all Church Fathers, is his dependence on the piety of his mother. This means, at that time, something extremely important. It means that he is dependent on the Christian tradition. This reminds us of Plato's situation. When Plato wrote, he also wrote out of a tradition – the aristocratic tradition of the Athenian gentry, to which he belonged. But this tradition had come to an end in the self-destructive Peloponnesian war, the masses had taken over, and then the tyrants came – as always, following the masses. The aristocracy was killed, as a principle and partly also as human beings. So what Plato saw in his mind was an ideal form of political and philosophical existence, both identical with each other, but a vision which had no reality any more. Therefore I warn you about a mistake! – The name of Plato overshadows everything else in Greek thinking, even Aristotle. But don't believe that Plato was the most influential man in the later ancient world. He had always some influence and his book "The Timaeus" was almost the bible of the later ancient world. But he could not exercise real influence because everything he developed was in the realm of pure essences, and had no historical foundation any more. Here I think in terms of pure economic materialism: if the social and economic conditions do not exist any more; if a civilization has reached a special status; then you cannot influence it and even less transform it with the ideal form of ideas which come from the past. This is very concrete for us today, namely the longing for the Middle Ages, and the daily – or I must say hourly – increasing power of the Roman church has something to do with this situation. But it cannot be done. We cannot go back to the Middle Ages, although this is the hope of every

Catholic. So when Plato wrote his "Republic" and later on his "Laws," and implied in all this all elements of his philosophical thought – which was at the same time his social, psychological and religious thought – then he was in some way reactionary – (if you don't misunderstand this word, from again, driving towards something which was a matter of the past, and could not be reestablished any more in the period of the Roman Empire. This produced again a kind of emptiness in which the Cynics and Sceptics and Stoics were much more important than Plato because they were adequate to their situation. Stoicism, not Platonism, governed the later ancient world. But Plato returned in the Middle Ages. We will speak of this later.

Augustine was just in the opposite situation. While in Plato a great aristocratic tradition came to an end, in Augustine a new tradition started. It was, so to speak, a new archaism into which he came, and was brought into it. So immediately he had something which made it possible for him to participate in the new tradition. He had a pagan father and a Christian mother. The pagan father gave him the possibility to participate in paganism – of course, in what was greatest in paganism at that time; what was lowest in it, for him personally, we don't know – and his Christian mother made it possible for him to enter into another tradition, a new archaism. Thus the simple empirical fact of a man with a pagan father and a Christian mother means almost everything for our understanding of him.

2) He discovered the problem of truth. This was the second step, connected with the fact that he read Cicero's book "Hortensius". Here Cicero deals with the question of truth. But this question in Cicero means choosing between the existing ways of truth, between the different philosophies. And Cicero, though a great Roman statesman, answers in terms of a kind of eclectic philosophy, (as I believe every American statesman, if he wrote a book on truth, would answer, showing those elements in philosophy which are most adequate to the political situation in which he finds himself.) So it was truth from a practical point of view. Cicero is not an original philosopher. This was impossible after the catastrophe of Greek philosophy. Therefore he used, from a pragmatic point of view, the Roman Empire – what enhances good citizenship in the Roman Empire is of philosophical value. And the ideas which enhance are: providence, God, freedom, immortality, rewards, and things like that.

Augustine was in exactly the same situation. But for him it was not the *civitas terrena* but the Christian city of God; it was the Christian tradition. So he

developed a pragmatic philosophy, with Platonic and other elements, on the basis of the need of the Christian life and not on: the basis of Roman citizenship. But the basic form was very similar – it was pragmatic-eclectic. Augustine is not an original philosopher in the sense in which Plato or the Stoics were. But he is a philosopher in whom the great synthesis between the Old Testament idea of Yahweh and the Parmenidean idea of being, was combined. He is responsible for the communion of Jerusalem and Athens, more than anybody else in the history of the Church.

## Lecture 16: Augustine (continued)

I wanted to give you a survey of the basic elements in the development of Augustine. I started last time and gave you two of these elements, the first being the piety of his mother Monica, in contrast to the paganism of his father; the importance of tradition, which now again has started after it had come to an end in Greece, for instance, in the period of Plato. We can say Plato represents the end of a tradition (the Aristocratic tradition in Athens), while Augustine represents the beginning of a new tradition, the Christian. The second point I made was the reading of Cicero's "Hortensius," where the problem of truth is discussed. This gave him the first question. Hortensius, Cicero himself, answers this question in terms of eclectic philosophy, philosophy which chooses and doesn't construct, chooses out of the given systems according to a practical or pragmatic principle of what is good for a special situation. In Cicero it is the Roman Empire, what is good for a Roman citizen. For Augustine the point of view is the Christian Church, which gives the basis for his philosophical eclecticism.

The third point was his Manichaeism. The Persian religion was dualistic and produced, in the Hellenistic period, a movement called Manichaeism, from its leader Mani. It was a Hellenized Parsism, dualistic in character. So we can consider it a mixture between the prophecy of Zoroaster, the prophet of the Persian religion, and Platonism in the form of the Gnostic thinking of his time, the late ancient world.

These Manichaeans were for a long time the main competitors with Christianity. They asserted that they represent the truly scientific theology of their time. Augustine was attracted for this reason and also because the dualism of the Manichaeans gave them the possibility of explaining sin rationally. This is the reason why the Manichaeans always had some influence through the whole history of Christianity. There were in the Middle Ages always sects influenced by Manichaean ideas, and there are Manichaean elements in many of you, without your knowledge of it. Whenever you hear an explanation of sin in terms of human freedom, then ask the question: "But if God is almighty, it must come from Him, or a principle against Him" – then you are Manichaean in your thinking: you have two principles in order to explain sin. This is something which is a past problem, but an actual problem, especially actual if you talk with people who are outside Christian:

thought but have this popular nonsense with which they confront God's almightiness and the evil of the world, and tell you either God is not almighty or He is not all-loving. Then you are tempted to retire into a kind of half-Manichaean principle that there is an ultimate principle of evil in the world against the ultimate principle of good. You hear this also unfortunately in very serious lectures, and when you hear that the Neoplatonists or Augustine called sin "non-being," then they have taken away the seriousness of sin. But in the moment in which you (regard) sin as a part of being, then you are Manichaean. .. Augustine was attracted by this because he could now have two ultimate principles – evil is as positive as good.

This choice, which kept him for ten years as a member of the Manichaean development, shows his interest in thinking. Not everybody had a merely logical interest in it. Most philosophers had other interests, too. There is first, that truth for this group, as for Augustine, is not a theoretical philosophical, it is not logical analysis, but is at the same time religious practice – practical truth, existential truth: that is his interest.

Secondly, truth is saving truth, and Manichaeism is a system of salvation. The elements of the good, which are captivated by the evil principle, are saved from it. This makes it attractive for Augustine because salvation is his main question.

Thirdly, truth is in the struggle between good and bad, which gives him a possibility of interpreting history.

Now he remained always, somehow, under the at least coloring influence of Manichaeism. He was not a Manichaean any more, after he left the group; he fought against it. But something in his thinking and even more, in his feeling, was colored by the profound pessimism about reality... His doctrine of sin is probably not understandable without his Manichaean period.

But he left Manichaeism, under the influence of astronomy. Astronomy showed him the perfect motion of the stars, i. e., the fundamental elements in the structure of the universe. This made a dualistic principle almost impossible. If the structure of the universe is a structure of regular mathematical forms which can be calculated and which are harmonious, where can you find the effect of the demonic creation in the world? The world as created in its basic structure is good – this is what he derived from it. This means he uses the Greek Pythagorean idea of the cosmos. He used the principle of form and harmony as it was expressed in mathematics.



Now this Greek European principle overcame the Asiatic dualism and negativity. So the separation of Augustine from the Manichaean philosophy was a symbolic event. It was the liberation of modern natural science, mathematics and technics from the Asiatic dualistic pessimism and negation of reality. This was extremely important for the future of Europe. And, as we shall see, as far as we have time to see it, the later medieval Augustinian philosophers and theologians were always men who emphasized astronomy and mathematics more than anything else. Modern natural science is born, as are Platonism and Augustinianism, on the basis of a belief in a harmonious cosmos determined by mathematical rules. This was also the worldview of the Renaissance. So if we look deeper into the movements of thought, then this anecdotic story, that Augustine left the Manichaeans because of astronomy and that he had joined them because of the explanation of sin and evil, becomes a world-historical symbol for the relationship of the East and the West, of the Asiatic East and the European West.

The fourth influence: After he had left the Manichaean group, he fell into skepticism, as always happens if you are disappointed about a system of truth in which you believe, suppressing other elements of truth which are in you but which you do not admit; then if you cannot keep them down any more., you fall into a skeptical doubt about every possibility of truth.

In his period skepticism was a very widely spread mood. Even in the later Academy, i. e., the Platonic school, skepticism about knowledge was present in terms of what is called probabilism: only probable statements are possible; no certainty is possible. This, in the Platonic school, was how the end of the Middle Ages looked.

All his older philosophical writings deal with the problem of certainty, He wanted to overcome the skeptical philosophy; he wanted certainty. This is another element in his thinking. It is very important, again, because it presupposed the negative end of the Greek development. The Greek heroic attempt to build a world on the basis of philosophical reason came to an end in terms of a catastrophe which we usually call skepticism. This was the end of the Greek thinking. The end of the Greek development to create a new world of thinking in terms of reason was skepticism. The heroic attempt of the Greek philosophers (after the archaic traditions had fallen down) to create a new world in terms of a doctrine of essences (Plato, the Stoics), came to an end in terms of skepticism. On this basis the emphasis on revelation must be understood. The negative end of the development of Greek philosophy, namely skepticism, is the negative presupposition for the way in which Christianity

received the idea of revelation. Skepticism is very often the negative basis for a doctrine of revelation. Those people who emphasize revelation in the most absurd supernaturalistic terms are those who enjoy being skeptical about everything. Skepticism and dogmatism about revelation are correlate. And the way in which Christianity emphasized revelation in the earlier period and almost up to the Renaissance, is based on the tremendous shock Western mankind experienced when all the attempts of the Greek philosophers to bring certainty proved to be in vain. And this proof was given by the skeptical philosophers, which permeated all schools at that time.

Secondly, this skepticism gave rise to something else, namely to the new doctrine of knowledge, to the new epistemology, which Augustine created and which starts with the inner man instead of the experience of the external world. The skepticism, which was the end of all attempts to build a world in the objective realm, in the realm of things and objects, had the consequence that Augustine was thrown into himself to find the place of truth there, instead of outside. So we have two consequences of his participation in skepticism: the one is that he accepted revelation, and the other that insofar as he tried to find certainty as a philosopher, he tried to find it in the innermost center of his soul – in the subject himself.

Augustine stands between skepticism and the new authority, that of the Church, as Plato stood between the old authority and the beginning of skepticism. Here again we have the end of the archaic period in Plato and the beginning of a new archaic period in Augustine.

The fifth point: the liberation from skepticism in the philosophical realm was produced by his Neoplatonic period. While skepticism was the one end of Greek thinking, Neoplatonism was the other end. Skepticism was the negative, Neoplatonism the mystical, way in which Greek philosophy came to its finish. Augustine became the Neoplatonic philosopher and he used it as the basis for a new certainty, the immediate certainty of God. In Neoplatonism you have the immediacy of truth in the inner soul, and from this he got his new certainty of the Divine,

Secondly, Neoplatonism gave him the basis for his interpretation of the relationship of God and the world, God as the creative Ground of the world in terms of amor (love).

Thirdly, it gave him the entrance to himself, from a psychological point of view, although this had to be supported by his Christian experience.

But now Augustine did something which later on all Renaissance philosophers also did: he turned the meaning of Neoplatonism into its opposite. Neoplatonism was a negative philosophy, a philosophy of escape from the world. The elevation of the soul out of the material world into the Ultimate, is the meaning of Neoplatonism. Augustine changes the emphasis. And this is the case in all Western Neoplatonism. Therefore he dropped the idea of degrees and used Neoplatonism for the immediate experience of the Divine in everything, but especially in his soul.

In his doctrine of sin and grace, we still have these two influences, the influence of Manichaeism in his doctrine of sin and the influence of Neoplatonism in his doctrine of grace – we will come to this later. But he overcame skepticism not only philosophically, with the help of the Neoplatonists: he also overcame it with the help of the authority of the Church, under the influence of St. Ambrose, bishop of Milano, in whom the authority of the Church was represented.

The principle of authority was a form in which the new archaism, or the new archaic period which starts with the Church tradition, became conscious of itself. The skeptical catastrophe drove Augustine more and more to authority, to the authority of revelation, concretely given to him by the authority of the Church, concretely given to him by the authority of this great bishop of Milano.

The whole medieval development has in its underground the anxiety of skepticism, the anxiety of meaninglessness, as we could call it, over against which the acceptance of revelation and authority stood. We can say the catastrophe of the Greek autonomous attempt to construct a world out of pure thought, is the negative presupposition of the Christian doctrine of authority. – Authority for Augustine – you know he said that he would not have believed in the Christian message without the authority of the Church – means the impressive, the imposing, the overwhelming power of the Church and its great great representatives. This element of authority was not what it is for us, a problem of heteronomy, subjection of something to what somebody else says to us we should accept. But it was for him the answer to the question implied in ancient skepticism. Therefore he did not feel it as heteronomy, he felt it as theonomy – and somehow rightly so, at that time. We will come back to this problem in the survey of the Middle Ages.

Seventh: Another element of the Church which impressed him profoundly: Christian asceticism, as represented by the monks and saints. He experiences the tension between the mystical ideal and his own sensual nature. In the period of Augustine, the sphere of sexuality was profanized in a terrible way. Neither Stoic reason nor Neoplatonism were able to overcome this profanization, on a large scale. The natural forms of love, sanctified by tradition and faith in the archaic periods of Greece and of the other countries, had been destroyed. An unrestrained naturalism of sex ruled. Against this, all the preaching of Stoics, Cynics, or Skeptics, was unable to help, because they preached the law, and the law was powerless against a naturalistically distorted libido. And now Augustine saw a new principle of sanctification. This gave him the solution for himself and for others also, in this realm. But it had the same tension in itself as Christian Neoplatonism. We already met Christian Neoplatonism in Dionysius, where we found this tension – affirmation and negation of the world. Now we find it here again in the problem of asceticism. Christianity affirms creation and sanctifies existence, through the historical appearance of the Divine in Christ. Neoplatonism negates creation; it has no creation, even. It negates the historical appearance of God, or makes it a universal event which always happens. Augustine was split: insofar as he was a Christian, coming from the Old Testament, he valued family and sex insofar as it is in the family. Insofar as he was influenced by Neoplatonism and the ancient negativity towards the world, he denied sex and praised asceticism. This conflict goes through the whole history of the Christian Church. We have it even in the Reformers: the Reformation was basically on the positive side of Augustine – Old Testament prophetism affirms the body, etc. On the other hand the suspicion of libido was so deeply rooted in the Christian tradition that in spite of their greatness and their radicalism, the Reformers were unable to eradicate completely this remnant of Neoplatonic asceticism, and were at least very suspicious of everything sexual, as especially in Calvinistic countries the Protestants still are.

This influence was of equal historical importance as the other six. But if a man like Augustine has influences, then not only are these influences important for all later history, but also that which has not influenced him. And this is what I must discuss now. I concentrated around the name of Aristotle. Aristotle is missing in this development – of course, not entirely, because Plotinus took much Aristotle into himself. But Aristotle was not directly important for Augustine. This is equally important. This means that Augustine didn't include in his theology, in his philosophy, in his life, the concern for Greek science – not only natural science, but also political science – was not really implied in his thinking. The

significance of this is so important that it determines that whole presentation of the medieval development later on.

- 1) What Aristotle did was to (construct) a system of mediation and not a system of dualism, as we have it in Plato and Plotinus. The system of mediation couldn't be used by Augustine because for him the dualistic world-view seemed to be the adequate expression of Christianity. So this side of Augustine had to wait until hundreds of years of education of the barbaric tribes had been performed.
- 2) The emphasis in Aristotle on the importance of the individual gives a good basis for tendencies which are far from Augustine, who wanted the community of the Church.
- 3) Aristotle speaks about the middle way between the extremes. He denies anything like the erotic and ascetic ecstasies of Augustine. Again, it is a quasi-bourgeois attitude. The consequences of this later on became very outspoken in Protestantism.
- 4) Aristotle represents the special sciences, which deal with things in their rational and horizontal relationship. Augustine denies the possibility of such, or he denies their importance – what is important is the knowledge of God and the soul, but not of the natural things.
- 5) Aristotle is a logician. There is no special interest in logic in Augustine. The intuitive and voluntaristic character of his thinking made him disinterested in the abstractions of pure logic.
- 6) In some way this is the most important thing: Aristotle is an inductive thinker, he is an empiricist. He starts from the given reality in time and space and goes up from there to the highest abstractions. Augustine, following Plato, is an intuitive thinker: he starts from above and goes down to the empirical realities.

These two attitudes were due to clash in the moment in which Aristotle was rediscovered in the ancient world – in the 13th century, which for this reason is the greatest century of Christian theology, and which is completely determined by the tension between Aristotle and Augustine. This tension continues through all the following centuries, and if you want to put a label on me, call me an "Augustinian," and in this sense, an anti-Aristotelian and an anti-Thomist, in the fundamental attitude of Augustine with respect to the philosophy of religion – not in many other things; for instance, as a gestalt theologian or philosopher I am much nearer to

Aristotle than to Augustine or Plato, because the idea of the living structure of a living organism is Aristotelian, while the atomistic, mechanical, mathematical science is Augustinian-Platonic. So there are some exceptions, and we will have more of them in the Middle Ages. But if you want to have the basic line of thought, don't forget what I told you here: After seven influences from the whole ancient world were mediated through the Middle Ages and to us, through Augustine, one of them was not (mediated): that for which Aristotle stands.

Augustine's epistemology. The purpose – at the same time, the way – of knowledge is expressed in his famous words: "I wish to know God and the soul." "Nothing else?" "Nothing at all." God and the soul. This means the point where God appears to man: in the soul. This he wants to know because only there can he know God, and in no other place. This implies, of course, that God is not an object besides other objects. God is seen in the soul. He is in the center of man, before the split into subjectivity and objectivity. He is not a strange being, whose existence or non-existence one might discuss, but He is our own apriori, He precedes ourselves in dignity" and reality, and logical validity. In him the split between the subject and object, and the desire of the subject to know the object is overcome. There is no such gap. God is given to the subject as nearer to itself than it itself is to itself.

Now therefore the source point of all philosophy of religion in the Augustinian tradition, is the immediacy of the presence of God in the soul, or, as I like to call it, the experience of the unconditional, of the ultimate, in terms of an ultimate or an unconditional concern. This is the prius of everything. This is not a matter of discussing whether or not somebody exists.

Augustine connects this with the problem of certainty. He says that we have immediate evidence of two things, namely, the logical form – because even the question of evidence presupposes the logical form – and secondly, the immediate sense experience, which should really be called sense impression because "experience" is too ambiguous. What he means is this; I now say that I see blue. The piece of color may objectively be not blue but green – I sometimes confuse these two, especially in female dresses, (the horror of Mrs. Tillich!) – in any case, I now have blue, as sense impression. This is absolutely certain, even if the dress is not blue. Now this is what he means with immediacy. I see a man, but I come nearer and it is a tree, in reality; this often happens when you walk through a fog and cannot distinguish a man from a tree, if they are a little bit away from us. This means there is no certainty about the objective element in it, but there is absolute

certainty about the impression I have as such. This means there is skepticism about everything real. Logical forms are not real; they are structures which make questions possible; therefore they are immediate and necessary.

Secondly, sense experiences are not real. They are real only insofar as I have them. But whether they are more than this, I don't know. Therefore these two evidences – of the logic and of the perception – do not overcome skepticism.

Now how can doubt about reality be overcome? You must start with the general doubt. You must doubt about everything. It was not Descartes who said this first. It was not even Augustine, but Augustine also said it. Therefore, is there a point of certainty, somewhere? He says: "You know that you are thinking." "I know." "Do not go outside; go into thyself" – namely where you are thinking – "The truth dwells in the interior of man, for a mind knows nothing except what is present to the mind. But nothing is more present to the mind than the mind itself." i. e., the immediate self-consciousness of the asking skeptic is the fixed point. The truth which was lost in the exterior world, where everything fell under doubt, is found again in the interior world. The soul is the inner realm, in contrast to Greek philosophy, in which it is the power of life. The discovery of soul, in this sense, is one of the most important consequences of Christianity. It includes the world as the sum of all appearances. In contrast to the Greeks, where the soul is a

part of all things, the world is an object. Now the world is an appearance for the soul, which is the only real thing.

Now these ideas – Go into thy inner reality and there you will find truth – sound very much like Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am). But the difference is that in Descartes, the self-certainty of the ego is the principle of mathematical evidence – he derives from this his rational system of nature – while for Augustine the inner evidence is the immediacy of having God. So he says, after saying "go into thyself," "And after you have your soul immutable, transcend yourselves i. e., in your soul is something which transcends your soul, something immutable, namely, the Divine Ground. It is the immediate awareness of that which is unconditional, to which he refers here. This is certainly not an argument for the existence of God, but it is a way of showing that God is presupposed in the situation of doubt about Him. "While not seeing what we believe, we see the belief in ourselves." i. e., we see the situation of being grasped by something unconditional.

## Lecture 17: Augustine (continued)

We discussed the type of thought in epistemology, psychology, and doctrine of God represented by Augustine, which makes him the one representative of the possibilities of a philosophy of religion in which philosophy and the Christian message are brought together.

The statement I made was that after skepticism – in which Augustine himself participated in one period – had broken down the certainty of the external world, Augustine goes into himself and rediscovers the ultimate certainty within his own soul, not in terms of changing psychological terms, but in terms of something unconditional, which transcends all psychological phenomena. I said that this is not an argument for the existence of God, but the description of an element in man's finitude which is always present, namely the element of the unconditional, of which he is aware.

There were people whom Augustine met who said: Why truth at all? Truth as such is not necessary. Why not stick to probabilities? Why not restrict oneself to pragmatic answers, answers which work? – But he says this is not sufficient, because it leads to a complete emptiness of life. Without something unconditional or ultimate, the preliminary meanings lose their meaning. And this cannot be replaced by another statement, namely that the human situation is not (one of) having truth, but searching for truth. He says: Searching for truth, also, is not an answer to the question of truth because if we are searching for truth, then we must have at least some insight of truth, we must know, when we approach truth we, approach it. But in order to know that we approach truth, we must already have a criterion: truth itself. -- What he says here is that in every relativism, however radical it may be, there is an absolute norm presupposed, even if it cannot be expressed in propositions. Since truth is something which we can find only in the interior of the human soul, physics are useless for ultimate truth. They do not contribute to the knowledge of God. He says: While the angels have knowledge of the Divine things, the lower demons recognize the world of the bodies -- so a knowledge of the bodily world is a participation in the bodily world. Knowledge is union; union implies love; and he who deals cognitively with the bodies loves them, is connected with them, participates in them. That means he is distracted from the highest, the Divine, knowledge. This, again, means that he is in untruth. Natural



sciences have meaning only insofar as they show the Divine causes in nature, show the traces of the Trinity in flowers and animals, but they have no meaning in themselves. This means that in the greater part of the Middle Ages, natural sciences are at least reduced in significance and not really furthered at all. The technical relationship to nature is of no interest to Augustine, and therefore the analysis of controlling knowledge for technical relation. This makes the attitude of the Middle Ages toward natural sciences understandable. It is not a matter that these people were so much more stupid than we are – there are some indications that they were not – but the reason is that it had no interest for them; they were not in love with what natural sciences produce. If they loved the exploration of nature, then it was nature insofar as it is an embodiment of the Trinity. This of course gave them the possibility of artistic production which is much higher than most we produce under the power of controlling, and not uniting, knowledge. I would ask you to go to the Cloisters (Museum) and look at the carpets on the walls there, and what you find there in terms of the observation of nature. It is not an observation in terms of natural science – probably none of these flowers, and certainly none of these animals, is naturalistically exact. But they all are painted in order to show the traces of the Trinity, I. e., the movement of life to separation and reunion, in the natural objects. They try to show the Divine ground in nature, and that gives them their

extreme beauty. In all these things the intention, that which is really meant, must be understood – otherwise you cannot really understand their creations. You think they were bad craftsmen – even there, there are signs they were not – but they didn't want what we want, they didn't want to show objects in 3-dimensional space. They wanted to show the traces of the Divine in nature, as Augustine wished.

The Neoplatonists and Plato himself were nearest to Christianity, Augustine says. And he shows the Trinitarian elements in them, especially the Logos doctrine, in Plato and the Neoplatonists. But then he says – and this is a very important statement, which somehow reveals the whole relationship of theology and philosophy – that there is one thing which philosophy as such never could have said, that the Logos has become flesh. Philosophy gives the possibility for theologians to speak of the Logos, to interpret philosophy in terms of the Logos, but when theology says the Logos becomes flesh, then something is said which is the basis of a religious message and of a theological statement. Here he sees clearly that one thing distinguishes Christianity from classical philosophy, namely the statement of the unique, incomparable historical event. Becoming flesh means becoming historical; the universal principle of the cosmos, the Logos, appears in historical

form. And that is, according to Augustine, a matter not of philosophy but of revelation.

In the same way, as in these ideas, the idea of God in Augustine unites Neoplatonic elements – which are always mystical – and ethical personality, and the uniting power is Augustine's idea of love.

Now let me say a few words about it before I go to the other problem, the problem of God, because this idea of love is rightly put in the foreground now. Nygren's criticism of Christian theology combining eros and agape is predominantly a criticism of Augustine. We have the synthesis in Augustine, and in Nygren – the Swedish theologian who wrote "Eros and Agape", as you probably know. wants to have them not united but in contradiction. And of course on this basis Augustine must mostly be attacked. Nygren is right that in Augustine there are both elements, the agape element (the element of love, in the New Testament sense, personal, forgiving, – charity (caritas), – all this is in his idea. the personalistic Divine forgiving character. But there is also in it the agape element – God is the highest good for Augustine, and all creatures are longing for it, desiring to be united with it, to fulfill itself in intuiting eternally the Divine abundance. The agape element is especially emphasized when we speak of God moving down to man in caritas – I prefer the Latin word to the very much distorted word "charity" – in becoming humble in Christ in exercising grace and mercy; the participation in the lowest, the elevation of the lowest to the highest,

Eros, on the other side, drives from below to above, from the lowest to the highest. It is a longing, a striving, a being-moved by the highest, a being-grasped by it in its fullness and abundance. It is exactly as I said before – the Logos becomes flesh: that's agape. But all flesh (all historical and natural reality) is desirous for God – this eros I. have shown in my Systematics lectures, that if you take eros out, then you cannot speak of love towards God any more, because this is love toward that which is the highest power of being, in which we are fulfilled.

God is also a union of summa essentia, ultimate being, beyond all categories, beyond all temporal and spatial things. Even the categories of substance cannot be used, and if it is used it is abusively used. Essence and existence, being and quality, functions and acts, cannot be distinguished in this side of God. It is the negative theology of Dionysius which is present here, (though) it is not dependent on him (Dionysius)," since Augustine was earlier, but dependent on Neoplatonism, on which both of them are dependent.

But on the other hand, there is the positive way: God is the unity of all forms. He is the principle of all beauty.. Unity is the form of all beauty and God is the unity of all forms. All ideas (all essences, or powers, or principles of things) are in the mind of God. Through these ideas, individual things come to pass and return to God through the ideas.

Now you have here the two elements of the idea of God. Insofar as God is beyond any difference, He is beyond subject and object. Love is not a subjective feeling, directed towards an object. Not objects are ultimately love, but through our love toward them love itself is love. Amor amato, love is love, and that means the Divine ground of being is love. Love is beyond the separation of subject and object. It is the pure essence, blessedness, which is the Divine ground in all things. Therefore if we love things in the right way, including ourselves, then we love the Divine substance in them. If we love things for their own sake, in separation from the Divine ground in them, then we love them in the wrong way, then we are separated from God.. So he can speak of a right self-love, namely if you love yourselves as loved by God, or if you love through yourselves – God, the Divine loving ground of everything.

But on the other hand Augustine is in the personalistic tradition of the Old and New Testament and the early Church. And for him this is even of much stronger importance than for the Eastern theologians, like Origen. He completely takes the point of the West in the Trinitarian discussion. He is not so much interested in the different hypostases, the powers of being in God, the three personae, as he is interested in the unity of God. And he expresses this in terms which make it very clear that he is one of those who are responsible for our present-day inclination to apply the term persona to God, instead of applying it to the Father, Son and Spirit. He is inclined, but of course he never became heterodox, in this respect, although his tendency goes, as the West's always went, toward a Monarchianistic tendency. He expresses this in using analogies between the Trinity and the personal life of man. He says: "Father, Son and Spirit are analogous to amans, (he who loves), quod amato, (that which is loved), and amor, (the power of love. ). Or: "The

Trinity is analogous to memory, intelligence, and will." This means that he uses the Trinity in order analogically to give a description of God as person. Since God is a person, and that means a unity, all acts of God towards outside are always acts of the Trinity, even the Incarnation. None of the three personae or hypostases acts for Himself. Since the substance of all things is love, in its three-fold appearance as amans, quod amato, and amor, everything which is created by the Divine Ground

has the traces of the Trinity, and this gives the immediate world this theonomous character, that character of all forms of life, not denied or broken, but theonomously filled with Divine substance.

With respect to the relationship of God and the world, there are several important things. He expresses, of course, very clearly the doctrine of creation out of nothing. There is no matter which precedes the creation. Creation is done without an independent substance. This means a continuous threat of finitude. I believe that when our modern Existentialist thinkers – including myself – say that finitude is the mixture of being and non-being, or in everything finite . non-being is present, it has something to do with Augustine’s statement that “everything is in danger of the fathomless abyss of nothingness.” The world is created in every moment by the Divine will, which is the will of love. Therefore Augustine concludes – and all Reformers followed him – that creation and preservation are the same thing. I. e. , the world is in no moment independent of God. The forms, laws, and structures of reality do not make it an independent reality. God is the supporting power of being, which has the character of love. This makes every deistic fixation of two realities – God and the world – impossible. God is the continuous, carrying ground of the world.

This is in’ agreement with Augustine’s famous doctrine of time. Philosophically speaking, this is his greatest work, perhaps because here he really starts a new era of human thinking about the concept of time. Cf. his prayer (Book 11 of the “Confessions”) Time has no objective reality, in the sense in which a thing is. Therefore it is not valid for God. Therefore the question how time was before the creation, is meaningless. Time is created with the world, it is the form of the world. Time is the form of the finitude of things, as is space also. Both world and time and space have eternity only insofar as they are subjects of the eternal will to creation, I. e., they are potentially present in the Divine Life, but they are not eternal as real; as real they are finite, they have a beginning and an end. There is only one world process, according to him – and this is the decisive statement in which he denies Aristotle and the Stoics – namely, that there is no cyclical world, cycles of a birth and rebirth of the world after everything repeats itself in the same way, infinitely. This is Greek thinking. But for Augustine, there is a definite beginning and a definite end, and only eternity is before and after this beginning and end. For the Greeks, space was finite, time was infinite--or, better, endless. For Augustine neither time nor space is infinite. In the finitude of space, he agrees with the Greeks; they couldn’t understand the infinity of space because they were all potential sculptors,

their world-view was plastic--(they wanted to see bodies) in space – the infinity of space would have disrupted the plastic form of reality, expressed in mathematical forms by the Pythagoreans. Augustine, however, said time was finite. This finitude of time is necessary if time shall have an ultimate meaning. It has not, in Greece, In Greece it is the form of decay and repetition, but it has no meaning of itself, in creative terms. The endless times in nature are meaningless. Meaningful time is historical time. And historical time is not a matter of quantity. The 6000 years of world history of which Augustine speaks are the meaning of time. And if instead of that there were 100, 000 years or, as we say, a few billion years, it cannot take away anything from the meaning of time. Meaning is a qualitative, not a quantitative, concept. The measure of time is not clock time. Clock time is physical time; it tends to repeat itself. But the meaning of time is the kairos, the historical moment, which is its qualitative character.

There is one world whose center is the earth, and one history, whose center is the Christ. This one process is eternally meant by God, but eternity is not time before time nor is it timelessness, something beyond all these categories. But the world itself, although it is intended eternally, is neither eternal nor infinite; but it is finite and meaningful. In the finite moment, infinite meaning is actualized. This feeling of finitude is again something which makes the Middle Ages understandable to us. They felt they lived in one process, which has a definitely known beginning, the days of creation, which are only a few thousand years before our time and which will have a definite end, the days of judgment, which are only a few or a few thousand years ahead of us. And within this period we live; what we are doing in it is extremely important; it is the meaning of the whole world process. But it is limited in time, as it is limited in space. We are in the center of everything which happens, and Christ is in the center of everything which we are. This was the medieval world-view, and you can imagine how far away we are from this if you really realize, not what this means in terms of words, but in terms of a feeling towards reality, an awareness of one's existence.

This is what Augustine says about the relationship of God and the world. Each of these statements is more important than what other theologians have said, in the whole history of Christianity.

Augustine's Psychology or, better, his Doctrine of Man: He says that the decisive function in man is the will. It is present in memory and in intellect, and has the quality of love, namely, the desire toward reunion. This predominance of will was

another of the great ideas in which the West overcame the East, and which produced the great medieval struggle between voluntarism and intellectualism. The two basic activities of the soul – knowledge and love, or will, which is the same – have an ambiguous character. They are partly directed towards themselves, and partly beyond themselves. They are directed towards oneself in self-knowledge and self-love. . . . “We are, we know that we are, and we love this our being and knowing” This means we are self-related and self-affirming. We affirm ourselves in knowledge and in will.

On the other hand, of course, love and knowledge transcend ourselves and go to the other beings.

Love participates in the eternal – this is its own eternity. The soul has trans-temporal elements. Now this participation is not what we usually call immortality, but it is the participation in the Divine Life, in the Divine loving ground of being. But this idea is crossed by another one, in Augustine, and this tension is very important. One could say the mystical element is crossed by the educational element. The souls are not only eternal in their essence, but also immortal in the technical sense of continuation in time and space, or at least in time. As a consequence, those who are excluded from eternity because they are separated from God, are still immortal, and their immortality means their punishment, their damnation. They are excluded from God, which means they are excluded from love – love is the ground of being – and they do not deserve any pity. There is no unity of love between them and the others; but if so, one must ask: How, then, is (there) unity of being, if being is love? Here you see one of those conflicts between mystical-ontological thinking and ethical-educational thinking. We had the same conflict in Origen when he spoke about the *apokatastasis panton*, the return of everything to God, the final salvation of everything that has being – and the Church rejected this. Here we have, again, in Augustine the same conflict. In this conflict esoteric theology and philosophy and mysticism always choose the one side, namely the side of the eternal and the union with God in eternity. Ecclesiastical, educational and ethical thinking always chose the other side, namely, the personal impossibility of being eternally condemned and punished. Logically this is impossible because the very concept of the eternal excludes continuation in time, and the ontological concept of love – which is so strong in Augustine – excludes being which is not in unity with love. Educational – this is the continuous threat over everybody, and therefore the Church always maintained it, and accepted the logical contradiction in order to produce the threat of eternal (i. e., endless)

condemnation. Ontological mysticism and educational moralism contradict each other in such ideas. It reminds me a little of another problem which is much more concrete, perhaps, in our time, but it has the same character: Everybody who thinks seriously, or at least thinks in a Christian or in an existentialist tradition, will agree with me that utopianism, namely the idea that at a certain time the classless society, or the Kingdom of God, will be established on earth, without power or compulsion, is Utopian – I. e., there is "no place" (no topos) for this in time and space. But if we say this, then we diminish the fanatical will to political revolution and to transformational society – because people tell you: We know this, but if we tell the people, then they will not fight any more for the transformation of society. They can do it if they believe the final stage is at hand – the Kingdom of God at hand. Only this gives the tremendous demanding power – What do you answer? It is the same problem. The ethical (in this case the social-educational) and the insight into the relation of time and eternity contradict each other, and many say: Although we know this is Utopianism, we must pronounce it, otherwise people will not act. Others say: – I belong to the latter.– The disappointment which follows utopianism, always and necessarily, makes it impossible to speak like this to people if you know better, because the disappointment is worse than the weakening of fanaticism. This would be my decision, but this decision is very questionable. But today even in this doctrine of eternal condemnation – you know that in Augustine even the unbaptized children are not condemned to hell but to the limbus infantium where they are excluded from the eternal blessedness, from the Divine love. Now such an idea might have a tremendous educational and ecclesiastical value in some periods of history, it doesn't have for us any more. It produces very often – especially the personal fear of condemnation – neurotic stages, and therefore we cannot say it is superior to the others.

Now let me give you finally something about Augustine's Philosophy of History. Each of these doctrines is world-historical, and therefore we must dwell on them so much. If you know him, you know the Middle Ages and much of the Reformation and Renaissance. The philosophy of history is based – as philosophy of history usually is – on a dualism; not an ontological dualism, of course – -this is impossible – but a dualism in history: on the one hand, the city of God, and on the other hand the city of earth or the Devil. The city of God is the actualization of love. It is present in the Church, but the Church is a corpus mixtum, a mixed body, with people who belong to it and others who do not, essentially, Spiritually. But on the other hand, there is a mediation between these two characters of the Church, representing the Kingdom of God and being a mixed body, (I. e., -not being the Kingdom of God),

and this is the hierarchy, that is, all those who have the consecrations, who mediate between the two. In them Christ rules the Church and Christ is present. So the Catholic Church could use Augustine in both ways. It could identify the Kingdom of God with the Church to such a degree that the Church became absolutized – this was the one development which actually happened. On the other hand, the difference could be made very clear, and this was what the sectarian movement and the Protestants did. There is a dialectical relationship between the Kingdom of God and the Church in Augustine, which was ambiguous and therefore useful for different points of view. But one thing was clear for him: there is no thousand-year (I. e., no third stage in world history. Chiliasm, or millennialism, was denied by him. (In this present time) Christ rules the Church; these are the thousand years; there is no stage of history beyond this stage in which we are. The Kingdom of God rules throughout the hierarchy, and the chiliasts are wrong: they should not look beyond the present state, in which the Kingdom of God is present in terms of history.

The same thing is true of the Kingdom of the earth. It has the same ambiguity. On the one hand it is the state of power, compulsion, arbitrariness, tyranny, the gangster-state (as Augustine called it); it has all the imperialistic characteristics we see in all states. On the other hand, (there) is the unity which overcomes the split of reality, and from this point of view it is a work of love. And if this is understood by the emperor, he can become a Christian emperor. Here again we have the ambiguous valuation: the state is partly identical with the Kingdom of the Devil; partly it is different from it because it restricts the devilish powers.

History has three periods: that before the law, that under the law, and that after the law. In this way we have a fully developed interpretation of history. We are in the last period, in the third stage, and it is sectarian heresy to say that another state must be expected. This heresy was expressed, of course, by the medieval sects, and from that point of view the fight between the revolutionary attempts of the sectarian movements and the conservatism of Augustine's philosophy of history, becomes visible.



## Lecture 18: Augustine. Pelagius.

We must continue our discussion of Augustine now, and after we have heard about the elements of his development and his psychology, epistemology, doctrine of God and doctrine of history, we now come to that doctrine which is perhaps most important for his position in the development of Church history as a whole: his doctrine of man.

The doctrine of man was really touched on to a certain extent when I spoke about the voluntaristic character of Augustine's thinking, the idea that the center of man is not the intellect but the will, and the fact that in carrying this through he is the beginner of a development which goes through the whole Western world, through that group of theologians and philosophers in whom the will – center of man – in a much larger sense than the psychological concept of will – is in the center against the intellect. We shall see when we come to the medieval philosophers and theologians and to the modern ones, that this influence always goes on and is always in creative tension with the tendencies coming from Aristotle. The tension between Augustine and Aristotle is the decisive power which moves the medieval history of thought, and almost everything can be seen in the relationship to this tension.

But this was only a description of man in his essential relationship. If man is seen in the essential relationship to God, to himself, to other men, then he is seen by Augustine as a will whose substance is love. This love, as we have also seen yesterday, is the creative ground of everything that is. It is an idea of love in which agape and eros are united – the Christian form of love and the platonic form of love. But this essential nature of man is not his existential nature, is not actual in time and space. On the contrary, this essential nature is distorted by what Augustine calls, in the tradition of the New Testament and the Church, sin, and especially original sin. His doctrine of sin, the center of his anthropology, his doctrine of man, was developed in his fight with Pelagius.

We must now turn to this struggle, which is one of the great struggles in Church history, like the Trinitarian and Christological struggles, which we have discussed, and it is one which repeats itself again and again. We have the tension already in the New Testament between Paul and the writers of the Catholic Letters; we have it in

Augustine and Pelagius; we have it somehow between Thomas and the Franciscans; we have it between Karl Barth and the present-day liberals. It is something which goes through the whole history of the Church. And there is always one point which is decisive. Usually it is discussed in terms of the concept of freedom, but this is misleading because freedom has so many connotations which are not relevant for this discussion. But it is the question of the relationship of religion and ethics, whether the moral imperative is dependent on the Divine grace in its actualization, or whether Divine grace is dependent on the fulfillment of the moral imperative. That is actually the question which is going on through all Church history. In abstract terms, you could say it is the relationship of religion and ethics.

Pelagius is not a special heretic. He represents simply the ordinary doctrine of people who were educated in Greek thinking, especially in Stoic traditions, and for whom freedom is the essential nature of man. Man is a rational being, and a rational being includes freedom of deliberating, deciding. All this wouldn't have made him a heretic because most of the Eastern church had exactly the same idea of freedom. But he developed them in a way which brought him into conflict with Augustine. When this conflict was decided, Augustine was at least partly victorious and Pelagius was an arch-heretic, whose name was used all the time as a name of one of the classical Christian heresies.

Let us listen to some of his ideas: For him, death is a natural event and not a result of the fall. Death would have happened, it belongs to finitude, even if Adam had not fallen into sin. Now you remember what I said about Ignatius and Irenaeus, where the same idea is expressed, namely that man is naturally finite and therefore due to die – as everything natural – but that in the paradise story the participation in the food of the Gods made it possible for man to overcome his essential finitude. What Pelagius does here is to leave out the second possibility and to state only the first is true and is even in the Christian tradition.

Secondly, the sin of Adam belongs to him alone and does not belong to the human race as such. In this sense original sin does not exist. Original sin would make sin into a natural category, but man has moral existence and therefore the contradiction to the moral demand cannot be a natural event but must be an event of freedom. Everybody must sin, in order to be a sinner. The simple dependence on Adam doesn't make (one) a sinner. Here again Pelagius says something which is universally Christian, that without the personal participation in sin, there is no sin.

On the other hand, he does not see that Christianity sees the tragic universality of sin and makes it therefore a destiny of the human race. The relationship to Adam as the presupposed first man is of course mythological, but in this myth the Christian Church – whether or not the Church took it literally – has preserved the tragic element which we also find in the Greek world view. So again Pelagius has some point, but on the other hand he doesn't see the profundity of the Christian description of the human situation.

Thirdly, children after their birth are in the state of Adam before their fall; they are innocent. But of course Pelagius could not close his eyes to the fact that the evil surroundings and customs distort their innocence. He follows a modern tendency, namely the psychoanalytic theory of the relationship to the parents, or their representatives, which decide about all the complexes and other negativities which are in the depths of the soul and come to it through the surroundings. There is even today another theory, the biological theory, that the distortion is inherited and cannot be avoided even in terms of the best surroundings you can provide for a child; there is something in its very nature, (from birth.) Here you have a modern restatement of this old struggle, Pelagius using the psychoanalytic theory in order to avoid the idea of hereditary sin.

Fourthly, before Christ some people were without sin, and :after Christ some people sin. Sin is not a universally tragic necessity, but it is a matter of freedom. Here again you can say that the state of things in this country is very much in favor of this basic Pelagian idea that every individual can always make a new beginning, that he is able in terms of individual freedom to make decisions for or against the Divine. The tragic element of the human situation is very much known in Europe, but is not so near to the heart of the people in this country. On the other hand, in Europe the merely negative Augustinianism – we can call it Existentialism – has made this human situation inescapable and has reduced the ethical zeal and impact Pelagianism can have.

Fifthly, the function of Christ under these circumstances is a double one: to provide the forgiveness of sins in baptism to those who believe, and to give an example of a sinless life not only by avoiding sins but also by avoiding the occasions of sins, through asceticism – Jesus, the first monk; Pelagius himself was a monk. He gives the example of an ascetic life, thus avoiding the occasions for sins, and not only the actual sins when the occasion is given.

Sixth, grace is identical with the general remission of sins in baptism. After this, grace has no meaning because after this, man is able to do everything himself. Only in the situation of baptism does man receive the grace of forgiveness. We can say it is a strong ethical emphasis with many ascetic elements, but the tragic aspect of life has been lost entirely. This is Pelagianism. And don't take him too easily; take him seriously. I don't say we all are Pelagians, by birth --as I say about nominalism --but I would say Pelagianism is nearer to all of us, especially in countries which are dependent on sectarian movements, as this country so strongly is. It is nearer to us than we know ourselves, and it is always effective in us when we try to force God down upon ourselves. And this is what we usually called by the much abused term "moralism."

He says: Good and evil are (performed) by ourselves; they are nothing given. If this is true, then religion was in danger of being transformed into morality. And you know enough about this danger; I don't need to say anything. So Pelagianism, like all the other great heresies, is not something of the past -- otherwise it would not be worthwhile for you and me to dedicate this precious hour from 11-12 each morning to all these old stories. They are, all together, new stories at the same time. And only if I succeed in making it clear to you that they are stories can they have meaning, and then it is worthwhile to deal with Church history.

Now against this we have Augustine's Doctrine of Sin.. Augustine agrees with Pelagius and all philosophy that freedom is the quality of man essentially or originally, so that Adam, when he committed his fall, and man essentially -- which is always represented by the figure of Adam -- is free. Originally man's freedom was directed towards the good and as we have seen last time, the good is the love with which God loves Himself; it is the being-directed towards good as the loving ground of being; in this sense everybody is free. But this freedom was dangerous, and it was so dangerous that man could change his direction towards God and could direct himself towards the special things in times and space.

Now Augustine saw the danger of freedom as so great that he produced the famous doctrine *attutorium gratiae*, the helping power of grace, which was given to Adam before he fell. He was not in pure nature (*in puris naturalibus*), namely the assisting power of grace. This assistance of grace made it possible for him to continue indefinitely in the direction of his will towards God. It made it possible for him. But you see this was a point where the Reformers fought against Augustine. This *attutorium gratiae*, this assisting power of grace, implied indirectly that nature in

itself cannot be good, it must be fulfilled by supra-nature; that if man is in *puris naturalibus*, in pure nature, then he is so endangered that actually he must fall. Therefore the supernatural helps him. The Reformers had such an emphasis on human nature – very similar to the Renaissance, at the same time – that they declined this idea of a *donum superadditum*, a gift which was added to man's nature. This is a very profound distinction, and behind this seemingly Scholastic terminology something is hidden, namely the question of the valuation of creation. In the doctrine of the *donum superadditum*, something of the Greek valuation of matter as the resisting power, is present. There is some of the Greek tragic feeling which enters here, the Jewish-Protestant-Christian affirmation of nature as good in itself.

Now if we see how Adam was formed, on the basis of all this, Augustine can say that the first man had the freedom not to fall, not to die, not to turn away from the good. In this stage he was at peace with himself – a profound remark in view of our modern depth psychology; he was at peace with all things and all men. There was no cupidity, no desire, in him, not even in sexual life. There was no pain in this state, not even in the situation of birth. . . . In any case, it was very easy for him not to fall. There was no real reason for it, but astonishingly he did fall. And since there was no external reason for his fall, his fall started in his inner life. Sin, according to Augustine, is in its very start spiritual sin. Man wanted to be in himself, he had all the good possibilities, he had nothing to suffer, from which he would turn away; he had everything he needed, but he wanted to have all this by himself, he wanted to stay in himself, (therefore he turned away. And this is what Dr. Niebuhr calls "pride," and what I prefer to call "hybris," self-elevation. In this way man lost the assistance of grace and was left alone by grace. He wanted to be autonomous, to stand upon himself, and this meant a wrong love of himself, not the right love of himself; and this wrong love of himself cut off the love towards God. He says: "The beginning of all sin is pride; the beginning of pride is man's turning away from God." Or, if you say hybris instead of pride, then this is profounder, because pride often has the connotation of a special psychological character, and that is not what is meant here. The most humble people psychologically can have the greatest pride.

Now these statements show first of all that Augustine was aware that sin is something which happens in the spiritual realm, namely turning away from the Ground of Being to whom one belongs. It is not a naturalistic doctrine of sin. But more important than this, Augustine shows clearly the religious character of sin. Sin for him is not a moral failure, it is not even disobedience – disobedience is a

consequence but not the cause; the cause is: turning away from God, and from God as the highest good, as the love with which God loves Himself, through us. For this reason, since sin has this character – if you say "sins," is easily dissolved into moral sins, but sin is first of all basically the power of turning away from God. For this very reason no moral remedy is possible. Only one remedy is possible: return to God. But this of course is possible only in the power of God, and this power is lost. This is the state of man under the conditions of existence.

The immediate consequence of man's turning away from his highest good is the loss of this good. This loss is the essential punishment for man. Punishments in terms of educational or juristic terminology are secondary. For Augustine, the basic punishment is ontological. If God is everything positive, the power of being overcoming non-being, or the ultimate good – which is the same thing for him-- then of course the only real punishment possible is the intrinsic punishment of losing this power of being, of non-participating any more in the ultimate good.

Augustine describes it thus: "The soul died when it was left alone, by God, as a body will die when it is left by the soul." The soul, which, religiously speaking is dead, has consequently lost its control over the body. And in the moment in which this happened, the other side of sin becomes actual. The beginning is pride, or turning to oneself, or hybris, separation from God and turning to oneself. The consequence is concupiscence, the infinite endless desire. The word *concupiscentia*, concupiscence, desire, libido, (in the forms in which modern psychology uses it) has two meanings in Augustine: the universal meaning, the turning towards the movable goods, those goods which change and disappear; but it has also a narrower sense, namely in the natural, sexual desire, which is accompanied by shame. This ambiguity of the term concupiscence has been repeated by the ambiguity of Freud's term libido. It is the same situation in Augustine. Both terms are meant universally, the desire to fulfill one's own being with the abundance of reality. And because of the predominant power of the sexual desire among all other desires, it has received, in both Augustine and Freud, the meaning of sexual desire, and out of this ambiguity innumerable consequences followed. From this followed, for instance in Freud, his puritanism, his depreciation of sex, his bourgeois suppression; and on the other hand, the revelation of this situation. But he never found a solution to the problem – either suppressing or getting rid of it. And since you cannot get rid of it, according to Freud, you have the desire to death, the death-instinct, as he calls it, which is the necessary answer to the endlessness of desire. In Protestantism, as in all Catholicism first, the ambiguity of the term concupiscence had the ascetic

consequences in all its different forms up to the most extreme and disgusting forms. The Reformers tried to reestablish the dignity of the sexual, but did it only in a limited way. They never completely followed through their own principles against the Roman church. Therefore, as every theologian can tell you who knows a little about the history of moral behavior and the history of ethical theory in Protestantism, in this point Christianity is very much uncertain and has produced no satisfactory answer to this question implied in human existence. This has something to do with the ambiguity of Augustine's concept of concupiscentia.

The sin of Adam is original sin, for two reasons. We all inhabited.. potentially, in Adam, namely in his procreative power, and in this way we participated in his free decision and thus are guilty. This again is of course myth, and a very questionable myth.

Secondly, he introduced libido, desire, concupiscence, into the process of sexual generation, and this element was given by heredity to all the others. Everybody is born out of the evil of sexual desire. Original sin in everybody is, as in Adam, first of all spiritual sin, sin of the soul. But it is also bodily sin, and Augustine had great difficulties in uniting the spiritual character of sin in everybody with the heritage-character which comes from Adam.

In this way everybody belongs to a "mass of perdition," to a unity of negativity, and the most striking consequence of this is that even the little infants who die early are lost. Since everybody, by hereditary sin, belongs to the mass of perdition, nobody is saved who is not saved by a special act of God. This is the most powerful emphasis on the unity of mankind in the tragedy of sin. He denies, in this way, most radically and almost in the sense of his Manichaean past, the freedom in the individual personality. The embracing unity makes us what we are. Now if we look at our modern research into depth psychology and depth sociology, we probably are able to understand better than our fathers did what Augustine means, namely the inescapable participation in human existence, in a social structure and in an individual psychological structure, whether we call it neurotic or something else; it is something which we can see better today. The question which is put before us, of course, is: "What about the participation of the individual in guilt ?, and there is no answer to this in the context of Augustine.

The opposite doctrine is the Doctrine of Grace. Man has lost his possibility to turn towards the ultimate good, because of his universal sinfulness.. We are under the law of servitude, the bondage of the will. Therefore grace is first of all :*gratia data*,

grace given without merit. It is given by God to a certain number of people, who cannot be augmented or diminished; they belong eternally to Him. The other part is left to the damnation which they deserve. There is no reason for the predestination of the one and the rejection of the other groups. The reason is in God alone; it is a mystery. Therefore one cannot speak of prescience, of foreseeing what man would do – as is often done in the doctrine of freedom. This is impossible since God's willing and knowing are identical. God never can look at something as if it were not carried by His power of being, i. e., His will, in this sense. Therefore God always wills what He knows. "He has elected us not because we would be holy, but in order to have us become holy." That is the decisive thing in this whole idea. There is no reason in man for predestination. God acts both the willing and the fulfilling.

But Augustine was not a determinist in the technical psychological sense. Predestination does not exclude man's will. The psychological will of man is preserved and distinguished from external forces, or from compulsory elements in man. But the direction of the will towards God is dependent on God's predestination and this predestination cannot be explored.

Grace is given to everybody who becomes a Christian. The forgiveness of sins, which is first given to him happens in baptism and is received by faith. In this Augustine continues the general tradition. But beyond this, forgiving is a real participation in the ultimate good. This ultimate good has appeared in Jesus as the Christ, without which neither good thinking nor good acting nor loving is possible. Now he describes this side of grace as the inspiration of the good will, or he also calls it the inspiration of love, namely first of all the love towards God. "The Spirit helps," he says, "by inspiring in the place of bad concupiscence, good concupiscence, that is, diffusing caritas (agape) within our hearts." Justification therefore is inspiration of love. Faith is the means to get it. But faith at that time already had the deteriorized sense which today makes Christian preaching about faith almost impossible, namely faith as the acceptance of doctrines which are unbelievable. So Augustine distinguishes between two forms of faith. He calls faith *crater deo aut christo*, namely believing "to" God or "to" Christ, namely, accepting their words and commands; and the other is believing "into" God and "into" Christ. The first is an intellectual acknowledgment, without hope and love. The second is a personal communion which is created by grace, or by the Holy Spirit, or by love – these words are all the same. This alone is the faith which justifies, because it makes him who is justified just.



Those who are predestined are of course naturally able to fall away again, so they get something else: they get the gift of perseverance, of sticking to what they have received, the gift of not losing the grace. All this, the whole process I have just described, does not depend on any merit, not even on the merit of non-resistance against grace, since grace, as Augustine emphasizes, is irresistible; when it comes to you, you cannot resist it, and you cannot get it if it doesn't come to you.

Now this is the way in which he has attacked Pelagius. It is in all respects the opposite. Now Church – historically – I can now tell you that this never was completely accepted by the Church. Of course Augustine was considered to be the greatest of the Church teachers, but he was not fully accepted. Pelagianism was rejected and even semi-Pelagianism, which crept up a hundred years later, was rejected. But the rejection didn't change the fact that it crept into the Church. Some historians who like additional Greek words have called it crypto-semi-Pelagianism, hidden, underground, spying, so to speak going into the Church half-officially, half-unofficially. And you cannot deny that especially in the Augustinian school, in the later Franciscans, we have semi-Pelagianism very much. No one would repeat Pelagius in the official Church: that was out of the question. But half-Pelagianism, taking away the irresistibility of grace, the necessity that we work in order to keep grace, and things like that; or restriction in terms of predestination and salvation – all this crept into the Church and made the doctrine of Augustine educationally possible. I talked about this before, and this is always a problem: you cannot have such a doctrine if you at the same time are an institution of education; and the only institution of education for a thousand years was the Christian Church. In such a situation you must appeal to the free will of those who are educated, and such an extreme doctrine cannot be presented in a direct way to most people. So the ultimate tragic element did not get lost, but it kept down to a certain extent for the sake of the educational element. This was the situation when the Reformers came in. When they came, the tragic element was reduced almost to nothing, by something else, namely, the educational, ethical, and ascetic element, and the Church lived in these things all the time. The churches are usually, with some exceptions, suspicious, very suspicious, of any doctrine of predestination – at least the Catholic church was.. ..because that makes the ultimate religion to God independent of the Church, or at least it tends to do so, and actually very often did. So we have here one of those tensions of which I spoke, in connection with Origen and other theologians, the tension between the ultimate theological, and the pre-ultimate, preliminary, educational point of view. And this is the tension you will experience in every hour of religious instruction – you always have these two

elements: you will have it in counseling, you will have it in preaching. And the great struggle between Augustine and Pelagius is perhaps the classical example of the problem in the Christian Church.

## Lecture 19: Augustine. Donatism. The Medieval Church. Scholasticism. Mysticism.

There was one point remaining to be discussed in Augustine, namely his doctrine of the Church, and since this is of extreme influence in all the Christian churches – not only the Roman – we must deal with it.

I gave you the basic ideas of Cyprian's doctrine of the Church, namely that the Church is an institution of salvation; the concept of the communion of the saints (*communio sanctorum*) was largely replaced by that of the institute of salvation, in Cyprian and the whole development of which he is the representative, the institution of salvation being an objective thing, in which we participate.

In this situation Augustine came into conflict with the Donatist movement. The consequence of the institution meant a change in the idea of the holiness of the Church (*una ecclesia sancta* .). These ideas meant something other than what they meant originally. Originally the emphasis was on the sanctification of the individual members and the group as a whole. Now this emphasis is changed to the sacramental reality of the Church, the holiness of the Church is identical with the sacramental gifts, especially with the sacramental power of the clergy. Sanctus, holy, saint, does not mean now, any more, someone who is personally sanctified, but it does mean someone who has the sacramental power. This of course is a fundamental change in meaning, from the subjective to the objective element, from personal holiness to institutional holiness.

There were people in North Africa, where Augustine was bishop, who didn't want to follow this development and who were interested in the actual sanctification of the Church and its members, especially of the clergy. The points in which this problem arose were the following:

- 1) the discipline in the act of penitence;
- 2) the question whether baptism is valid if performed by heretics;
- 3) the question whether ordination is a possible thing if it is done by *traditores*, traitors, who in the persecutions delivered over the holy books, or denied they were Christians.

Are the objective graces valid if they are done by people who subjectively are under a strong judgment of the opposite of holiness? The Donatistic movements excluded them, did not allow them to become ministers, because for them the holiness of the Church is the personal holiness of their representatives. This would have had the consequence that the individual Christian would have been dependent on the moral and religious standing of the clergy. He would have been dependent on the inner holiness of the minister. Now Augustine was clear about the fact that you cannot judge about it, that any attempt to judge about it would lead to terrible consequences – to claiming the position of God who alone can look into the hearts of the people. He wanted to save the objectivity of the Church against the demand for subjective holiness in its representatives. He followed the lead of Cyprian. In order to do this he introduced the distinction between faith (including hope) and love. Faith, including hope, are possible outside the Church, because they are determined by their content. You may live among heretics, you may be one yourself, but if you fulfill the formula of baptism in the right way, then the content is decisive and not your personal heretical or morally unworthy status. The formulas are the same as they are in the Catholic church. Therefore if the heretic churches use these same formulas, the contents make their activities valid.

Love, on the other hand, is something which cannot be found where there is not the right faith. Love is the principle which unites the Church – it is not simple moral goodness, which can be found everywhere, but it is the agape relationship of individuals with each other. And this spirit of love, which is embodied in the Church as unity of peace, as the reestablishment of the original Divine unity which is disrupted in the state of existence – this is something which you can have only in the Church. Therefore salvation is only in the Church, since salvation is impossible without the poured-in agape, the agape given like a fluid into the hearts of men. But this you can get only in the Church, therefore there is no salvation outside the Church, although there may be valid sacraments outside it.

Now this distinction between the faith element and the love element is of extreme importance and makes the Church the only place of salvation for every Catholic.

From this follows a second distinction, namely between the validity and the effectiveness of the sacraments. The sacraments of the heretics are valid, if they are performed in terms of the orthodox tradition. Therefore nobody has to be rebaptized. But they have no effectiveness within the heretic groups. They have effectiveness only within the Church. Baptism, for instance, always gives a

“character from the Lord,” as the technical term stated; it is the character coming from God, which one has throughout his life whatever one does. This was very important because it enabled the medieval Church to treat the pagans and Jews differently from the baptized Christians. The baptized Christians are subjected to the laws of heresy, the Jews and pagans are not, because even if they tried to become Jews and pagans – or Mohammedans, etc. – they cannot because they have the indelible character given to them in the very act of baptism – whoever mediates this act, whether a member of the Church or a member of the heresy. But the effectiveness of baptism, its saving power, you cannot have except within the Church.

In the same way, ordination is always valid. The priests who are fallen and excommunicated are forbidden to administer the sacraments, but they are able to do it validly. If in a prison the medieval priest who is excommunicated for a crime meets a couple and marries them, what he does is valid in spite of the fact that it is forbidden him to do so. No re-ordination is needed if the priest is absolved and returns into the clergy, because ordination is and remains valid.

Now all this makes the people in the Church completely independent of the quality of the priest. Nobody knows this quality exactly, anyhow – of course, there are mortal sins which are publicly visible, and then the priest will be excommunicated and forbidden to exercise his activities, but this is quite different – what he does is valid anyway – in this way the institution is effective by itself and has become completely independent of the status of the clergy. What we have here is the hierarchical institute of salvation, which as an institute is independent of the character of those who perform it; and also there is the spiritual community of the faithful. According to Catholic doctrine, the first is the condition of the second; according to sectarian ideas, the second is the condition of the first, if it comes to the first at all. These two concepts of the Church were fighting with each other in all the history of the Church. This ends our discussion of Augustine. We come now to the development of that Church which is more dependent on him than on anybody else: the Medieval Church.

## **The Medieval Church**

We can deal with this topic for two semesters, four hours a week, starting only with the year 1000 and ending with 1450. But here we can do it only in a few weeks. Therefore I will do something which some of you may criticize. Others in former years have appreciated it so much that, following Professor Handy’s advice, I will

repeat it at this time, namely to give you, in one lecture hour or so, a survey of the main ideas and trends of the Middle Ages, from the beginning to the end, and only after this will I go into a few great figures and their special discussions. This is an emergency method, because this survey should follow the at least four hour semester course necessary for dealing with the Middle Ages. But it cannot. So you must follow me in what is usually called a sweeping statement. Now I hope it is not sweeping as a statement, but sweeping insofar as it sweeps through the centuries!

Now first the basic problem of the Middle Ages, which we find in all its periods: namely, a transcendent reality manifest and embodied in a special institution, in a special sacred society, leading the culture and interpreting the nature. This is medieval though t- a transcendent reality embodied in an institution in time and space, leading all cultural activities and interpreting the relation of man to nature. If you have this in your mind, you can understand everything going on in the Middle Ages. If you have not, you cannot understand anything, because then you measure the Middle Ages by our own measures of today, and this the Middle Ages do not admit. When you come to distorted pictures, you come to the judgment that the Middle Ages were "dark ages" and we are the illumined ages, and we look back at this period of terrible superstition with a kind of contempt, etc.

But nothing of this is true! The Middle Ages were one form in which the great problem of human existence in the light of the eternal was solved. The people lived in these thousand years, and they lived not worse than we live. in many respects, and in other respects they lived better than we do. So there is no reason to look back at the Middle Ages with any form of contempt.

But on the other hand I am not a romanticist. I don't want us to measure our situation with measures taken from the Middle ages, as does all romanticism.

The Middle Ages are not so united as our ignorance about them makes us regard them. They are very much differentiated. We can distinguish the following periods:

1) Ca. 600, which we all should know as the date of Pope Gregory the Great, in whom the ancient tradition was still alive, but in whom already the Middle Ages started.

From there to ca. 1000, we have 400 years of preservation, as much as could be preserved - which was comparatively little - and of reception, in the tribes which

ruled Europe (the Germanic-Romanic tribes.) It was the period of transition from the ancient to the medieval

world. It was a transition which sometimes, in contrast to the real Middle Ages, is called the Dark Ages, especially the 9th and 10th centuries. But they were not so dark as they seem, and great things happened there which prepared a new world out of which we all come, even if we have forgotten it.

2) The second period is from 1000-1200, when new, original forms developed, decisively different from the ancient world. It is the very creative and very profound period of the early Middle Ages, artistically represented by Romanesque art.

3) We come to the High Middle Ages, 1200-1300. Here all the basic motifs are elaborated and brought into the great systems of the Scholastics, of Gothic art, and of feudal life.

4) From 1300 on, we come into the period of the disintegration of the Middle Ages, from 1300-1460, the Late Middle Ages. If I call it an age of "disintegration," I don't want to depreciate the tremendous surge of new motifs which developed there and made both the Renaissance and Reformation possible. Thus, to repeat:

1) The period of transition, 600-1000.

2) The Early Middle Ages, 1000-1200.

3) The High Middle Ages, 1200-1300.

4) The Late Middle Ages, 1300-1450.

The first series of problems we will discuss are the main cognitive attitude, the main theological attitude – I don't speak of systems, but of attitudes. There are three of them, and they were always present and influential.

1) Scholasticism: , the main and determinative cognitive attitude of the whole Middle Ages. It is the methodological explanation of Christian doctrine. It is derived from "school, of course, and means "school philosophy," philosophy as it was treated in the school. Today "school" has connotations of separation from life; "scholasticism" even more so. When we hear the word "scholasticism" we think of lifeless systems, (as thick as a horse is heavy, as was said of one of these Scholastics), and no one can read them, since they have nothing to do with reality. There was a

distortion of Scholasticism in the late Middle Ages, but that Scholasticism really is the theological interpretation of all problems of life of these people. Therefore we have an extremely rich Scholastic literature, that has tremendously influenced the whole spiritual life of the Middle Ages.

But there was of course one limit to this. . . A Scholastic(education) ... was given only to a small upper class. All the Scholastic books were written in Latin, and although many more of the educated of that time knew Latin, the masses did not know it, nor could they even write or read. So the question was: how to bring the message discussed in these Scholastic systems to the people.

There were two ways: participation in the church services, the liturgies, pictures, the church (structures), hearing the music, and receiving other sense impressions – which do not require much intellectual activity but which give the feeling of the numinous, and some kind of moral guidance. But this didn't mean that these objective things were really personal experiences. The second attitude therefore developed to introduce personal experience into the religious life, and this was what mysticism in the Middle Ages meant.

Now you are today misled by a Protestant theology which starts with Ritschl and is still alive in the Barthian theology, a misinterpretation of the meaning of mysticism. You are misled by people who immediately identify the word mysticism with either Asiatic mysticism of the Vedanta type, or with Neoplatonic mysticism of the Plotinus type. Now forget about this when you approach the Middle Ages. Every medieval Scholastic was a mystic at the same time I. e. , they experienced what they were talking about as personal experience. That was what mysticism originally meant in the Scholastic realm. There was no opposition between mysticism and Scholasticism. The Scholastic message "experienced" – that was mysticism. The unity with the Divine in devotion and ascetic exercises and prayer and contemplation was the basis of the dogma. Now if you know this, then at least I hope you will not fall into the trap of removing mysticism from Christianity, which practically means reducing it to an intellectualized faith and a moralized love. And that is what has happened since the Ritschlian school became predominant in Protestantism, and still is very important in many parts of this country. And don't fall into the trap that if you use the word mysticism, or read it, or hear it spoken, you immediately think of the pattern of absolute or abstract mysticism in which the individual disappears in the abyss of the Divine. Mysticism - - unio mystica , as even the Orthodox theologians of Protestantism called it – is the immediate union with



God in His presence. And even for the Orthodox people, this was the highest form of the relationship to God. In the Middle Ages, mysticism and Scholasticism belonged to each other.

3) The third attitude was biblicism. Biblicism is strong in the later Middle Ages and helps prepare the Reformation. But biblicism is not something exclusively Protestant. There were always biblicistic reactions in the whole Middle Ages. These reactions sometimes were very critical of the Scholastic systems, sometimes they were critical of mysticism – usually they were united with mysticism, and often also with Scholasticism. They were attempts to use the Bible as the basis for a practical Christianity, especially a lay Christianity. They prepared also in this respect the Reformation: in the later Middle Ages biblicism was predominant and made it possible for many laymen even in that period to read the Bible, before the Reformation.

So we have these three attitudes: Scholasticism, mysticism, biblicism. They could be united in the same person, and were in most cases. They could come into some tension. And we shall see how, for instance, Scholasticism and mysticism came into tension in the fight between Bernard of Clairvaux and Abelard. That is possible. But neither of them prevailed. Both gave what they had to give to the medieval Church. And the biblicistic criticisms were simply (appropriated) as the biblical foundation of the Scholastic system and the mystical experiences.

This is the first group of considerations. The main point is: Take these things for what they really are: Scholasticism is the theology of that time; mysticism is the personal experiential piety of that time – sometimes going to extremes; biblicism is the continuous critical reaction coming from the biblical tradition and entering the two other attitudes, finally overcoming both of them in the Reformation.

Now we come to something much more difficult, namely the scholastic method. All Scholasticism has one basic problem, namely that of authority and reason. This you must understand again. The first thing is to understand the word "authority." What is the medieval authority? The medieval authority is the substantial tradition on which medieval life is based. Authority is first of all the Church tradition, and then those places where this Church tradition is expressed: in the acknowledged Church Fathers, in the creeds, in the Bible, in the Councils. This is authority. Now if we hear of "authority" today, we always think of a tyrant – be it the father, the king, the dictator, or sometimes even a teacher – I think some teachers exist who are tyrannical, but very few, I suppose, who would dare. In any case this is what

authority means for us. Now don't be betrayed when you go to medieval sources and read the word *auctoritas*, or "authority", and identify it even with the Pope at that time – this is much later, toward the end of the Middle Ages. But in the earlier and High Middle Ages, authority is the living tradition. This is perhaps the way in which you can translate the word authority. So the question is: What is the relationship of reason to the living tradition of the Church in which everyone lives and there is no other tradition? This is the tradition which is as natural for us as the air we breathe. There are no places of the earth that have different kinds of air to breathe, and we can choose one or the other. We breathe the air, and if it is not polluted by human activities, it has everywhere the possibility of keeping us alive. This is an analogy you must understand if you want to understand what living tradition in the Middle Ages means.

But in contrast to my example, the tradition was composed of many elements. It happened that these elements didn't all say the same thing, if you inquired into them. In many cases you had to make decisions. The Middle Ages experienced that first of all in the realm of practical decisions, namely of canon law. The canon law is the basis anyhow of medieval life; the dogma is one of the canon laws – this gives it its legal authority within the Church. In this sense, practical needs produced people who had to harmonize the different authorities on the meaning of the canon laws, as they appear in the many collections of canon law. Here we have first the harmonizing method, the method of harmonizing the authorities. One called this the method of yes and no, the dialectical method, which intends to harmonize.

Now we know what reason means in the Middle Ages: it is the tool for this purpose. Reason combines and harmonizes the sentences of the Fathers and the sentences of the Councils and their decisions – first practically and then also in the theoretical realm of theological statements. Therefore the function of reason was to collect, to harmonize, and to comment on the given sentences of the Fathers. The man who did this more successfully was Peter the Lombard, whose *sententiae*, the sentences of the Fathers, was the handbook of all medieval Scholasticism; everyone commented on it when writing one's own system.

But another step was taken, namely, this tradition which is now harmonized in the "sentences" of Peter the Lombard, or some others, must be understood; they need commentary; they must be interpreted. The next function of reason was to interpret the meaning of the given tradition expressed in the sentences. This means that the contents of faith had to be interpreted, but faith is presupposed. Out of this

situation came the slogan: *credo ut intelligam*, I believe in order to know. But this simply means: the substance is given; I am living, participating, in it; it is not that I exert a will-to-believe – this is nonsense for the Middle Ages. The creed is given, like nature which is given. Natural science does not create nature; no natural scientist would tell you this. But he calculates the structures and the movements of the given nature. Similarly, reason has the function of interpreting the given tradition – it doesn't create the tradition. If you keep strictly to these analogies, then you can understand the Middle Ages much better.

This was carried through in the next step, less speculatively, very cautiously, by that group of thinkers which took Aristotle into their theology, and formulate – especially Thomas Aquinas – the relation in such a way that they said: Reason is adequate to interpret authority; reason at no point is against authority, but you are able to interpret that which is given in the living tradition in rational terms, and you don't need to hurt or destroy reason in order to interpret the meaning of the living tradition. This is the Thomistic position even today.

But then the last step developed, namely, the separation of reason from authority. Duns Scotus, Occam the nominalist, asserted that reason is inadequate to the authority, the living tradition; reason is not able to express it. This was stated very sharply in later nominalism. But if reason is not able to interpret the tradition, then the tradition becomes authority in a quite different way. Now it becomes the commanding authority to which you have to subject yourselves even if you don't understand it. We call this positivism: the tradition is given, positivistically: there it is, you simply have to look, at it and accept it, subjecting yourselves to it; and it is given by the Church. Thinking never can show the meaning of the tradition; it can only show different possibilities which can be derived from the decisions of the Church and the living tradition. Reason can develop probabilities and improbabilities, but never realities. It cannot show how things should be. They are all dependent on the will of God. The will of God is irrational and is given. It is given in nature, so we must be empiricists in order to find out how the natural laws are. We are not in the center of nature. They are in the Church orders, in the canon law, so we must subject ourselves to these decisions, positivistically; we must take them as positive laws; we cannot understand them in rational terms.

Now this was the end of the Middle Ages. And these different steps in the relationship of reason and authority, or reason and living tradition, must be kept in

mind when coming to the last step, where Scholasticism dissolved itself. I repeat these steps:

- 1) Collecting and harmonizing the different expressions of the tradition – called authority .
- 2) The commenting upon them, making them un-understandable in a quasi-systematic way.
- 3) To-speculate about them, but on the basis of faith (Anselm).
- 4) To say cautiously: you cannot really produce them, but they are adequate to reason.
- 5) They are inadequate to reason and you cannot reach them at all with reason; you must subject yourselves to them as they are given by the authority of the Church.

This is the development in many steps, and if you take them all together and say the medieval Church was "authoritarian," you don't know what you are saying. These different steps must be distinguished.

In Protestantism both things came to an end, the Church authority and to some extent reason. Reason then elaborated itself completely and became creative in the Renaissance. In the Reformation, tradition was transformed into personal faith. But the Counter Reformation tried to keep reason in the bondage of the tradition, but now this tradition was not so much living tradition as formulated tradition, tradition which was identical with the authority of the Pope.

Now this is very important for our present situation. Keep this in mind. We all have to deal, even today, with the problem of living tradition. Living tradition is often confused with authority, but this confusion is wrong. Authority can be natural, factual authority, authority which is not created by a break in ourselves, by a break of our autonomy, and by a subjection to a foreign law of heteronomy. This was the situation in the early Middle Ages. In this situation, authority was natural, so to speak, as our relation to nature is natural.. But at the end of the Middle Ages the situation was changed. And then that concept of authority arose against which we must fight – which is embodied in the preservation of one tradition against other traditions by subjection to one. The dictators today go even beyond this. They exclude the other tradition. The so-called "iron curtains" which we now build to a certain extent by not admitting books from the East, etc., are attempts to keep the

people in a definite tradition and prevent it from touching other traditions, because every authoritarian system knows that nothing is more dangerous for a given tradition than the contact with other traditions, which puts the individual into the point of decision between the traditions, and this they want to avoid. Therefore the iron-curtain methods, which were not necessary in the early Middle Ages because there was no other tradition and one lived in this tradition as naturally as we live in nature.

## Lecture 20: Medieval Period: Nominalism, Realism, Monasticism, Crusades.

Our subject has been the general trends in the Middle Ages. We discussed the main periods, attitudes of thought, and the development of the Scholastic method in its different steps. We now come to different trends in scholasticism itself.

The first form in which autonomous thinking arose in the Middle Ages was dialectics. This word is very hard to use today, having innumerable meanings, the original meaning having been lost. The original meaning is the Greek word "conversation," talking to each other about a problem, going through "yes" and "no," one representing the "yes" and the other the "no" – or vice versa. I told you yesterday already that the jurists, those who represented the canon law, had to harmonize for practical reasons the different authorities, Councils, theologians, about practical problems of the organization of the Church. Out of this need arose the method of "dialectics," of yes and no. They were applied to the theological problems themselves. But yes and no is always something about which the guardians of traditions are afraid, because once a "no" is admitted, one does not know where it leads to. This is so today, when you think of our Fundamentalists, our traditionalists, of any kind, and this was so in the early Middle Ages.

Certainly the early Middle Ages were not able to stand much no's, in view of the primitive peoples to which they had to speak, and in view of the fact that they were the only reality in which mankind lived at that time, and in view of the fact that everything was a process of transformation and consolidation. So against the dialectics, the pious traditionalist – arose – I think here especially of the dialectic of Abelard, and the representative of the pious traditionalists is Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard prevailed over against Abelard in terms of synodal decisions, but Abelard prevailed insofar as his method became the general method of Scholastic thinking.

The question was: Can dialectics produce something new in theology, or is dialectics to be used only for the sake of explaining the given, namely the tradition and the authorities? .

This was the first conflicting couple of trends. The next goes deeper into the Scholastic development itself. I referred to it already when speaking about Augustine, that one man is missing in Augustine's development, namely Aristotle, and that this had consequences in the High Middle Ages when the Augustinians

came into conflict – or at least into contrast – with the newly arising Aristotelians. The Augustinians were represented by the Franciscan order, therefore they are often called the Franciscan group; the Aristotelians were represented by the Dominican order, therefore it is often called Dominican theology. Augustinians against Aristotelians: or Franciscans against Dominicans. One of the heads of the Franciscan order was Bonaventura, a cardinal of the Church, opposing Thomas Aquinas, the great Dominican theologian.

This means we have a development of one of the fundamental problems of the philosophy of religion when Augustine and Aristotle – since Augustine is somehow Neoplatonic – when Plato and Aristotle met again and continued their eternal conversation, which will never cease in the history of human thought because they represent points of view which are always valid and which are always in conflict with each other. If you want the more mystical point of view, (cf.) in Plato, Augustine, Bonaventura, the Franciscans; and the more rational, empirical point of view, in the line from Aristotle to Thomas Aquinas. This was perhaps the most important couple of trends in the Middle Ages, from the point of view of the foundation of religion and theology. Almost all the problems of our present day philosophy of religion were discussed in this light, which was especially strong in the 13th century, developing in all methods.

A third contrast or conflict was between Thomism and Scotism (Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus – 13th century). In some way this is a continuation of the other struggle, since Duns Scotus was a Franciscan and Thomas a Dominican. But it was not the old problem, it was another new and very important problem, also decisive for the whole modern world – namely, the fight between intellect and will as ultimate principles. For the Dominicans, for Thomism, for the Aristotelian rationality which Thomas introduced into the Church, the intellect is the predominant power; man is man qua intellect. For the Augustinian line, which leads to Duns Scotus, will is the predominant power which makes man man, and God God. God is first of all will, and only on a second level, intellect. Man is first of all will – this is the center of his personality – and only on a second level, intellect. The world is first created by will and therefore irrational and to be taken empirically, and only on the second level, intellectually ordered; but this order is never final and cannot be taken in by us in deductive terms. So we have another form of conflicting, going on all the time also, going on also through the modern world where people like Bergson can be confronted with a man, for example, like Professor (Brand) Blanshard of Yale who fight with each other, in terms of will and

intellect. This is the third of the conflicts going through all the Middle Ages, on which all of us are dependent whether we know it or not, if we start thinking.

The fourth of the conflicting trends is Nominalism against the so-called Realism. Now in order to make this very powerful conflict understandable, we must understand the word "realism." If you understand what realism was in the Middle Ages, then simply translate it by "idealism": it was what we call idealism, if idealism is not meant in a moral sense or a special epistemological sense, but if it means that the ideas, the essences, the *ousia's* of things have reality and power of being. Medieval realism is almost 180 degrees the opposite of what we call realism today, and realism today is almost identical with what the medieval people called nominalism. Now this is very confusing, but you as people who have to learn these things should at least be able to understand this confusion.

The reason for it is the following: For medieval man, the universals, the essences, the nature of things, the nature of truth, the nature of man, are powers which determine what every individual tree or every individual man always will become when he or it develops. This is, if you want, mystical realism or, if you want, idealism. *Universalia realia* – this is medieval realism. They are not, of course, things in time and space; that is a misunderstanding, and then it is a little too easy to reject them and say, "I have never seen "manhood," I have only seen "Paul" and "Peter". Of course this is a wisdom the medieval people, also, knew. But they said all Pauls and Peters always have a nose and eyes and feet and language – this is a phenomenon which must be understood, and it can be understood only if it is understood in terms of the universal, the power of being which we call manhood, and which makes it possible for every man again to become a man, with all these potentialities – which may not develop, which may be destroyed; but he has these potentialities. That is what realism means.

Nominalism is the opposite position which says: only. Peter and Paul, only this tree, at Riverside Drive, at the corner of 116th (the big one there!): that alone exists, and not "treehood," not the power of treehood, which makes it become one and which makes all the small ones develop – if the boys don't destroy them! Here you have an example of the difference in feeling. If you look at a tree, you can feel nominalistically and say, "This is a real thing; if I run against it, I will hurt my head." But you also can look at it and can be astonished, that of all the tree-seeds thrown into the soil, always this structure, shooting up and spreading its branches, etc., develops. And if you do this, then you can see in this big tree "treehood," and



not just a big tree. And in Peter and Paul, you can see not only these particular individuals, but also the nature of man, manhood, as a power which makes it possible that all men have this character. The importance of this discussion, which went on in logical terms and is still going on all the time – there's almost

no day in which I do not have a fight against nominalism on the basis of my comparatively medieval realistic kind of thinking, which thinks that being is power-of-being. That is a sin against the "holy spirit" of nominalism, and therefore very much against the "unholy" spirit of logical positivism and many other such spirits. But I fight this fight because I believe that although extreme realism is wrong – namely that realism against which Aristotle was fighting in Plato, that the universals are special things somewhere in heaven – of course this has to be denied – there are structures which actualize themselves again and again against all attempts of boys and stones and climate to make something else of them. They are always carried through. This is what I mean with "realism" and so I can say, of being always resists non-being. And for this reason I believe that we cannot be nominalists alone, although the nominalist attitude, the attitude of humility towards reality, of not desiring to deduct reality, is something which we must maintain.

The immediate importance of nominalism was that it disrupted the universals, which were not only understood in terms of abstract concepts but which were also understood in terms of embracing groups – for instance, family, state, a group of friends, of craftsmen – where it is always the group which precedes the individual. Now this was also the danger of medieval realism, that the individual was prevented from developing himself in his potentialities. Therefore nominalism was an important reaction, so important that I would say that without the nominalistic reaction the estimation of the personality in the modern world, (this real basis of democracy), couldn't have developed. And while I usually make scolding remarks against our being nominalists, I now praise it, saying that without the emphasis on the fully developed individual and his potentialities we would have become Asiatics, as we are now in danger of becoming. And in this danger, medieval nominalism must be understood as positively as medieval realism. Medieval realism maintains the powers of being which transcend the individual; medieval nominalism preserves, or emphasizes, the valuation of the individual. The fact that the radical realism of the early Middle Ages was rejected has saved Europe from Asiatization, namely from collectivization. The fact that at the end of the Middle Ages all universals were lost has produced the imposition of the power of the church on

individuals, making God Himself into an individual who, as a tyrant, gives laws to other individuals. This was the distortion which nominalism brought with itself, while the affirmation of the personal was its creativity.

So when you hear about nominalism and realism, and read about it in textbooks of logic, don't be betrayed into the belief that this is in itself a basically logical problem. It is logical, it must be discussed in terms of the science of logic, too, but it is in terms of the attitude towards reality as a whole which expresses itself also in the logical realm.

The fifth and last of these trends, partly connected with realism in the Middle Ages, is, Pantheism – tendencies toward the complete extinction of the individual. This was done in different ways – in what is called Averroism (cf. Averroes, the greatest of the Arabian philosophers, who said that the universal mind which produces culture is a reality in which the individual mind participates. But the individual mind is nothing independent. What is to be seen here is that it was just in the same line of Asiaticization. And he was rejected. Another way in which pantheistic elements were brought down was, German mysticism of the type of Meister Eckhardt, which in itself could dissolve all the concreteness of medieval piety, and which has led to the philosophy of the Renaissance. But the Church rejected it, in the name of the individual authoritarian God.

Thus the trends:

Dialectics against traditionalists.

Augustinians against Aristotelians – or Franciscans against Dominicans.

Thomism against Scotism -- about the will.

Nominalism against mystical realism.

Pantheism against the Church doctrine, in its concreteness.

This alone should show you that the Middle Ages are not monolithic, although they had a definite authority; that they are very rich and varied, and have many tensions and problems. We cannot sweep them with the statement that they are the "dark ages," since all their problems are present even now.

The Religious Forces

The next consideration is about the religious forces. Which are the religious forces in the Middle Ages? First the hierarchy: it is the greatest and most fundamental of the religious forces. They represent the sacramental reality on which the existence of Church, state, and culture as a whole depend. They administer the central event in which this happens, namely the Mass.

Then, the hierarchy carrying through the educational work towards the Germanic-Romanic tribes, (from which barbaric state) They, the tribes, entered the Church and ancient civilization. In doing so they tried not only to influence the individual, through the sacrament of penance – which is the correlate to the sacrament of the Mass (the Mass is merely objective, penance merely subjective) – but beyond this they tried to influence the social status of reality; they wanted to control the world. The civil powers arose – not the “state”: this is a nonsensical term for the Middle Ages, but the different secular hierarchies, up to the emperor at the top of all of them, and this meant they had to come to a fight with the emperor, who aspired to do the same thing from the secular point of view which the Church tried to do from the religious, namely to establish one body of Christian secular life, a life which is always at the same time secular and religious, instead of establishing two realms and separating them, as we do.

This is the hierarchy, and is the first and basic and continuous religious force. But of course by these functions the hierarchy was always in danger of becoming secularized itself. So we must look at other religious forces, resisting this tendency. Here we have, first, monasticism, the second religious force. It represents the uncompromising negation of the world, but this negation was not a quietistic negation: it was a negation connected with activity towards transforming the world, in labor, in science, in all other forms of culture, e. g., esthetic culture, church-building and forming, poetry, music, etc. It was a very interesting creation and has very little to do with the deteriorized monasticism against which the Reformers and the Humanists were fighting. It was the radicalism, on the one hand, of resignation from the world, leaving the control of the world to the clergy, to the secular hierarchy, as it is sometimes called. But they themselves restricted themselves from all this, but then at the same time they didn't fall into a mystical form of asceticism alone, (or a ritual alone as the Eastern church was in danger of becoming), but they applied their status to the transformation of reality. The monks produced the great medieval esthetic culture, and even today some of the monastic orders represent the highest form of culture in the Catholic church, especially the Benedictines, who have preserved this tradition until today. Then there were the real bearers of

theological science, and somehow of all science. The Franciscans and Dominicans, especially the latter, produced the greatest theologians. Then there were others who did agricultural work, work of irrigation, drying swamps, and all the things necessary in the newly conquered countries where conversions had been made, in central and northern Europe. So as monastics they had the intensity of resignation and at the same time the power of controlling and transforming. They were, as we would say today, the active, ascetic vanguard of the Church. They were free to perform cultural activities and at the same time were bound to the fundamentals of the Church. Later on, similar things developed, namely attempts to bring this monastic spirit more into groups other than the monks themselves. I can mention two groups – the knights and the knight orders who were fighting against the pagans and conquering eastern Germany; and if you want a sweeping historical statement, these knight orders who fought a thousand years ago for a Christianization and at the same time Germanization of the East of Europe, as far as possible, have now been conquered, in this 20th century, with the help of the Christian nations of the West, namely the Slavic groups have retaken what was taken away from them by the knight orders of the Middle Ages, and Christianity was suppressed for the sake of the Communist form of a non-Christian secularism. It was a great world-historical event (as great as the battles of the knights in the Middle Ages) when in the 20th century, especially in the conference of Berlin in 1945, Eastern Europe was surrendered and the Germanic population which lived there for a thousand years was thrown out.

Now if you see the situation in this perspective, then you also see a little of the importance of these medieval orders.

Related to them are the Crusades and the spirit of the crusaders. It was also an introduction of the monastic spirit into the lower aristocracy, and the effect was that they were to conquer – for a certain time at least -- Palestine and the eastern Byzantine Empire. But they also finally were repelled.

3) This is monasticism. Now I come to Sectarianism. Sectarianism should not be understood so much from the dogmatic point of view, as one usually does – of course sometimes they have crazy speciality with respect to doctrine, and leave the Church for this reason; but never believe them: that is not the real reason. The reason is psychological and sociological much more than theological. Sectarianism is the criticism of the Church for the gap between its claim and its reality. And it is the desire of special groups to represent groups of consecration, of sanctification, of

holiness. It is an attempt to carry through some of the monastic radicalism - not all of it, not the ascetic elements, often - radically or moderately, as the case may be, but in terms which are anti-hierarchical.

Now this leads immediately to the fourth group, the Lay Movements. In some way the sectarian movements are lay movements. But as the word *secta* means, they "cut" themselves off from the body of the church. There were other ways to introduce monastic ideals partly into secular life, namely the so-called *tertiarii*, the "third orders." There was a "first order" of St. Francis (the men's order); their second order was the women's order (the nuns); and later on a third order was created (the laymen, who did not enter the cloister nor were they celibate, but they subjected themselves partly to the discipline of the monastic orders, and as such produced a kind of lay piety which towards the end of the Middle Ages became stronger and stronger and prepared the Reformation, which in some way is a lay movement.

5) The fifth movement which I must mention as a bearer of medieval piety is the

Great individuals of Church history. But they are not great individuals as the Renaissance has introduced them. They are great individuals as representatives of something objective, namely of the "holy legend."

The holy legend starts with the Bible, goes through all centuries. ,

"Legend" does not simply mean "unhistorical" it is a mixture of history and interpretation and stories connected with it, and hanging usually on great individuals who themselves never had any connection with these stories, but they are representatives: so legendary history is a history of representatives of the spirit of the Church. That's a very important thing - this meant that the Catholic Christian of the Middle Ages was aware of a continuation from the Biblical times and even the Old Testament period and even before that, going back to Adam and Noah, through all history, always represented by great individuals who are not interesting as individuals but as representatives of the tradition and the spirit in which the people lived. This seems to me more important than the superstitious use of these individuals as objects of prayer, if they had become saints. The holy legend was a reality which, like nature, was something in which one lived. It is a reality in which the living tradition expresses itself symbolically. And those of you who have some interest in religious art will see that up to Giotto, the great figures of medieval art

are not so much individuals but representatives of the Divine presence in a special event or a special form and character.

3) The sixth of the religious forces: the popular and superstitious forms of daily piety.

These forms are, if we call "superstitious" everything in which a finite reality identifies itself with the Divine. And such superstitions permeate the whole Middle Ages. One of them was the relics of the saints, or from Christ's life. Another was the ever-repeated miracles. Another was the kinds of holy objects, which were not used as pointers to, but as powers of, the Divine in themselves.

But this had also the positive element that it consecrated the daily life. Now let me give you this in a picture. You come into a medieval town – you have not this occasion; but if you ever have it abroad, e. g., take the most accessible town, the town of Chartres. It is not only its cathedral which is important, which you must look at to understand the Middle-Ages, but also the way in which the cathedral stands, on the hill in the middle of the small town. It is a tremendous cathedral, overreaching the whole surrounding country. If you go into it, you find symbols of the daily life in the Church – the nobility, the craftsmen, the guilds, the different supporters of the Church – the whole daily life is within the walls of the cathedral, in a consecrated form. If you go into it, you have your daily represented in the sphere of the holy. If you go out of it, you take with you the consecration you have received in the cathedral, and take it with you into your daily lives. Now of course this is the positive side of it. The negative side is that this express itself, then, in the superstitious forms of poor pictures and sculptures and relics and the looking for new miracles, all forms of holy objects, etc.

7) The seventh and last: This also is of great importance: the experience of the demonic in the daily life of medieval man. This was something which with a kind of thrill one hears about in lectures on systematic theology here, from 9 to 10, or reads in some books of theologians – not earlier than 1930 – but it is something which was a reality of the daily life for these people. The vertical line which leads to the Divine also leads down to the demonic. And the demonic is a power which is present in the cathedral as conquered. The so-called exorcism, the driving out of the demonic, belongs to the daily practices in the cathedral. If you enter it, you spread yourself with holy water, which means that you have to purify yourself from the demonic forces which you bring with you from the daily life. Baptism is first of all exorcism of the demonic forces, before the forgiveness of sins is possible. Demonic figures are

seen supporting the weight of the churches - -which is perhaps the greatest symbol, - namely, the power of the Divine which conquers the power of the demonic within the daily life. And then towards the end of the Middle Ages, when the Renaissance brought into it all the demonic symbolism and reality of the later ancient world, the demonic prevailed over against the Divine in terms of anxiety. And the Church of this period lived in a permanent anxiety about the presence of the demonic within themselves or within others. And this is the background of the witch trials and partly of the persecution of heresies. It is the basis for a demonic persecution of the demonic - we cannot describe these witch trials differently. It is the feeling for an under-ground in life, which is overcome, which can break in every moment and broke out in many individuals in terms of neurotic anxiety. The churches were first able to conquer it and at the end of the Middle Ages they were not able any more, and so they started the great persecutions, which were more cruel and more bloody than the persecutions even of the heretics. But as every persecution -- those of the heretics and those of the sorcerers - it was the fear, the tremendous anxiety about non-being in terms of demonic symbols, which was behind this hostile attitude towards oneself and others, if one felt that there the demonic was present.

Now this is a survey of the religious forces of the Middle Ages. Of course, not everything is in it. We will return to it, partly. But if you have these seven religious forces in mind, you will know more than if you had 200 names of mediaeval theologians and saints.

## Lecture 21: Medieval Period (continued)

The Seven Religious Forces:

Hierarchy

Monasticism

Sectarianism

The Lay Movements

The Great Individuals

The Popular Superstitions

The Experience of the Demonic

All this happens within the Church. We must therefore, now, discuss the interpretation of the Church. It is interesting that in the systems of the great classical theologians of the Middle Ages, there is no special place for the doctrine of the Church. This indicates, besides other things, the fact that the Church was, so to speak, self-understood; it was the foundation of all life and was not a matter of a special doctrine. But of course, in the discussions about hierarchy, about the sacraments, about the relationship to the state, a doctrine of the Church was implicitly developed.

The first consideration is: What was the Church in relationship to the Kingdom of God, according to medieval thinking?

On the answer to this question everything depends for the answer to all other questions about the relationship of the Church to the secular powers, to culture, etc. The background of it is what I said about Augustine's interpretation of history; to this we must look back in order to understand the situation.

In the Augustinian interpretation of history we have a partial identification and partial non-identification of the Church with the Kingdom of God. They are never fully identified because Augustine knew very well that the Church is a mixed body, that it is full of people who formally belong to it but who in reality do not belong to



it. On the other hand he identified the Church with the Kingdom of God from the point of view of the sacramental graces which are present in the hierarchy. This identification could be the point of emphasis or the non-identification could be the point of emphasis. This was always the problem of the Middle Ages. The Church of course tried to identify itself with the Kingdom of God, in terms of the hierarchical graces. You never should think that any medieval representative of the Church, neither a theologian nor a pope nor a bishop, identified his own goodness or holiness with the Kingdom of God, but always his sacramental holiness, his objective sacramental power. And the objectivity of this sacramental reality is decisive for all understanding of medieval thought. On the other hand, the actual Church was a mixed body and the representatives of the sacramental graces were distorted. So from this point of view it was possible to attack the Church. Between these two poles the discussion of the Middle Ages went on, in continuous oscillation.

But Augustine had another identification, namely the partial identification and partial non-identification of the state with the 'kingdom of earth, which is also designated as the kingdom of Satan. The partial identification was based on the fact that in Augustine's interpretation of history, states are the result of compulsory power, "robber-states," as he called it, states produced by groups of gangsters, so to speak, who are not considered criminals only because they are powerful enough to take the state into their hands. This whole consideration, which reminds one of the Marxist analysis of the state, is, however, contrasted by the natural-law idea that the state is necessary in order to repress the sinful powers which, if unrepressed, would produce chaos.

This was the Augustinian situation, and here again the emphasis could be on the identity of the state with the kingdom of Satan, or at least the kingdom of earth, i. e., the kingdom of sinful earth; and on the other hand, the non-identification, the possibility that the state has a Divine function to restrict chaos. All this is understandable only in a period in which Augustine lived, and in which the Roman Empire and later the Germanic-Romanic kingdoms were matters of non-Christian power. Even in a period in which already Constantine had accepted the Christian doctrine, the power-play was still going on and the substance of the ancient culture was still in existence and was not replaced by the religious substance of the Church. Now the situation changed. After the great migration, the Church became the cultural substance of life – that power which determines all the individual relations, all the different expressions of art, knowledge, ethics, social relations, relation to

nature, and all other forms of human life. The ancient substance was partly received by Augustine and partly removed, and what was left in it was subjected to the theonomous principles of the Church. '

Now in such a situation one couldn't say any more that the state is the kingdom of Satan because the substance of the state is the Church. So a new situation arose which had consequences not only for the consideration of the Church with respect to the state, but also for the state itself. How was the Germanic system related to the Church? The Germanic tribes, before they were Christianized, had a religious system in which the princes, the leaders of the tribes, represented not only the earthly but also the sacred power. So they were automatically representing both realms. This was continued in the Germanic states in the form that the clergy belonged to the feudal order of these tribes. A man like the great bishop of Rheims, in France, Hincmar, represented the feudal protest of a sacred political power; – political and sacred at the same time – against the universality of the Church. The German kings, who had to give political power to the higher feudal lords, had to give power to the bishops who were higher feudal lords also, – the Church called this simony, (from the story of Simon, who wanted to buy the Divine power.) This was connected with the fact that these feudal lords had to give something for what they received. All this was necessarily connected with the territorial system of the Germanic-Romanic tribes and was of course something in opposition to the universal Church.

Against the feudal bishops and the local kings or princes, opposition came from three sides: 1) from the lower clergy. 2) from the popes, especially Gregory VII, 3) from the proletarian masses; which were anti-feudal, especially in northern Italy. The pope used them and let them alone again. The pope used the lower bishops who were very much nearer to the lower clergy than the pope, so in the name of the pope they could resist the feudal clergy of their own countries. This was the situation which finally led to the great fight between Gregory VII and Henry IV, the struggle which is usually called the struggle between Church and State, but this is very misleading, you shouldn't call it thus. It was a quite different thing. First of all, "state" in our sense is a concept of the 18th century and didn't exist before, and when we speak of "the state" in Greece, in Rome, in the Middle Ages, we should always put it in quotation marks, using the word from the 18th century situation, which didn't exist in former centuries. What did exist were the legal authorities, with military and political power,

But what was the point of conflict? It was not, as it was often later, that the states encroached upon the rights of the Church – this of course was their right – but it was a much more fundamental thing. Since the Church was the representative of the spiritual substance of the daily life of everyone, of every function, craft, business, profession – it was all ecclesiastical in some way – there was no separation of realms as we had it after the Reformation, but there was one reality, with different sides. But now the question arose: Who shall head this one reality? There must be a head, and it is dangerous if there are two heads. So from both sides, the clergy and the princes, the feudal lords, each claimed to be the head of this one reality. The state represented by the feudal order was conscious of also representing the Christian body as a whole, and the Church represented by the pope was also conscious of representing the Christian body as a whole, This was the fight. The same position was claimed by both sides, a position which embraces the secular as well as the religious.

The king aspired – and especially when he became the German emperor and as such the continuation of the Holy Roman Empire – and claimed to represent as protector all Christendom, Christendom as a whole, the secular as well as the religious. On the other hand, Pope Gregory VII claimed the same thing from the hierarchical side. He made claims transcending everything which was done before, and of which even he could reach only a limited amount. He identified himself with all bishops; he is the universal bishop. All episcopal grace comes from the pope, who is Peter and in whom Peter is present, and in Peter, Christ is present, So there is no bishop who is not dependent on the pope in his episcopal sacramental power” This is the universal monarchy of the pope in the Church. But he goes beyond this: the Church is the soul of the body; the body is the secular life. Those who represent the secular life are related to him who represents the life of the -- soul, as the limbs of the body are to the inner self which is the soul. And so, as the soul shall govern the limbs of the body, so the pope shall govern the kingdoms and all feudal orders.

Now this was expressed --a fter compromises had to be made and became unavoidable – by the famous doctrine of the two swords. There are two swords, the earthly and the spiritual. As the bodily existence is subjected to the spiritual existence, so the earthly sword, that of the king and of the feudal groups, is subjected to the spiritual sword: the pope. Therefore every being on earth has to be subject to the pope at Rome. This was the doctrine of Pope Boniface VIII, in which the papal aspirations are expressed radically.

The emperors fought against it, compromises were made, but generally speaking the popes prevailed – up to a certain moment. They prevailed as long as there was this one reality about which they – emperor and pope – were fighting: namely, the one Christianity. But this was not the final answer. New forces arose in the Middle Ages. The first and main force was the national states. The national states claimed something which neither suited the pope nor the emperor, namely independence from both of them. And since the national feeling is behind them – this is partly the importance of Joan of Arc because, in her, French nationalism first arose and came of course immediately into conflict with the pope. But others followed, and at the end of the Middle Ages the national states had taken over much of the papal power. Again France was leading; Phillip the so-called handsome” took the pope to Avignon in France, and the schism between the two popes undercut the pop’s authority most radically. But these princes and kings who slowly became independent and created the national states – the same thing was going on in England and Spain – were at the same time religious lords, and they put themselves also in the place of what the emperor wanted to do: in the place of the religious lords. So we have in England theories about the king of England being Christ for the Church of England, as the pope is the vicar of Christ. Here you see the new forces slowly developing, both against the emperor and against the pope. On this basis another theory arose, especially against the pope. The bishops of these developing national states were not simply subjects of the pope, but they wanted to get the position the bishops had in the period, let us say, of the Council of Nicaea. They developed the idea called conciliarism (from curia, the papal court): the papal court is the monarchic power over Church and state; conciliarism (i. e. , the council of the bishops, which is practically the majority of the bishops) is the ultimate authority of the Church. And in alliance with the national reaction against state and Church at the same time, this was a very radical movement, and the pope was in great danger for a certain time, but not in the long run because the national separations and the splits of all kinds, the desire of the later Middle Ages to have a unity in spite of all this, gave the pope the power finally to destroy the reform councils in Basle and Constance, where conciliarism triumphed; but the pope took away the triumph from them after, and finally ecclesiasticism and monarchism prevailed in the Roman church, and prevails up to now – even the cardinals have no power whatsoever against the monarchy of the pope.

But there was another movement of importance for this situation, namely the movement of criticism of the Church. These movements are present in the sectarian movements and are present in the lay movements at the end of the Middle Ages.

The greatest of the critics of the Church is, theoretically, Occam, who fought for the German national state against the universal monarchy of the pope. But the most effective is Wyclif of England. Wyclif radically criticized the Church as it existed, from the point of view of the lay movement; from the point of view of the lay movement, from the point of view of the *lex evangelica*, the evangelical law, which is in the Bible; he translated it; and he fought against the hierarchies with the support of the national king. There already the relationship between the king of England and the pope became very precarious. The pope did not succeed in inducing the king to persecute Wyclif and his followers.

Finally the hierarchy came to an end in the revolutionary movement of the Reformation. The territorial Church which was prepared long ago under the prince, or in society, became the form of the Protestant churches, Territorialism was prepared in the Middle Ages, but now the pope and the whole hierarchy disappeared, and now the situation was this: The Church had no backbone any more, it was mere spiritual groups, and it needed a backbone. So the prince became, not only as in England the Christ for the people – (the king), for instance, up to today, is the one who decides (cf. the Book of Common Prayer) – but in the German churches the prince received the title of “highest bishop,” which simply means that he replaces the hierarchical sacramental bishops, and becomes the highest administrator within the church, as a lay member at the same time; he is the predominant lay member who can keep the church in order. So the Protestant churches became subjected to the earthly powers, and are in this problem even today. In Lutheranism it was the relationship to the princes and their cabinets and authoritarian governments. In the Calvinist countries, e.g., and in this country, it is the socially ruling groups which are decisive for the church and give it its administrative backbone.

This is again a sweeping run through the Middle Ages. You must keep this development in mind and understand it. And don't use the phrase “the fight between Church and State”, etc – this is very misleading.

I come to the last sweeping statement about medieval Church history perhaps the most important of all, from the point of view of the actual religious life – namely, the sacraments. Now if we come to the discussion of the sacraments, we must forget (as Protestants) everything we have in our immediate experience of the sacraments. In the Middle Ages, sacraments were not things which happened at certain times a year, and to which one went and one didn't know what to do with it; and which one

regarded as a comparatively solemn act, but one was not very clear why. – In the Middle Ages the sacraments are important. The preached word need not necessarily accompany it. So people like Troeltsch called the Catholic church the greatest sacramental institution in all world history, and have understood all sides of the life of the Middle Ages, and even the present-day Catholic church, from the point of view of the sacramental basis. So I don't speak now about something which just happens to be in the picture and therefore must be mentioned along with the rest, but I speak of the foundations of the whole medieval thinking,

You remember that I said, in contrast to some other great periods in Western history, the medieval has one problem only, and this one problem is the basis for all other problems, namely, to have a society which is guided by a present reality of a transcendent Divine character, This is different from the period in which the New Testament was written, where the salvation of the individual soul was the problem. It is different from the period of Byzantium (let us call it ca. 4:50- 950 or so) where mysteries interpret all reality in terms of the Divine ground, but not much is changed. It is different from the period since the Renaissance – which ended in the 19th century – namely, a world which is directed by human reason, by man as the center of reality, and by his rational activities. It is different also from the: early Greek period in which the mind was looking for the eternal immovable. All these periods have their special problem. The problem of the Middle Ages – which you should keep in mind all the time – is the problem of the world (society & nature) in which the Divine is present in sacramental forms. Now this is the basis for this consideration, then we can say: What does sacramental mean? It means all kinds of things, in the history of the Church. It means the deeds of Christ, the sufferings of Christ (His stations of the Cross), it means the Gospels (which you can call sacraments), it means problematic symbols (in the Bible), it means the symbolic meaning of the church buildings, all the activities going on in the church, everything in which the Holy was present.

And this was the problem of the Middle Ages: to have the Holy present. The sacraments represent the objectivity of the grace of Christ as present in the objective power of the hierarchy. All graces – or, another way of translating "grace" substantial powers of the New Being – are present in and through the hierarchy. The sacraments are the continuation of the basic sacramental reality, namely the manifestation of God in Christ. In every sacrament is present a substance of a transcendental sacramental character. A thing - -i. e. , water, bread, wine, oil, a word, the laying on of hands - -all this becomes sacramental if a transcendent

substance is poured into it. It is like a fluid which heals. One of the definitions is: "Against the wounds produced by original and actual sin, God has established the sacraments as remedies." Here, with medical symbolism, you have very clearly what is meant: it is the healing power which is poured into the substances.

The question, often raised in Protestantism, is: How many sacraments? Up to the 12th century there were many sacramental activities. Which of them were most important was partly always clear, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and partly very much open to changes. Therefore it took more than a thousand years of Church history to discover that seven sacraments are the most important. After this was discovered, these seven often draw upon themselves the name "sacrament" in a special sense. This is very unfortunate for the understanding of what sacrament is. We must always distinguish the universal concept of the sacrament: the presence of the holy. Therefore sacramentalia are going on in churches all the time, namely activities in which the presence of the Divine is experienced in a special way. The fact that there are seven, has traditional, practical, Church-political, psychological, and many other reasons (behind it). But there are seven in the Roman church. There were five for a long time. In the Protestant churches

there are two. There are at least in some groups of the Anglican church, actually and even theoretically three. But that doesn't matter. The problem is: "What does sacramental thinking mean?" not "How many sacraments?" And this is what Protestants must learn; they have forgotten it.

In the Roman church there are still the main sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist. But there is also penance as the center of personal piety. There is ordination which is the presupposition for the administration of all the other sacraments. There is marriage, as the control of the natural life. There are confirmation and extreme unction, as supporting sacraments. In the development of the life of the individual, (we see the *raison d'être*), the biographical reasons, for some of the sacraments; and other sacraments stem from the establishment of the Church. In any case, there they are, and now they are *de fide*; but it was not always the case.

Now what is a sacrament? Sacraments are visible or sensuous signs instituted by God, so to speak, as medicaments, in which under the cover of visible things, Divine powers are hiddenly working. There we have the ideas: Divine institution, visible signs, medicaments (the medical symbol is very important), the hidden powers of the Divine under the cover of the sensuous realities. A sacrament is valid if it has a

material substance, a form (the words by which it is instituted), and the intention of the minister to do what the Church does. These three elements are necessary. The sign (we would say symbol) contains the matter. Therefore the sacrament has causality: it causes something in the inner part of the soul, something Divine. But it has not ultimate causality. It is dependent on the ultimate causality, namely, on God. The sacraments give the grace. You always should translate "grace" as Divine power of being, or power of New Being, which justifies or sanctifies – these two words are identical in Catholicism while in Protestantism they are far removed from each other. Grace, i. e., the Divine power of the New Being, is poured by the sacraments into the essence of the soul. into its very innermost center. And there is no other way to receive grace, justifying and sanctifying, than through the sacraments. From the substance which pours through the center of the soul, it has effects on the different functions of the soul ; or mind, as we would say. The intellect is driven towards faith, by the sacramental grace; the will is driven towards hope; and the whole being is driven towards love.

And now the decisive statement: the sacrament is effective in us *ex opere operato* by its mere performance, not by any human virtue. There is only one subjective presupposition, namely the faith that the sacraments are sacraments, but not faith in God, not a special relationship to God. It is a "minimum" theory: those who do not resist the Divine grace can receive it even if they are not worthy, if they only do not resist by denying that the sacrament is the medium of the Divine grace. I. e., the theory of *ex opere operata* (by its very performance) makes the sacrament an objective event of a quasi-magical character. This was the point where the Reformers were most radical. The whole life stood under the effects of the sacrament. Baptism removes original sin; the Eucharist removes venial sins; penance removes mortal sins; extreme unction, what is still left over of one's sins before death; confirmation makes a man a fighter for the Church; ordination introduces him into the clergy; marriage, into the natural vocation of man and wife. But beyond them all is one sacrament which is a part of the Eucharist but which has become independent of it, namely the sacrament of the Mass. The sacrifice of Christ repeated every day in every church of Christianity, in terms of the transubstantiation of bread and wine into body and blood, is the foundation of the presence of the Divine and the foundation of the sacramental and hierarchical power of the Church. Therefore this was, so to speak, the sacrament of sacraments. Officially it was a part of the Lord's Supper, but objectively it was and is the foundation of all sacraments, namely the power the priest has to produce God,



facere deum – making God out of the bread and wine is the fundamental power of the Church in the Middle Ages.

Let me add one last word: There was one sacrament which was in a kind of tension with all the others, namely penance. Penance was the sacrament of personal piety and there was much discussion about it: What are the conditions of the forgiveness of sins in the sacrament of penance? Some made it very easy, some more heavy. All believed that a personal repentance is necessary – light or heavy and, on the other hand, that a sacrament is necessary. But how the sacrament and the personal element were related to each other, to this no Scholastic gave an answer; and this was the point in which the medieval Church exploded, by the intensification of the subjective side in the sacrament of penance. This was the experience of Luther, and therefore he became the reformer of the Church.

## Lecture 22: Anselm and His Arguments

After the general discussion of the Middle Ages, we now come to two men in the 12th century, in that period which I have described as the beginning of the new developments, namely Anselm of Canterbury and Abelard of Paris.

Anselm's basis for his theological work is like that of all Scholastics, the assertion that in the Holy Scriptures and its interpretation by the Fathers, all truth is directly or indirectly enclosed. It is that concept of faith or tradition which is not a special act of individuals but is, so to speak, the spiritual substance of the reality in which we are. Therefore the phrase *credo ut intellegam* -- "I believe in order to understand," not "I understand in order to believe." Belief, which is not belief but which is participation in the living tradition, is the foundation; and the interpretation<sup>1</sup>, the theology, is built on this basis.

The content of eternal truth, of principles of truth, is grasped by subjection of our will to the Christian message, and the consequent experience out of this subjection. This experience is given by grace; it is not produced by human activities. Here the term "experience" becomes important. Experience, again, must be distinguished from what we mean today by "experience," if we mean anything at all -- which is very questionable, since the word has such a large use that it almost has become meaningless. In any case at that time experience means not religious experience, generally speaking -- such a thing "didn't exist at that time -- but experience meant participation in the objective truth which is implied in the Bible and which is authoritatively explained by the Church Fathers.

In this experience every theologian must participate. Then this experience can become knowledge. But this is not necessarily so. Faith is independent of knowledge, but knowledge is dependent on faith. We can again use the analogy I have used last time, when we say: Natural science presupposes participation in nature, but participation in nature does not necessarily lead to natural science. On this basis, reason can act entirely freely in order to transform experience into knowledge. Anselm was the great speculative thinker, in a period when the word "speculation" had not yet the meaning of looking into the clouds, but of analyzing the basic structures of reality -- which meaning you should always have.

Knowledge based on experience leads to a system. Here we come to one of the features of all medieval thinking. The medieval thinkers knew that in order to think consistently, you must think systematically. In the term "systematic theology," with which we are dealing in this institution, there is still the remnant of this insight, that knowledge, in order to be consistent, must have the character of a system. Today if somebody uses the word "system" ,except in this old fashioned phrase "systematic theology," he is attacked, just because he thinks systematically and not sporadically and fragmentarily. But the Church cannot afford -- what every individual thinker can - -to have here an insight and there an insight which have nothing to do with each other, and usually contradict each other. But the Church needs something which is consistent, where everything has some connection with every other thing. The bad element in systematic theology is if you derive from principles, consequences which have no foundation in experience to which the Divine is present in sacramental terms. But this is not the meaning of "system." The meaning of system is, to order experiences cognitively in such a way that they do not contradict each other, and that they give a whole of truth; for, as Hegel has rightly said, the truth is the whole.

Reason in this way can elaborate all religious experiences in rational terms. Even the doctrine of the Trinity can be dealt with rationally by reason, on the basis of experience. In other words, autonomous reason and the doctrine of the Church are identical. It is again to be compared with our relationship to nature, where we say: mathematical structure and natural reality belong to each other. The mathematical reason is able to grasp nature, to order and to make understandable natural movements and structures. In the same way theological reason is able to make understandable and to connect with each other the different religious experiences, which are not religious in the general sense, but experiences on the basis of the Christian tradition.

Now this is the courageous way in which Anselm attacked the problems of theology. If he says that even the Trinity can be understood in rational terms, then this is an Augustinian heritage; he did it also. We can call it dialectical monotheism, a monotheism in which movement is seen in God Himself. God is a living God and therefore there is a yes and a no in Himself - this is dialectical monotheism. It is not a dead identity of God with Himself, but it is a living separation and reunion of His Life with Himself. In other words, the mystery of the Trinity is understandable for dialectical thought. The mystery of Trinity is included in reason itself and is not against reason. How could it be, according to classical theology, since God has

reason in Himself as His Son, the Logos.? Reason, therefore, is valid as far as God and world are essentially considered. Autonomy

is not destroyed by the mystery. On the other hand, autonomy is not empty and not formalistic. It doesn't empty the mysteries of the Divine Life, but only points to it in dialectical terms. The content, the substance and the depth of reason, is a mystery which has appeared in revelation.

Now this means that Anselm was neither autonomous in a formalistic empty sense, nor was he heteronomous in subjecting his reason to an un-understood tradition, to a tradition which is almost a magic mystery. but his attitude is what I would call Theonomy. You will encounter this concept often in my writings and in discussions. And whenever you are asked, "What do you mean with theonomy?" then you say: "The way of philosophizing of Anselm of Canterbury," or "The way of philosophizing of Augustine," or "The way of philosophizing" - now I hesitate to say it--"Hegel", in spite of my criticism of him; namely, acknowledging the mystery of being, but not believing that this mystery is an authoritarian transcendent element which is put upon us, and against us, which breaks our reason to pieces - which would mean that God breaks His Logos to pieces - but that which gives the depth to all Logos. Reason and mystery belong together, like substance and form.

But now there is one point - and that was the point where I deviate from Hegel and go further with Anselm - which is more than a point, namely a total turn of the whole consideration: the Logos becoming flesh, and what this means, is not a matter of dialectical reason. This is not only dialectical, not only mystery, but this is paradoxical. Here we come to the sphere of existence, and existence is rooted in the freedom of God and man, in sin and grace. Here reason can only acknowledge and not understand. The existential sphere, existence itself, is ruled by will and decision, not by rational necessity. Therefore it can become anti-reason, anti-structure, anti-Divine, anti-human.

This means that the limitation of rational necessity is not mystery and revelation. If somebody with whom you talk puts you into a corner, dialectically, don't say "That is a mystery," and then you'd escape the corner; but he would not acknowledge that you really have escaped. He will further believe that you are in the corner and that he has caught you. What you must do is to show that you are dialectically superior to him, and that the mystery of being is preserved by good dialectics, and destroyed by bad dialectics - That's what you have to do. But then there is one thing in which he and you have to acknowledge that there is something which is not mystery and

not dialectical, but which is paradoxical, namely that man has contradicted himself and always contradicts himself, and those people who corner you have to acknowledge that also if they are honest with themselves – and they will. And that at the same time there is a possibility of overcoming this situation, because there is a New Reality under the conditions of existence, conquering existence: this is the Christian paradox. It is of serious concern that we do not make a gap between the Divine mystery and the Divine Logos. The Church again and again has affirmed that they belong to each other and are the same Divinity. If you deny that the structure of reason is adequate to the Divine mystery, then you are completely dualistic in your thinking; then God is split in Himself.

Now I come to more special problems in Anselm, in which this general theonomous character is obvious. I come first to his famous arguments, or as I like to say, so-called "arguments," for the so-called "existence of God," because I want to show you that they are neither arguments nor do they prove the "existence" of God. But they do something which is much better than this. There are two arguments, the cosmological and the ontological, the cosmological given in his Monologion and the ontological in his Proslogion. My task is to show that these arguments are not arguments for the existence of an unknown or doubtful piece of reality, even if it is called "God," but that they are quite a different thing from this.

The Cosmological argument says: We have ideas of the good, of the great, of the beautiful, of the true. These ideas are realized in all things. We find beauty, goodness, and truth everywhere, but of course in different measures and degrees. But if you want to say that something has a higher or lower degree in which it participates in the idea of the good or the true, then the idea itself must be presupposed. Since it is the criterion by which you measure, it itself is not a matter of measure and degree. The good itself, or the unconditionally good – being, beauty – is the idea which is always presupposed. This means that in every finite or relative is implied the relation to an unconditioned, an absolute. Conditionedness, relativity, presuppose and imply something absolute and unconditional. I. e., the meaning of the conditioned and of the unconditioned are inseparable.

If you analyze reality, especially your own reality, you discover in yourselves, continuously, elements which are finite and which are inseparably related to something finite. This is a matter of conclusion, from the conditional to the unconditional, but it is a matter of analysis, in which both elements are found as

corresponding. Reality by its very nature is finite, pointing to the infinite to which the finite belongs and from which it is separated.

Now this is the first part of the cosmological argument, As far as this goes, it is an existential analysis of finitude and as far as it does this, it is good and true, and the necessary condition for all philosophy of religion. It is the philosophy of religion, actually. But this idea is mixed with the philosophical – or better, metaphysical – realism which identifies universals with the degrees of being. Medieval realism, as you remember we spoke very much about it, gives power of being to the universals. In this way a hierarchy of concepts is constructed in which the unconditionally good and great, and being, is not only an ontological quality, but becomes an ontic reality, a being besides others. The highest being is that which is most universal. It must be one, otherwise another one. could be found; it must be all-embracing. In other words, the meaning or quality of the infinite suddenly becomes a higher infinite being, a highest or unconditionally good and great being.

So the argument is right as long as it is a description of the way in which man encounters reality, namely as finite, implying and being excluded from infinity. The argument is doubtful, is a conclusion which can be attacked, if it is supposed to lead to the existence of a highest being. That is what I wanted to say. Therefore I speak of the "so-called" argument – it is not an argument but an analysis – of the "so-called" existence of God; God is not a being in itself, not even the highest.

In the Proslogion Anselm himself criticizes this argument because it starts with the conditional and makes it the basis of the unconditional, Anselm is right in his criticism if we consider the second part of his argument. but he is not right with respect to the first part, namely there he doesn't base the infinite on the finite but analyzes the infinite within the finite.

But Anselm wanted more. He wanted a direct argument which doesn't need the world in order to find God. He wanted to find it in thought itself, Before thought goes outside itself to the world, it should be certain of God. Now this is really what I mean with theonomous thinking. Now how does he do this? I give you now the argument, very slowly, and you should follow it and try to understand it – probably with very little success, because it is extremely Scholastic and extremely far from our modes of thought, I give you then, later, an attempted commentary to it.

He says: "Even the fool is convinced that there is something in the intellect of which nothing greater can be thought, because as soon as he (the fool) hears this, he

understands it; and whatever is understood is in the understanding. And certainly, that of which nothing greater can be thought cannot be only in the intellect. If, namely, it were in the intellect alone, it could be thought to be in reality also, which is more. If, therefore, that of which nothing greater can be thought is in the intellect alone, that of which nothing greater can be thought is something of which something greater can be thought. But this certainly is impossible. Therefore, beyond doubt, something of which nothing greater can be thought, exists in intellect as well as in reality, And this art Thou, our Lord." Now this last sentence is remarkable because I haven't read such a sentence in any of our logical treatises in the last few hundred years, that after they have gone through the most sophisticated logical arguing, the end is "and this art Thou, our Lord." Here again is what I call "theonomy," It is not a thinking which remains autonomous in itself, but a thinking which goes theonomously into the relationship of the mind and its Divine Ground.

What does this arguing mean? I will give you a point by point analysis:

- 1) Even the fool – the fool of the Psalms, who says in his heart, "There is no God, understands the meaning of the term "God." He understands that in the term "God" the highest, the unconditional, is thought. So he has an idea in his mind of something unconditional.
- 2) Secondly, if you understand the meaning of God as something unconditional, then this understanding has the character that it is, so to speak, in the human mind.
- 3) But there is a higher form of being, namely not being only in the human mind, but being in the real world, outside of the human mind.
- 4) Since this kind of being, outside of the human mind, is higher than the mere being (thought) in the intellect, it must be attributed to the unconditional. These are the four steps in the argument. Each step in this conclusion is such that each of you can easily refute it. and the refutations were given in Anselm's time already, and then again..later. For instance he refutation is: It would be adequate for every highest thing – for instance, a perfect island – since it is more perfect to exist in reality than only in mind. Secondly, the term "being in the mind" is an ambiguous phrase which means actually being thought, being intended, being an object of man's intentionality. But "in" is metaphorical and should not be taken literally.

Now this criticism is so obvious that each of you can make it. (!) But to the first, Anselm answered that a perfect island is not a necessary thought, but the highest being, or the unconditioned, is a necessary thought. Now we come back to the question: "Is God a necessary thought?" To the second argument he could answer that the unconditional must overcome the cleavage between subjectivity and objectivity. It cannot be only in mind; the power of the meaning of the unconditional overcomes subject and object, embraces them. But now if he had answered this way, then the fallacious form of the argument is abandoned. Then the argument is not an argument for a highest being, but is an analysis of human thought. And as such the argument says: there must be a point in which the unconditional necessity of thinking and being must be identical, otherwise there could not be certainty at all, not even that amount of certainty which every skeptic always presupposes.

Now this is the Augustinian argument that God is truth, and truth is the presupposition which even he who is the skeptic acknowledges. God is identical, then, with the experience of the unconditional as true and good and beautiful. What the ontological argument really does is to analyze in human thought something unconditional which transcends subjectivity and objectivity. This is necessary because otherwise truth is impossible. Truth presupposes that the subject which knows truth and the object which is known are in some way on one and the same place.

But it is impossible – here I come to the second part of the argument – to conclude from that a separate existence. In this we cannot follow medieval realism. The so-called ontological argument is a phenomenological description of the human mind, insofar as the human mind, by necessity, points to something beyond subjectivity and objectivity, points to experience of truth. But you cannot go beyond this, and in the moment in which you do so, you are open to a devastating criticism. This is proved through the whole history of the ontological argument. The history of this argument is dependent on the attitude towards form or content. If the content of the argument is emphasized, as all great Augustinians and Franciscans until Hegel have done, they all have accepted the ontological argument. If the argumental form is emphasized, as equally great men – namely, Thomas and Kant – have done, then the argument must fall down. It is very interesting that this argument is going on all the time, even today, since Plato's period. And its most classical formulation in Christianity is that of Anselm. But it is much older and much younger; it is always there. Now how is that possible? You would say: If some of the greatest are



completely split about this argument, and you hardly can say that Thomas was much cleverer than Augustine, and Kant much cleverer than Hegel, or vice versa – they all are supreme minds and nevertheless they contradict each other – what about this situation? How can it be explained? What I here try to give is an explanation of this phenomenon, which no one can deny. It is historically evident – read the history of philosophy – that this argument is passionately accepted and passionately rejected by the greatest men. How is this possible? The reason only can be that they look at something different. Those who accept the argument look at the fact that in the human mind, in spite of all its finitude, something unconditional is present. And the description of this something unconditional is not an argument, but it is a right description. That is what actually is behind all those who affirm the ontological argument. (I myself am of their number). On the other hand, people like Thomas, Duns Scotus, Kant, reject the argument because they say it is not an argument, the conclusion is not valid. And certainly they are right. So I try to find a way out of this world-historical conflict – it has much more consequences than the seeming Scholastic form shows – by saying that these people do different things: those who are for it are for the insight that the human mind, even before it goes (outside) to its world, has in itself an experience of the unconditional. And secondly, those are right who say the second part of this argument cannot be done because this never leads to the highest being, which exists. Kant's argument that existence cannot be derived from the concept is absolutely valid against this. So one can say: Anselm's intention never has been defeated, namely, to make the certainty of God independent of any encounter with our world, and to link it entirely to our self-consciousness.

Now I would say that here the two ways that the philosophies of religion part from each other. The one looks at culture, nature and history theonomously, i. e., on the basis of an awareness of the unconditional – and I believe this is the only possible philosophy of religion.

The other one looks at all this – nature and history and the self – in terms of something which is given outside, from which through progressive analysis one might come finally to the existence of a highest being called God. This is the form which I deny and think it is hopeless and ultimately ruinous for religion. And I can state that .in a religious statement, that where God is not the prius of everything, you never can reach Him. If God is not the prius of everything, you never can reach Him. If you don't start with Him, you never can reach Him. And that is what Anselm himself felt when he saw the incompleteness of the cosmological argument.

Anselm is famous in theology for the application of his principles also to the doctrine of atonement. In his book *Cur Deus-homo* (why did God become man?), he tries to understand the rational adequacy for the substitute suffering of Christ for the work of salvation. The steps are the following. Again they are difficult and not so easy as the popular distortion of this doctrine tells you.

1) The honor of God is violated by human sin. It is necessary that out of His honor, God react in a negative way.

2) There are two possibilities of His reaction: either punishment, which would mean eternal separation from God; or satisfaction, giving God satisfaction so that He can overlook the sins, This is the way in which His mercy has decided to solve the problem.

3) Man is unable to fulfill this satisfaction because he has to do what he can

anyhow – he cannot do more – and his guilt is infinite, which makes it impossible, by its very nature, for man to solve it. Only God is able to give satisfaction to Himself.

4) Not God, but man has to give the satisfaction, because man is the sinner. Therefore somebody must do it who is both God and man, who as God can do it and who as man must do it. The God-man alone is able to do it.

5) But he doesn't reach it through what he did, because he had to do that anyhow; he had to give full obedience to God; but he did it by what he suffered, because he did not have to suffer, since he was innocent. So voluntary suffering is the work through which the Christ gives satisfaction to God.

6) Although our sin is infinite, this sacrifice – since it is given by God Himself – is an infinite sacrifice, and it makes it possible for God to give Christ what he has deserved by this sacrifice, namely, the possession of man. He himself doesn't need anything, but what he needs and will have is man, so God gives him man.

Now this idea, in these 6 steps, is legalistic, of course, is quantitative, but it has behind it a very profound meaning, namely, that sin has produced a tension in God Himself. And this tension one feels. Anselm's theory became so popular because everybody felt that it is not simple for God to forgive sins, as it is not simple for us to accept ourselves – it is the most difficult thing – and only in the act of suffering, of self-negation, is it possible at all. And that was the power of this doctrine and still is;

in every Lenten service, in our Week of Passion this week, we hear of the "atoning work" of Christ. The Church never has dogmatized Anselm; cleverly it restricted itself from doing so, because there is no absolute theory of atonement. As we shall see, Abelard had another one, and others did also, e. g., Origen. The Church has not decided.

But the Church obviously liked Anselm's theory most, probably because it felt it has the deepest psychological roots, namely the feeling that a price must be paid if one has become guilty; that we cannot pay it, but that God must pay it. But now the question was: How can man participate? And to this the juristic mind of Anselm had no answer. Here Thomas came in and said: It is the mystical union between head and members, between Christ and the Church, which makes us participate in all the steps which have been (made) by Jesus himself.

Now this is Anselm. Tomorrow, the last hour before Easter, we deal with Abelard -- and two others -- Abelard being Anselm's great counterpart.

## Lecture 23: Abelard. Bernard of Clairvaux. Mysticism.

We discussed Anselm of Canterbury as a typically theonomous thinker, theonomous in the sense that he does not crush reason by heteronomous authority, that he does not leave it empty, unproductive, but filled with the Divine substance as it is given with revelation, tradition and authority. We can say Anselm represents, so to speak, the more objective pole in the thinking of the Middle Ages, objective in the sense that the tradition is the given foundation, which does not exclude a very personal kind of thinking and searching. On the other hand, we have a man who represents the opposite, namely the subjective side, if subjective does not mean willful but means taking into the personal life, as subjective reality. It is a very bad thing that the words "objective" vs. "subjective" have become so undefined and distorted in all respects. This shouldn't be. And if you hear about them, don't react (so as to regard) objective as something which is true and real, and subjective something willful. This is often the reaction, but it is entirely wrong. "Objective" here means the reality of the given substance of Bible, tradition and authority. "Subjective" here means taking into the personal life, as something which is discussed and experienced.

Now when I come to Abelard, the philosopher and theologian of Paris, in the 12th century, who lived in the shadow of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. . . . When we look at him we can say the subjectivity is visible in the following points which characterize his spiritual attitude and character:

1) He was enthusiastic about dialectical thinking, dialectics meaning showing the "yes" and "no" in everything. He was full of contempt for those who accept the mysteries of the faith without understanding what the words mean in which these mysteries are expressed. He, as all medieval people, did not want to derive the mysteries from reason; certainly not. But he wanted to make them understandable for reason. Of course, there is always the danger that the mystery is emptied, that the situation is turned around, but this danger is the danger of every kind of thinking: thinking destroys the immediacy of life, wherever it starts, and this cannot be helped. The question is whether a higher immediacy can be reestablished. This is also true of these theological lectures which you hear here. To hear them means being endangered, and this is the reason why some of the more fundamentalistic people would be very much afraid if their future theologians

would be educated in a place like Union Seminary, which likes – as Abelard did – dialectical thinking, and shows everywhere the “yes” and “no.” But if you don’t risk this danger, then your faith never can be a real power.

2) Abelard represents the type of jurisprudential thinking which was introduced into the occidental Christian world by Tertullian. He was, so to speak, the lawyer who defends the right of the tradition in showing that the contradictions in the traditional material – which no one can deny – can be solved. In doing so he supported the Church, but of course dialectics which have the power to defend have also the power to attack. And this was the danger in dialectics which some of the traditional theologians sensed, even before the danger became actual. This is again a reason why some more or less orthodox theology doesn’t like apologetics, because the same means with which you defend Christianity can be used to attack it.

3) He was a person of strong self-reflection, and this was almost a new event in this period which had a very objective character, in the sense of being related to the contents and not to oneself. In Abelard it is not a mere commitment to truth or good, but it was at the same time a reflection about his being committed. Now you know all this; you have a feeling of repentance; and you reflect about having this feeling. You have an experience of faith, and you reflect about this experience. This is something modern, which first appears in Abelard. From this we understand the famous book he wrote, “*Historia calamitatum*” (“History of my Misfortunes”). This is autobiography. The title is, of course, in the line of Augustine and his *Confessions*, but the importance is that the self-analysis is not made in the face of God – as in Augustine – and always related to God; rather, the self-analysis is done in relation to himself, in relation to what he has experienced. Here the title itself reveals the danger, a danger in which we all live, as modern men. When Augustine speaks of confessions, then he relates himself to God, in looking at himself. If you speak of “misfortunes,” of “calamities,” then there’s a resentful feeling left, and resentment is always a sign of subjectivity.

This is supported by his tremendous ambition; by his lack of acknowledgment of others, for instance his teachers; by his continuous attacks on authorities; and by his personal ambition. All this was a very strong subjective character.

4) The subjectivity is visible in the realm of feeling. We can even say that he belongs to those who have discovered that realm as a special realm. This is expressed in his romance with Heloise, which has all the tragedy and all the greatness of an event, which opens up all romantic forms of romantic love, but which is much earlier than

its development in the romantic period. It is the discovery of eros against two things which prevailed before: on the one side, paternalistic authority, and on the other, simple sexuality, which has nothing to do with the personal relationship but which is allowed and limited by the Church and is used as an element in the paternalistic family. Instead of this, we have in the romance of Abelard and Heloise a relationship in which the sexual and the spiritual are united. But again, this was something new and dangerous in a period in which all these things stood under the principle of education and stratification of barbaric tribes which had just received the Christian Gospel. It was, so to speak, too early, as was so much in Abelard.

All this is present in his book with the characteristic title, "Sic et non" ("Yes and No"). I said already in my survey that this is also older than Abelard. It comes from the canonistic literature (the sacred law literature) from ecclesiastical jurisprudence, in which the papal law scholars tried to harmonize the decrees of the different popes and synods. There was a practical yes-and-no problem because the pope and his advisors had to make decisions. They wanted to make these decisions on the basis of tradition, in this case, the law tradition. So the law had to be harmonized. But a part of the canones is the dogmatic decisions of the popes and synods, and so the dogmatic decisions had the same problem in it, sic et non, yes and no. When Abelard wrote this book and tried to harmonize the doctrines, he didn't do it in order to show some dogmatic differences, in order to provoke doubt or skepticism. On the contrary, he wanted to show that in the tradition a unity is maintained which can be proved by methods of harmonization. This was also accepted by the Church authorities because they needed it. And so all Scholasticism accepted the yes-and-no method of Abelard. They asked questions, they put opposing views against the answers, and discussed the opposing views, finally coming to a decision. The whole Scholastic theology is a sic et non theology, first expressed by Abelard. Let us look a little to see how this was applied.

The first step is the attempt to deal with the texts of the Fathers, the synods, the decrees, and the Bible, historically. One must ask the question whether these texts are authentic. Further, one must show in which historical situation and under which psychological conditions these texts were written. Changes have to be examined. The sphere and the configuration in which these changes take place in the same author, must be inquired into and stated. Of all this has been done, then something happens which you yourselves can control easily, namely, what seemed to be contradictions are not contradictions at all, but are only different forms in which the same idea is expressed. Very often in the history of thought – this is

something which you should take with you – it happens that contradictory statements are only contradictory if you take them as isolated statements out of the gestalt, the structure to which they belong, and in which, seemingly contradictory, they may actually say one and the same thing. It is one of the miserable things in so many discussions that we don't follow this method of Abelard, first to show the whole structure in which a statement appears. I often am asked: Dr. Niebuhr says this in one book, and you say this. – This may be -- Very often when I inquire into it, I find it is only the contextual difference which makes it seem to be a contradiction at all.

2) The second step is the elaboration of the literal meaning of a word, the – philological task, after the historical task. This may lead to the discovery of different senses of a word, even in the same writer. It is as if he lived in 1953, where in all my lectures I continuously discover that the semantic problem is predominant in our situation, that if we use a word like "faith" or "Son of God" or any word in theology, it has at least half a dozen meanings and probably as many meanings as people who sit in this room, and each of them has a little bit of nuance in terms of a different meaning. And then one fights with each other, each in a different concept. So it is actually not a real fight, but a talking beside each other. This is what Abelard wanted to avoid – a very reasonable demand.

Now when we come to the semantics which he suggests, and ask ourselves: Is there a danger in this method? or, more largely speaking, to what degree can logical calculus, semantic purification and reduction, be applied to contents such as that of the Christian message? – then I would say there is no absolute possibility of applying it because if we come to the important things of life, to the things which are existential, every word has an edge which makes it what it is, which gives it its color and power, and which, if you take it away, leaves a bone, but not a bone with flesh and skin – it leaves a conceptual bone. And that is why I am not so convinced of criticisms by logical positivists, in spite of my great semantic interest, because I believe that if they have their complete way, all words in a realm like theology or philosophical metaphysics or ontology or art theory or history, would lose their full meaning and would be reduced to mathematical signs through which everything escapes, which is the real power and meaning of such words. So be very careful to use every word in the same sense in your discussions, but don't be horrified or afraid or shaken if logical positivism shows you that you don't use a word in terms of a mathematical sign.

3) The application of the authority of the Bible as the ultimate criterion is the next step. This sounds very Protestant, as so much biblicism in the Middle Ages sounds very Protestant, but it is not very Protestant. It was not a new experience with the Bible, out of which Abelard spoke – as it was with Luther. It was the application of the Bible as a law, so to speak as the ultimate legal judge. This is something quite different from the Protestant interpretation of the Bible as the place where the message of justification can be found.

The legal relationship to the tradition is different from the creative traditionalism of Anselm. Anselm, although he was less dialectical than Abelard, was more creative and even more courageous, and nevertheless keener (about) the substance of the tradition.

Some of Abelard's special doctrines: He shows subjectivity in all his doctrines, ethical and theological. Connected with the subjective reason is his doctrine of ethical autonomy. He is a predecessor of Kant, in spite of the tremendous difference in time and situation. He first teaches that it is not an act in itself that is good or bad, but the intention makes it good or bad. As Kant expressed the same idea, nothing is good except a good will. And this man of the 12th century expresses the same idea. The work itself is indifferent; only the intention is decisive.. "In the intention consists the merit." Therefore not nature itself, not even the desire itself makes us sinful, but the intention, the will. Not the contents of a moral system are important, but the conscience which follows or does not follow these contents. The contents of the moral system are always questionable in their application to a concrete thing. You never can take them absolute. But your conscience must guide you. The perfect good, of course, is if the objective norm and the subjective intention correspond; if our conscience shows us what is actually right. But this is very often not the case. And if it is not the case, it is better that we follow our conscience, even if it is objectively wrong. He says: "There is no sin except against conscience." Now in one way even Thomas Aquinas accepted this idea. Aquinas said: "If a superior in my order, to whom I have sworn obedience, asks me to do something which is against my conscience, I shall not do it, although I am obliged to keep obedience to him". -- The conscience was regarded as ultimate judge, even if it is objectively erroneous. The Protestants, and Kant, were preceded in these formulas, which, at that time, couldn't work because the educational element is neglected by Abelard. If you tell these uneducated masses that they should follow their conscience, and you don't give them objective norms with sufficient strictness, you let them loose, and they may go astray. This means that in this respect, as in so



many others, Abelard was an anticipation of something which later became actual. He had much of 18th century thinking in France.

In the same way he discussed the theological problems.

1) He denies the idea that in Adam all have sinned. Not sensuality is sin, but acts of will. Without an agreement of the will, no sin; and since we didn't agree with our will when Adam sinned, it is not sin for us. Here you see how. the subjectivity, exactly as in the 18th century, dissolves first of all from the very beginning the doctrine of original sin, because this doctrine shows the tragic side of sin, the objective and not the personal, subjective side, the agreement of will.

2) In Christology, he emphasizes the human activity in Christ, and denies radically that Christ is, so to speak, a transformed God or Logos or higher Divine being. For him the personal activity of Christ is decisive, and not His ontological coming from God.

3) In the idea of salvation, he is best known to Protestants and very often quoted. In the doctrine of atonement, as we have seen yesterday, Anselm makes a deal between God and Christ, out of the situation which is produced by human sin. He describes atonement in quantitative terms of satisfaction. This is not the idea of Abelard. But it is the love of God which is visible in the cross of Christ, which produces our love. It is not an objective mechanism between transcendent powers which enables God to forgive, as it is in Anselm, but it is the subjective act of Divine love which provokes our subjective act of loving Him. Salvation is man's ethical response to the forgiving act of the Divine love -- ethical in the sense of personal. Now this has produced a whole type of the doctrine of atonement, which is always called the Abelardian type, the type in which God forgives because He loves; the mechanism of atonement through the substitute suffering, the problems of satisfaction, etc., are simply ruled out. It is a doctrine of atonement in the personal center, while in Anselm it is a doctrine of atonement in a mythological realm in which God and Christ trade with each other -- Christ sacrifices something and gets back something from God in return, namely the human individuals, with whom He is united. In all these things Abelard is a pre-Protestant and pre-autonomous type. It is subjectivity in the sense of reason and centered personality. But Kant could not have appeared in the 12th century; he could only appear in the 18th century and become the all-decisive philosophical turning point. Therefore many things of Abelard were rejected. He was too early for the educational situation in which the Church

found itself. For instance, when you tell somebody whom you want to educate that the act of confession is only act of confession (and that means repentance) if it comes from love towards God and not from fear, then the whole educational effect of the preaching of the law is taken away. Abelard is just the opposite of an educational theologian. He doesn't think in terms of what is good for the people, but in terms of what is ultimately true, and what is good for those who are autonomous. For this reason some of his doctrines were rejected, and he was not received completely, in his time. But nevertheless he became one of the most influential people in the development towards Scholasticism, because of the cleverness and greatness of the method he produced, the method of sic et non.

I said he was rejected. Who were the people who rejected him? This brings me to another great man of the same century:

Bernard of Clairvaux

Anselm was fighting with Bernard about the possibility of applying dialectics to Christian contents. Bernard is the most representative of a Christianized, or "baptized," mysticism. He was, as I said, the foe of Abelard, but he was not only the foe; he brought Abelard to a council which rejected him. But when we call him the adversary of Abelard, this is only half true because he also was fighting for the subjective side, namely subjectivity in terms of mystical experience. He belonged to those who wanted to make the objective Christian doctrines, the decisions of the Fathers and the council; a matter of personal adaptation. But the difference was that while Abelard did this in terms of reason, Bernard did it in terms of mystical experience. This experience is based on faith – of course, every medieval theologian would say this – and faith is described as an anticipation of will. This is Augustinian voluntarism which becomes visible here in Bernard as well as in the whole Franciscan school later on. Faith is something daring, is something free. You anticipate something which can become real for you only by full experience. Certainty is not given in the act of faith; it is a daring anticipation of a state to which you may come. Faith is created by the Divine Spirit, and the following experience confirms it.

But more important and more effective than these ideas which foreshadow the Franciscan school and much of medieval thinking about faith, is the mysticism of Bernard of Clairvaux. Here I come to a problem which is important and has been dealt with directly in this room two years ago when we had a seminar on Christian mysticism, and put it under the question, "Can mysticism be baptized?" I. e., can it

be Christian? is that possible? Mysticism is much older than Christianity, it is much more universal than Christianity. What about the relation of Christianity to mysticism? Now in this seminar we came to the final answer that it can be baptized if it is made a concrete

Christ-mysticism – in a very similar way as it is in Paul – a participation in Christ as Spirit. And now this is just what Bernard of Clairvaux did. He is really the baptizing father in the development of Christian mysticism. This is his importance. And whenever you are attacked, and some Barthians tell you that Christianity and mysticism are two different things; you are either a Christian or a mystic, and the attempt of almost 2000 years to baptize mysticism is wrong – then you must answer that perhaps the most important figure in whom mysticism is expressed is Bernard, and this is the mysticism of love, and only if you have a mysticism of love can you have Christian mysticism.

Mysticism has two contents in Bernard: first, the picture of Jesus as it is given in the Biblical report, and in which the Divine is transparent. It is the participation in the humility and not an ethical command, although this follows out of it. It is the reality of God in Jesus, in which we participate. The mystical following of Jesus is participating in Him. And you never should forget, when you read about Francis of Assisi and Thomas a Kempis, that when they tried to follow Jesus, this was not the way in which a Jew follows Moses; it was not another law, but it was meant as a participation in the meaning of what Jesus is. In this way the mystics of the Middle Ages overcame a legal interpretation of the obedience to Christ. We cannot really follow Him except we participate in Him mystically. But this participation is not static, it's dynamic. It's not legal, but it is participation. This concrete, active mysticism of love to Christ is the presupposition of the second part of mysticism in Bernard of Clairvaux, the abstract mysticism, "abstract" meaning abstracting from anything concrete, the mysticism of the abyss of the Divine. This side of the mystical experience is that which Christian mysticism has in common with all other forms of mysticism. There are three steps, according to Bernard:

1) Consideration (you look at things from outside; they remain objects for your subjectivity.)

2) Contemplation (participating in the "temple," (going into the holiness of the holy..)

3) Excelsum (going outside of oneself, an attitude which exceeds the normal existence, in which man is driven beyond himself without losing himself. It is also described as raptus, being grasped.

In the third stage, man goes over into the Divinity, like a drop of wine which falls into a glass of wine. The substance remains, but the form of the individual drop is dissolved into the all-embracing Divine form. You don't lose your identity, but your identity is a part of the Divine reality into which you fall.

Now here we have two forms of mysticism which must always be distinguished: concrete mysticism, which is mysticism of love and participating in the Savior-God; abstract mysticism, or transcending mysticism, which goes beyond everything finite to the ultimate ground of everything that is.

When we look at these two forms, then we can say that at least for this life, Bernard's mysticism is in the Christian (tradition). When we ask about the second type, you can say: Now this makes an eternity love impossible. – But we must also add that Paul said something similar when he said that God will be all in all. This means that when we come to the ultimate we cannot simply think in terms of separated individuals, although we still must think in terms of love, and this is not an easy task. In any case the decisive thing is that we now have one man in which more is involved than in Pseudo-Dionysius, namely, it is concrete mysticism, Christ mysticism, love mysticism. But it is still mysticism, because it is participation, and participation always means partly participation

and partly identification.

Now I come to the end of this lecture on the early Middle Ages, to another man, Hugh of St. Victor. He was the most influential theologian of the 12th century. He was already the fulfiller of systematic thinking, to an extent in which neither Anselm nor Bernard nor Abelard were fulfillers. This man wrote a book, "On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith." This brings us back to what I said about the sacramental character of the medieval Church. The term "sacrament" in his book is used in the broadest sense – everything in which the Divine becomes visible; I. e. all works of God are sacraments. If this is the case, he can distinguish two groups of the works of God. He calls them the opera conditionis, the works of condition, and the opera reparationis, the works of reparation. This gives you a deep insight into medieval life. All things are visible embodiments of the invisible ground behind them. Nevertheless this does not lead to – what you are also much afraid of – a

pantheistic form of theology, because although all works of God are sacraments, they are concentrated into seven sacraments. And if not only bodily realities, but also activities of God are called sacraments, then you see the full dynamism of this idea of sacrament.

So we have here an interpretation of the world in a dynamic sacramental form, centered around the seven sacraments of the Church, and there again centered around Mass and penance. This is the medieval situation which in people like Hugh of St. Victor already found a rather consistent and sharp expression. Now I see you after Easter again. I wish you a good Easter.

## **Lecture 24: Thirteenth Century: Joachim di Fiore, Franciscan theology, Dominic.**

The last lecture dealt with Hugh of St. Victor and the sacramental interpretation of reality which we have found in him. I want to give you now a sacramental interpretation of history which has become extremely influential upon the Middle Ages and on modern thinking, namely the theology of Joachim di Fiore – (a monastery in Calabria, southern Italy, where Joachim was the abbe. )

He wrote a group of books in which he developed a philosophy of history which has become the alternative to the Augustinian interpretation of history and was the background for most revolutionary movements in the Middle Ages and in modern times, while Augustine's interpretation of history was the basis for most conservative movements during the same time. So what I want to do is to confront the Joachimistic interpretation of history with the Augustinian.

About the Augustinian I told you already that it puts the reign of Christ, the so-called thousand-years, in the present time and identifies the reign of Christ with the control of this period by the hierarchy and its Divine graces. The sacramental power of the hierarchy makes it the immediate medium of Christ, so that the thousand years, the monarchy of Christ, is the monarchy of the Church. Since this, according to Daniel, is the last period, there is no future any more, the thousand years are present, we live in them, and everything critical can be critical only about the mixed body of the Church, but not about the foundation of the Church, which is final. You can imagine that in this way Augustine removed the threat of millenarianism – the doctrine of-the thousand years – which still lay ahead, and which then was used to criticize the Church and the hierarchy.

Joachim renewed the idea of the thousand years of Christ laying still ahead. He speaks in a good philosophy-of-history-way about the three dispensations which go on in history and are characterized by historical figures. The first period goes from Adam to John the Baptist, or the Christ – it is the age of the Father. But this age is overcome by the very fact of the Christ. Then there is the 2nd period which goes from King Uzziah (Isaiah 6) to the year 1260. These years are produced by the fact that according to the genealogies of the Old Testament, this age embraces 42 generations. Then the 3rd dispensation is that of Benedict in the 5th century after

Christ, where Western monasticism starts, and is called the age of the Holy Spirit. It has 21 generations after Christ, which leads to the year 1260.

This seems to be very artificial. The ages overlap, The 2nd age is identical with the first, in the years from King Uzziah to the birth of Christ, or to John the Baptist. And the 2nd is overlapped by the third in the birth from St. Benedict to 1260. Now what is this overlapping about? It is a very profound insight into historical developments. History, historical periods, never start sharply but always develop in terms of overlapping. There is no "the end of the Gothic period and the beginning of the Renaissance." There is no "end of the Renaissance" and "the beginning of the Baroque." There is no "end of the baroque" and "beginning of the Rococo," etc. etc. Every new period is conceived and born in the womb of the former one. This is an insight of which no one was more aware than Karl Marx when he made his interpretation of history and described how every new period was prepared in the womb of the preceding period – for instance, the socialist period in the womb of the bourgeois period, and that in the womb of the late feudal period. It is

like birth: there is a certain period in which mother and' child are in one and the same body, and here in one and the same period. This insight is expressed in the idea of overlapping. The germs of the new period are earlier than what he called fructificatio (fructification), mature realization. A period is not mature when its first beginnings are visible. So we have this trinitarian scheme applied to history, but in such a way that the following period always is present for a certain time in the former period. Christ in this way is one moment in the three periods of history, and history goes beyond Him. It is the same problem which we have in the Fourth Gospel, which is discussed there, whether the Spirit goes beyond the Christ or not. The Fourth Gospel decides in a double way: it decides partly for going beyond the Christ – many things cannot be said now, but the Spirit will come and help you; and on the other hand: the spirit does not take it from its own; it says what is already present in the 2nd period, in the period of the Son, in Jesus, according to the Fourth Gospel.

These ideas about the meaning of historical development must be taken very seriously. Don't reject the whole thing because of these Old Testament names, which are certainly arbitrary. The arbitrariness of every historical periodization is known to every historian.

Every historian will tell you that the period which you call "Renaissance" was "Renaissance" only for a few people – for some artists, scholars, and politicians,

and, following, some other people in England, Holland, Germany, etc. But the masses of the people lived still in a period which was of hundreds of years ago. And so it is always. You never can say about a historical period that it is one hundred per cent that of which you say it is.

What are the characteristics of these stages? The first stage is, as Joachim knew – being a profound observer, as (were) all the others also – sociologically to be determined. It is a state in which marriage is the decisive sociological form where, with respect to economy, the need to work and servitude (slavery, feudalism, etc.) are decisive, and which therefore can be also identified religiously with the period of the law. You see it is a very rich assembly of categories which he uses in order to describe these periods.

In the second period it is the clergy and the organized Church which is decisive. Here we have the graces, I. e., the sacramental reality which makes the law unnecessary, and in accepting the graces demands faith instead of good works. It is not an age of autonomy, but the age in which the clergy represent for everybody the presence of the Divine.

The third period is monasticism, where the monastic ideal will grasp mankind, and the production of new generations will cease. Therefore this is by necessity the last period. It has higher graces given by the Holy Spirit than the sacramental graces of the end period, and higher, of course, than the law of the first period.

While the 2nd period is prepared already in Judaism—where there are some sacramental there are some sacramental graces – the 3rd period is prepared in Church history, with the foundation in monasticism. The inner part of this period is freedom, I. e., autonomy, not subjected any more to state or Church authorities. The attitude is contemplation instead of work, and love instead of law.

If we look at this we can observe that it is sociological, but if sociology is not the "cause" of: every thing, as it is in Marxism, but it is a necessary condition. It is connected with the other attitudes. So we have here an early sociological understanding of the different periods of history. At the same time we have the religious understanding, which shows the difference of work, of grace – accepted by faith – --and of autonomous freedom, in contemplation and love. The scheme is trinitarian, I. e., the dynamic element, which is always implied in trinitarian thinking. has become horizontal. It has been transferred to the historical movement. It is the historization of the trinitarian idea: Father, Son and Spirit have



different functions in history. Of course, all three are always present – God cannot be divided – but they are present with a different emphasis.

This means that something is still ahead. The perfect society, the monastic society, still will come, and, measured by it, not only the Old Testament society but also the New Testament society, the Church, has to be criticized.

Another element is in it, namely that truth is not absolute, but is valid for its time – *bonum et necessarium in suo tempore* – the good and necessary according to its time.

This is dynamic truth. It is the idea of a truth which changes in history, according to the general situation.

The early Church had to apply this principle always toward the Old Testament. The truth of the Old Testament is different from that of the New, nevertheless the Old Testament is also the Divinely inspired Word of God. What to do about it? So one spoke about dispensations, or covenants, or different periods. In any case, one used the idea of the *kairos*, of the educational time, of the time which is different, and, accordingly the truth is different. This is now put against the absolutism of the Catholic Church which had developed, and which identifies its own being with the last period of history, I. e., with the ultimate truth. There is a higher truth than that of the Church, namely the truth of the Spirit.

From this follows that the Church is relative. It is *inter utrumque*, between both the period of the Father and the period of the Spirit. Its shortcomings are not only shortcomings by distortion, but also by its relative validity. The Church is relativized in this scheme. Only the 3rd period is absolute, and this 3rd period is not authoritarian any more: it is autonomous. Every individual has the Divine Spirit by himself. This means that the ideal for Christianity lies in the future and not in the past. He calls it *intellectus spiritualis* and not *litalis*, I. e., a spiritually formed intellect and not an intellect dependent on laws of literalism.

From this follows that in the future the hierarchy will come to an end and the sacraments will come to an end. They are not needed any more because everything is spiritually directly related to God, and the authoritarian intervention is not needed.

Joachim speaks of a *papa angelico*, an angelic pope – which is more a principle than a man. It is a pope who is not pope any more but only represents the presence of the

Spirit without authority. The hierarchy will be transformed into monasticism and the lay world will be transformed into monasticism, and then the last period will have been reached. In this third stage there will be perfection (*perfectio*), contemplation, liberty, Spirit. They will be in history. For Augustine the final end is only transcended; nothing new will happen in history any more. For Joachim the new is in history. He also calls it the "eternal Gospel," and the eternal Gospel is not a book – the Gospel is the presence of the Divine Spirit in every individual, according to the prophecy of Joel – which is often used in this context. It is a simple *intuitus veritatis*, a simple intuition of truth which all can have without intermediate authority.

Freedom means the authority of the Divine Spirit in the individual. It is not rationalizing autonomy, but it is theonomy, theonomy which is filled with the presence of the Divine Spirit.

History produces freedom in the course of its progress. So it is also a progressivistic idea: the goal is ahead.

Now this of course was extremely revolutionary, and we understand that Thomas Aquinas fought against it in the name of the Church. The Church has no classical period ahead but has it in the past. The classical period of the Church is the Apostolic period. The Church is based on history, history has brought the Church about, but the Church is itself/ not in history. The Church is beyond history because it is at the end of history.

All these ideas are, as you can see, extremely important, and they are important because in them something is present which was the dynamic, revolutionary, explosive power in the medieval as well as in the modern world. The extreme Franciscans used his prophecies and applied it to their own order, and from there they revolted against the Church. Many sectarian movements, the sects of the Reformation on which much American life is dependent, were indirectly and directly dependent on Joachim di Fiore. The Enlightened philosophers who spoke about a third period in history in which everybody will be taught directly by the inner light – the light of reason – are dependent on Joachim. The socialist movement is dependent on the same idea when in the classless society everybody will be directly responsible to the ultimate principles. Now I don't mean that all these peoples knew exactly the name and the ideas of Joachim, but there is a tradition of revolution in Western Europe which goes on and on and in which fundamental ideas, first appearing in Joachim, are present and are changing reality.

And much of American utopianism must be understood in the light of the same movement in the West. We have, as far as I know, nothing equal – except in Christianity and perhaps Judaism – in the Eastern religions, because by definition they are non-historical religions. And here in this man a new insight into the dialectics of history appeared.

His influence was mediated by the radical Franciscan monks. I now come to the Franciscan theology, and this means, to the thirteenth century. Everything I said up to now belongs to the early Middle Ages. All these men – Abelard, Hugh of St. Victor, Anselm, Joachim, et al-, are of the 11th and 12th centuries. The 13th is the highest point of the Middle Ages, in which the whole destiny of the Western world was decided in a very definite way. I have not used one name, a man who also belongs to the 12th century, and on whom all Scholastics are partly dependent: Peter the Lombard (Petrus Lombardus.) He is not as original as the others, but he represents the systematic didactic type of the Middle Ages. He wrote four books of "sentences," the sayings of the Fathers about theological problems – cf. in connection with Abelard. He organized the sayings of the Fathers into four books which became the textbook of the whole Middle Ages, if there ever was a textbook! Every great Scholastic started by writing a commentary on Lombard's four books of sentences. In this sense it has become the classical schoolbook of Scholasticism.

The 13th century can be described theologically in three steps, represented by three names: Bonaventura, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus. But there are others between them and I will mention them occasionally.

Duns Scotus was, as scholar, the greatest of all, but he was also the point in which new developments started on which all of us are dependent in our modern world.

Thomas is called the classical theologian of the Roman church – and certainly he is, and has been reestablished as such again a few years ago by the Pope

Bonaventura represents the spirit of Augustine and St. Francis, in his being, in his mysticism, and in his theology.

So these three names must be known by all of you.

Now what are the presuppositions of the 13th century which made it the central and high point of the Middle Ages? First I want to mention the Crusades, not because of their political and military importance but because they produced the encounter of two highly developed cultures – besides Christianity – namely, the

original Jewish and the Islamic cultures. Perhaps one could say a third culture was encountered at that time, namely the old Greek, the classical culture, which through the mediation of the Arabian theologians, brought streams of ancient traditions into the medieval world.

The fact of an encounter with somebody else, if it is serious enough, always includes a kind of self-reflection. Only if you encounter somebody else are you able to reflect about yourselves. As long as you go ahead without a resistance, you are never forced to look back at yourselves. But if you encounter resistance, you reflect. And that is what Christianity had to do. In a much more radical way, it reflected about itself. This was the first part.

The second was the appearance of the complete Aristotle, his genuine writings, and with him the appearance of a scientific philosophical system which was methodologically superior to the Augustinian tradition.

Thirdly, there was the rise of a new type of monastic orders: preaching and mendicant orders, with their intensification and popularization of the religious substance. They produced a world-wide organization through all countries, and combated with each other theologically, and since they were not nationally provincial, they could compete on a world-wide scale and produce theological systems of the highest significance, in difference and in conflict with each other. Since the 13th century these two orders became the bearers of the theological process. They used Aristotle, but they used him differently. They used the new knowledge of Judaism and Islam, but they used it differently.

This leads me to a description of the two types which were developed by these orders: The Franciscan and the Dominican types. They were dependent on two personalities: St. Francis of Assisi and Dominic. Francis continues the monasticism of Augustine and, Bernard of Clairvaux. Like them he emphasizes personal experience, but he brings some very modern elements into the Franciscan tradition. He brings in the idea of the active in contrast to the contemplative life. This was always nearer to the Western mind which from the very beginning was more half-historical than the East. But he enlarged this idea by applying it to all beings. Not only human hierarchical orders, but also sun and stars and animals and plants belong to the power of the Divine life; and he tries to produce on this basis a new relationship to nature. In order to understand him the best thing would be that you look at the pictures of Giotto. Giotto painted almost nothing else except the story of St. Francis, the new Holy Legend. So he became the father of the

Renaissance. By his feeling of fraternity with all beings, he opened up nature for religion. He opened up nature with respect to its ground of being which is the same as it is in man.

At the same time he introduced another important idea, namely the idea that the lay people must be brought into the circle of the holy. In the sacramental system the clergy and the monks were the real representatives, while the laymen were only passive. Now he wanted to bring them into the circle and he did this by creating the so-called "third order" of St. Francis, the *tertiarii*. The first is the male order, the monks; the second is the corresponding female order, the nuns; the third is the laymen who remain laymen and remain married, but subject themselves to some of the principles of the monastic orders, and are directed by members of these orders.

But all this, St. Francis subjected to the authority of the Pope. The famous Giotto picture in which the greatest pope, Innocent III, and the greatest saint of the Roman church met in 1250, depicts a classical moment in world history. Nevertheless all this was dangerous for the hierarchical system. And the danger became actual first in the revolution of the Franciscan radicals who tried to unite St. Francis and Joachim di Fiore, and who became the prototypes of many later anti-ecclesiastical and anti-religious revolutions. It was also dangerous because of the emphasis on the lay principle, because this lay principle could mean the end of the absolute authority of the hierarchy. And it was dangerous because/the new relationship to nature and the vision of the Divine ground in it, which in the long run was able to undermine the Catholic supernaturalism.

Now all this was Francis. Generally speaking, he belongs to the Augustinian-Anselmian-Bernardian tradition of the mystical union of Christianity with the elements of culture and nature.

In contrast to Francis, we have no such original personality in St. Dominic. Instead we have a special task, which was the task of a special person; namely the task of preaching to the people - -in this they did the same thing as the Franciscans - and of defending the faith. This was something new - defending either by mediation or by conversion or by persecution, I. e., either in terms of apologetic or in terms of missions or in terms of Church power. In all three ways they became the order of the Inquisition and of the Counter-Reformation later on, until the Jesuits took over. Therefore they produced the classical system of mediation, of apologetic theology - namely, Thomas Aquinas - and they produced the greatest preachers, among them Meister Eckhardt. More than any other school, they brought Aristotle to the West.

Their instrument was the intellect, even in their mysticism, while the Franciscan-Augustinian tradition emphasized more the will. Finally, the will of the Franciscans broke down the intellect of the Dominicans and opened the way for Duns Scotus, Occam, and the nominalists.

Now this was the spiritual background for the tremendous development of the 13th century. Without permanent reference to these movements, the theology of this period cannot be understood. And if we think especially of Thomas Aquinas, then we must understand him as a mediator. He has understood, as nobody else, the mediating function of theology. In Germany we had the term *Vermittlungstheologen* – this was a term despisingly applied to many of the 19th century. I tried to defend them by saying that all theology is a mediation, namely the mediation of the message, which is given in the Gospel, with the categories of the understanding as we have them in every period of history and of Church history. In this sense theology is and always will remain mediation.

The dynamics of the high Middle Ages are determined by the conflict between Augustine and Aristotle, or between the Franciscans who were Augustinians and the Dominicans who were Aristotelian. But don't take this too exclusively. Very often I warn you about making too sharp divisions. And here again all medieval theologians were Augustinian in substance. And all of them since the 13th century were Aristotelians with respect to the use of their philosophical categories. In this sense the duality is limited. But in another sense, in the sense of an emphasis, it is a very important division, a division which is effective in all our philosophy of religion today, even in the most modern ones, who would not even know they do things which these old "primitives" of the 13th century have done – and I don't believe they are as primitive as most philosophers of today are, but they are considered to be such.

## Lecture 25: Medieval Theology. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus.

We must now go into the main problems of the medieval development. I just finished yesterday by saying that the conflict between Aristotle and Augustine characterizes the medieval situation. Let me first make clear what Aristotle means for the Middle Ages in the moment in which he was discovered in the beginning of the 13th century, with the help of the Arabic philosophers.

1) Aristotle's logic was always known, but this was used as a tool and didn't influence the content of theology directly. When the whole work of Aristotle was rediscovered, it was a complete system in which all realms of life were discussed – observations about nature, about politics, about ethics, an independent secular world-view, including a system of values and meanings. The question was: How could a world which was educated in the Augustinian ecclesiastical tradition deal with this secular system of ideas and meanings? This was the first thing Aristotle meant. It is a little as though theology for centuries asked the question: How can the scientific revolution which has been going on since the 17th century be mediated with the Christian tradition? It was a similar problem for the Middle Ages.

2) Aristotle gave basic metaphysical categories, such as form and matter, actuality and potentiality. He gave a new doctrine of matter, of the relationship of God and the world, and all this on a basis of an ontological analysis of reality.

3) This was perhaps the most important point: He gave a new approach to knowledge. The soul has to receive impressions from the external world. Experience is always the beginning, while in the Augustinian tradition immediate intuition was the beginning. The Augustinians were, so to speak, in the Divine center and judged the world from there. The Aristotelians looked at the world and concluded to the Divine center.

The conclusion, therefore, with which I want to deal first is the question of knowledge. The whole movement of Augustinianism and Aristotelianism must be understood from here. The question was: Is our knowledge a participation in the Divine knowledge of the world and of Himself, or must we, in the opposite way, recognize God by approaching the world from outside? Is God the last or the first in our knowledge? The Augustinians answered: the knowledge of God precedes any

other knowledge, it is the first one, we must start with it. In ourselves we have the principles of truth. God is the presupposition even of the question of God, as He is the presupposition of every question for truth. He is, says Bonaventura, the Franciscan Augustinian leader of that time, in the 13th century, "most truly present to the soul and immediately knowable." The principles of truth are the Divine or the eternal light within us. We start with them. We start with our knowledge of God and we go from there to the world, using the principles of the Divine light which are in us. This Divine light or these principles are the universal categories, especially the so-called "transcendentia" those things which transcend everything special and given: being, the true, the good, the one: these are ultimate concepts; we have immediate knowledge of them, and this knowledge is the Divine light in our soul. Only on the basis of this immediate knowledge about the ultimate principles of reality can we find truth in the empirical world. In every act of knowledge these principles are present. Whenever we say "something is so," whenever we make a logical judgment about something, the ideas of the true, of the good, of being itself, are present; or, as Bonaventura says, "being itself is what first appears in the intellect," and being itself is the basic statement about God. This means: every act of cognition, every cognitive act, is made in the power of the Divine light, Of this Divine light, of these principles in us, the Franciscans said that it is uncreated; we participate in it. This makes that somehow no secular knowledge exists. All knowledge is in some way rooted in the knowledge of the Divine in us. There is a point of identity in our soul, and this point precedes every special act of knowledge. Or I could describe it in the following way: Every act of knowledge – about animals, plants, bodies, astronomy, mathematics – is implicitly religious. A mathematical proposition as well as a medical discovery is implicitly religious because it is possible only in the power of these ultimate principles which are the uncreated Divine light in the human soul. This is the famous doctrine of the inner light, which was also used by the sectarian movements and by all mystics during the Middle Ages and the Reformation period, and which finally underlies even the rationalism of the period of the Enlightenment. They all are philosophers of the inner light, even if this Divine light later on became cut off from its Divine ground.

We can also call this attitude. That is what the Franciscans tried to maintain in spite of the fact that they also had to use Aristotelian concepts such as form and matter, and potentiality and actuality. So we have here in the Augustinian-Franciscan development, from Augustine to Bonaventura, a philosophy which is implicitly religious or theonomous, in which the Divine is not a matter of conclusions but is a matter of preceding every conclusion, making conclusions possible. It is the



philosophy of religion – perhaps some of you have seen in the Union Review a few years ago, when I wrote an article about “The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion” – this is the one type I called it at that time the ontological type; I can also call it the mystical type, or the type of immediacy. I would also like to call it the theonomous type, in which the Divine precedes the secular.

The opposite type is the Thomistic. Thomas Aquinas cuts the immediate presence of God in the act of knowing. He denies it. He also says of course, that God is the first in Himself, but he says God is not the first for us. Our knowledge cannot start with God – although everything starts with Him – but our knowledge must reach Him by starting with His effects: the finite world. So we must start with the Divine effects and conclude from there to the cause. In other words, man is separated from being itself, from truth itself, and from the good itself. Of course Thomas could not deny that these principles are in the structure of man’s intellect, but he calls them created light and not uncreated light. They are not the Divine presence in us, so to speak, but they are works of God in us; they are finite. In other words, in having an act of knowledge, we do not have God, but with these principles we can find God. It is not that we start with the Divine principles in us and then discover the finite world, as in the Franciscans; but it is that we start with the finite world and then perhaps are able to find God, in acts of cognition, of knowledge.

Now against this Thomistic theory the Franciscans said that this method, which of course must start in a good Aristotelian way – with sense experience – is good for scientia (for “science” in the largest sense of the word) but that this method destroys sapientia, wisdom. Sapientia means the knowledge of the ultimate principles; this means the knowledge of God. One of Bonaventura’s followers made this prophetic statement, that in the moment in which you follow the Aristotelian-Thomistic method and start with the external world, then you will lose the principles. You will win the external world – he agreed with that; he knew

empirical knowledge can be won only in this way – but something is lost: sapientia, the wisdom which is able to grasp intuitively, within oneself, the ultimate principles. Thomas answered that the knowledge of God, as every knowledge, must start with sense experience and must reach God on this basis in terms of rational conclusions, which are derived from the sense experience.

This is the fundamental discussion. Here the two types diverge, and they have been divergent ever since, in the Western world. This divergency is the great problem of all philosophy of religion, and, as I will show now, is the ultimate cause for the

secularization of the Western world – :cause,” of course, in the cognitive realm; there are other causes, too. In the cognitive realm this is the cause, that here the Aristotelian method is put against the Augustinian, and slowly from Thomas Aquinas the method of starting with the external world prevailed.

Thomas knew that these conclusions, although they are logically correct, do not produce a real conviction. Therefore they must be completed by authority. In other words, the Church guarantees the truth which never can be fully reached in terms of an empirical approach to God. So we now have the situation clear: In Bonaventura we have theonomous knowledge in all realms of life; we have no knowledge whatsoever without beginning with God. In Thomas we have autonomous knowledge, scientific method, as far as it goes; but Thomas himself knew that it doesn't go very far and therefore it must be completed by authority. Now this is the meaning of the heated struggle between the Augustinians and the Franciscans in the 13th century. It was a gap, but at that time the gap was not yet visible. Thomas' genius, his power to take in almost everything, his power of 'mediating' – of which I have spoken – his personal and even mystical piety, was able to cover the gap, and is able to cover the gap even in present-day Catholicism, but the gap was there and had consequences reaching far beyond everything Thomas himself realized.

This came out in the 3rd man of the 13th century, Duns Scotus. He was not a mediating but a radical thinker. He was one of those who tear up what seems to be united. He fought against the mediations of Thomas Aquinas. On the other hand, he did not follow his own Franciscan predecessors. He followed Thomas in a complete acceptance of Aristotle, but he realized the consequences which Thomas Aquinas still was able to cover.

For Duns Scotus there is an infinite gap between the finite and the infinite. Therefore the finite cannot reach cognitively at all, neither in terms of immediacy – as the older Franciscan wanted – nor in terms of demonstrations, as the Dominicans, with Thomas Aquinas, wanted.. He criticizes – and insofar as you are nominalists, you will like this criticism – even the transcendentia, the ultimate principles. He says: Being itself (*esse ipsum*) is only a word; it points to an analogy between the infinite and the finite, but only an analogy. The word "being" does not cover God as well as the world. The gap is such that you cannot cover them in terms of one word, not even in terms of the *verum, bonum, unum*, the true, the good, and the one, and that means, being itself. Therefore :Only one way is open to receive

God, namely the way of authority, the way of revelation received by the authority of the Church.

In this way we have two positivisms. The religious or ecclesiastical positivism: since we cannot reach God cognitively, we must accept what is given to us by the Church. On the other hand, we have the positivism of the empirical method: what is positively given in nature, we must discover by the methods of induction and abstraction -- now the gap of which I spoke has become visible. In Thomas it was closed; in Duns Scotus it is opened up, and never has been closed again. And it is still our problem, as it was the problem of the people of the 13th century. While in Bonaventura God is known immediately, He is present before anything else is present in us while in Thomas He can be proved by demonstrations, but authority must help, because it is not completely certain in this way; in Duns Scotus neither immediacy nor demonstrations is left, so only revelation and authority accepted in faith can help. – Now if you have understood this, then you are really in the center of any important philosophy of religion. This is the real problem.

Now the gap opened up by Duns Scotus becomes a very large gap a century later in Occam, the real father of nominalism. God cannot be approached at all in terms of autonomous knowledge. He is out of reach. Everything could be the opposite of what is. Therefore He can only be reached by our subjection to the Biblical and ecclesiastical authorities. And we can subject ourselves to them only if we have the habit of grace, only if grace is working in us and makes it possible for us to receive the authority of the Church. Cultural knowledge the knowledge of science, is completely free and autonomous, and religious knowledge is completely heteronomous. So when I come back now to the characterization of the early Franciscan-Augustinian situation, I can say: the original theonomy – God always the prius of every knowing – has been disrupted into complete scientific autonomy on the one side, and complete ecclesiastical heteronomy on the other side. That is the situation at the end of the Middle Ages. And since the Middle Ages are based on a system of mediation, the Middle Ages came practically to an end in the moment in which these mediations broke down.

When I bring this down to the traditional question of reason and revelation, I can express it thus: In Bonaventura reason is in itself revelatory, insofar as in its own depths the principles of truth are given. This of course doesn't refer to the historical revelation in Christ, but refers to our knowledge of God. In Thomas reason is able to express revelation. In Duns Scotus reason is unable to express revelation. In Occam

revelation stands beside and in opposition to reason. At the end of the Middle Ages the religious and the secular realm are separated, but they are not separated in the way in which they are today – as a consequence of this separation in the Middle Ages – but the Middle Ages still wanted for centuries its traditional unity. Therefore the Church now developed its radical heteronomous claim to rule all realms and to control them, but now from outside. And now the desperate fight between autonomous secularism and heteronomous religious developed. Don't confuse the late Middle Ages with the earlier Middle Ages. As long as the tradition was in power, the Middle Ages were not heteronomous; they were theonomous, which is something quite different. But at the end an independent secular realm was established, and the question was: Is the Church able to control this independent realm? And the ways in which the Church was deprived of this power are the ways of Renaissance and Reformation.

One of the ways I wanted to mention, and which appears already at that time, was the way of the double truth, which is very illuminating for the situation. Some people seriously – not only diplomatically, in order to hide themselves – believed, in reality, that a statement about the same matter can be contradictory and nevertheless true theologically though wrong philosophically, and vice versa, so that people asserted the whole heteronomous system which the Church as long as it was in power still could maintain, and on the other hand, they developed autonomous thought. And if the proposition came into conflict, then they took refuge in the so-called 'double truth. Of course for many this was a way of hiding, but it was more than this: it was the belief that these realms are so separated that you can say in one realm the opposite of what you say in the other.

This is the epistemological problem, and it was a very fundamental one, but of course – as behind all problems in philosophy and theology – it is always the problem of God which is decisive, and so I now go to the doctrine of God in medieval thinking, and I come again partly to these three men of the 13th century.

The medieval idea of God has three levels:

- 1) The first and fundamental level is the idea of God as *primum esse*, the first being, or *prima causa*, the first cause. By "cause" here is meant not as "cause and effect," as we have it in the realm of finitude – the word "prima," "first," means not the first according to time, but the ground of all causes, so that the term "cause" is here used more symbolically than literally. It is the creative ground in everything, *creatrix universarum substantiarum*, the creative substance of everything that is. This

is the first statement about God. He is the Ground of Being, as I like to express it, or being itself, or the first cause – all these terms point to the same meaning.

2) This substance cannot be understood in terms of the inorganic realm – for instance, as an inorganic substance like fire or water, as the old physicists did – nor in the biological situation, as a life process, but it must be understood as intellect. The first quality of the Ground of Being is intellect. Intellect doesn't mean intelligence, but it means the point in which God is for Himself subject and object at the same time; or, as it was carried through, God knowing Himself and knowing the world as that which He is not. The Ground of Being, in other words – the "creative substance" – is a bearer of meaning. The world – this is the consequence – is meaningful, can be understood in words which have meaning. The logos, the word, can grasp it. In order to understand reality, we must presuppose that reality is understandable; and reality is understandable because the Divine ground has the character of intellect. Only because the Divine intellect the ground of everything, is knowledge possible.

3) The third characteristic, which comes from the Christian Augustinian tradition – while the intellect comes from the Greek Aristotelian tradition: God is will. Will, of course, if applied to God and the world, is not the psychological function which we know in ourselves, but it is the dynamic ground of everything. It is the productive power of the Ground of Being. This will has the nature of love – in good Augustinian tradition. The creative substance of the world has meaning and has love – is intellect and will, symbolically speaking. And as with respect to knowing we said that God knows Himself, so we must now say that God wills or loves Himself as the absolute good, indeed as the ultimate aim of everything. And He loves the creatures in giving them, in a graded way. the good of which He is the ultimate Ground. Therefore they all are longing for Him, and He is for them the object of that love which everything has and every being has, the love toward that in which it sees its ultimate good. Now this is the medieval idea of God. This God is not called a person. The word "person" is never applied to it in the Middle Ages. for two reasons:

1) because the Trinitarian "faces" or "countenances" are called personae: the Father is persona, the Son is persona. and the Spirit is persona. But persona here means more a special characteristic of the Divine ground, expressing itself in an independent hypostasis. Therefore we can say the term persona has been applied to God only in the 19th century, when God was made into a person, and the greatness

of the classical idea of God was destroyed by this kind of speaking. Of course this structure, including being, intellect and will, is analogous to our experience of our own being, and if we call ourselves "person" we must call God also "Person." But this is something quite different from calling God "a Person" First of all. He is being itself. He is the Ground of Being in everything. The personal side is expressed in intellect and will, and their unity. But to speak about a person would have been absolutely heretical for the Middle Ages; it would have been Unitarian heresy for them, because this would exclude that God has three personae, namely, expressions of His being.

Now about the relationship of intellect and will in God, there the same fight was going on as about the epistemological problem. For the Thomistic tradition, intellect is characteristic of God and man. Thomas argues that only because man is intellect is he able to be distinguished from an animal. An animal would be a man in the moment in which it was able to put purposes intellectually before the will. But the animal only wills, without purpose – in the sense in which we ascribe it to man. Therefore for Thomas the intellect is that which makes man man and therefore is the primary characteristic of God.

Intellect is the insight into the universally true and good. But Duns Scotus opposed this doctrine. In him God and man are will. Will is universally creative. There is no reason for the Divine will other than the Divine will itself. There is nothing which determines the will. The good is good because God wills that it is. There is no intellectual necessity that the world is as it is, that salvation is as it is. Everything is possible for God except not to be God – that's impossible for Him. This is what Duns Scotus called His *potentia absoluta*, the absolute power of God. But God uses His absolute power only in order to create a given world in which there are definite orders. Therefore he called this *potestas ordinatus*, the ordered power of God. Here he distinguishes these two: the world as we know it, and the purpose of salvation as we know it by revelation, is not necessarily so as it is, but now, after it has been given, it is so as it is; it is by Divine ordered power. But behind this stands something as a threat. The world is not as it is from eternity. There is no real necessity that it is as it is. The threatening absolute power of God behind the ordered power may change everything. Duns Scotus didn't believe that this would happen, but it can happen.

Now what does such an idea mean? It means that we have to accept the given, that we cannot deduce it, that we have to be humble toward reality. We cannot deduce

the world or the process of salvation in terms of, for instance, with Anselm's doctrine of atonement, where he tried to deduce in terms of necessity the way of salvation between God and Christ, and man. Duns Scotus would say there is no such necessity; this is a positive order of God. Now here in this idea of the absolute power of God, we have the root of all positivism, in science as well as in politics, in religion as well as in psychology. In the moment in which God became "will", who is only determined by Himself and His own will, and not by the intellect - in this moment the world became incalculable, uncertain, unsafe, and we are demanded to subject ourselves to what is given. All the dangers of positivism are rooted in this concept of Duns Scotus. And so I consider him, more than anybody else, the turning point in the history of Western thought.

## Lecture 26: Pelagius and Aquinas

I don't know whether I really spoke in a very negative way about Pelagius. I said that he was in the Greek tradition, the ordinary Greek tradition, that he emphasized freedom in the sense in which Greek philosophy always had done it. I said he believes that every man is in every moment able in principle to decide for God although the historical heritage is (such) that this is extremely improbable. But there are people who always were able to do it, and there always will be people who are able to do it. We must decide: do we believe this is an adequate doctrine of the human situation or do we believe that the description expressed in the term of the tragic character of the human situation is equally necessary? And I must say that Augustine was right in emphasizing the tragic side of the human situation, the participation of everything in man's estrangement from God, and in the impossibility of man in his own power to return to God. Now this is the question. If somebody in a Manichaean way emphasized this tragic element, then I would take the side of Pelagius, of course, because the both sides – the responsible side and the tragic side – belong to each other. And if you have the one without the other, then you are wrong. Let me give two examples: The one is a special kind of Neo Orthodox theology which has already appeared in the Reformation period under the heading of a movement called gnesio-Lutherans (genuine Lutherans). The man who was especially representative for this was Matthias Flaccius. He said that original sin is the substance of man. In saying this he made a statement which made the sinful state a matter of creation, because substance is a category which belongs to the realm of creation. And therefore he was rejected, with this statement. But the tendency which he represents is always very strong.

Now I had a discussion with one of my German friends amongst the student body here who told me that he believes that God cannot maintain His first creation, that He cannot maintain the creation as we see it in time and space, but that this creation, so to speak, was a failure. And this German student said: since the creation of God was a failure, through the guilt of man, God must cancel the creation, so to speak, and must posit the new creation. The new creation is something absolutely different from the old creation. Then I asked him about the structures which make that a tree always becomes a tree, and that the human being is always dependent on special functions of the blood stream, on the breath, on the lung, etc. Then he said: all this has to be cancelled, so to speak, by God in the new creation. The new



creation is the new heaven and the new earth, the Kingdom of God – however it is symbolically called – and the natural structures which have proved to be a failure since man for whom they were created is a failure, have to be removed by God and replaced by other ones.

Now this is an attitude in which the tragic element has completely overwhelmed the original goodness of man to which his essential freedom belongs. And insofar as Pelagianism – if you want to use that word for it – emphasizes human freedom in this sense, insofar as this is the case Pelagianism is a necessary corrective against the danger of Augustinianism to fall back into Manichaean dualistic tendencies and to emphasize the disruptedness of reality in such a way that even the natural structures of reality have to be removed.

My second answer is: When we speak about our relationship to God and the possibility of man, under the conditions of estrangement, to reunite with God, then I would say: this is impossible, because the ethical act which comes out of the situation of estrangement is colored, formed, shaped, by this situation of estrangement, even if it is a so-called good act. And this means that only if there is a new reality is it possible to reunite with God, in the power of this new being, or new reality. And in this, Augustine and the classical theology, the Reformers, etc., are right. And I think modern philosophy and psychology, existentialism and depth psychology in their alliance, have confirmed what I have said. Perhaps our grandfathers could believe that there are people who have a good will and other people who have a bad will, and they are always on the side of those who have a good will, while it is the others who have a bad will. Now in every special situation you can decide this was a good deed and that was a bad deed. This is unambiguously so, so that if you do a good deed, everything is all right. Those of you who have heard or read some of my things will remember that I believe that life is defined by the concept of ambiguity, and that ambiguity means that in a tragic way the great is always at the same time the tragic, Greatness and tragedy belong together. The great produces great guilt, produces tragic guilt, And this is always ambiguously intermixed. Now if we ask ourselves about the best deed we have done – perhaps some of you remember their best deed, of I don't know how many years ago, probably many, because from the last year we hardly will discover one--in any case, if we imagine our best deed, we must ask ourselves how many motives might have been co-operative in our good deeds, which in themselves are not good but are either ambiguous or bad. . . Now if we ask this every time, then we will not simply say: this was good, this was had, etc., but we will say our best deed was still a deed

in which many elements which we probably would call ambiguous or bad, are present.

But the opposite is also true, namely, the people who are not people of good will – that is, the others – if we judge their acts, (and they are certainly very negative acts: they acted toward us very negatively, or they committed crimes, or all kinds of things), then we know that in their acts are elements of goodness, and they can be living acts only because of the elements of goodness within them. Otherwise, they could not have being, because being – or the power of being – has in itself the nature of the good, according to the Christian idea that *esse qua esse bonum est*, being as being is good. Now if this is the case, then it is much easier not to condemn the others; then it is possible to judge ourselves more adequately. And “we” don’t even need to condemn ourselves, perhaps, in such a way as when we distinguish between black and white unambiguously. Our worst deed perhaps was not as bad as we think, when we compare it with other deeds which we count our best deeds. Perhaps the difference is not so terribly great.

But I wanted only to express the Augustinian point of view in terms of modern psychology. If we accept this, then the necessary consequence is that if we believe that God wants the unambiguously good – because He is unambiguously good – our free decisions are not able to reach Him. This then produces the Augustinian idea of grace, which I translate for us into the concept of a New Being, which has as its central element the character of in spite of. And here seems to me to be the profoundest criticism of Pelagianism, that it doesn’t know the nature of the “in spite of.” The nature of the “in spite of” is the “in spite of our ambiguity.” Now let us for a moment imagine consistent Pelagianism: what would we experience in ourselves? We would experience that all these ambiguities are always present when we make a decision for reunion towards God or towards the ultimate good, however you want to define it, and we never would be able to accept ourselves. You know that most of the neurotic states of man are rooted in the fact that he is not able to accept himself. Now nobody who is serious or profound is able to accept himself on the basis of what he does. If he tries to do this, then he either becomes superficially self-complacent – a way out which many people are able to muddle through from day to day – but there is a hidden knowledge that this is not the reality. If we face the reality of our being unable to act completely good, to act towards God so that we bring God down to us by our actions, then we cannot accept ourselves: the self-acceptance is possible only on the basis of being accepted. Now this being accepted is again a translation of the Augustinian concept of grace, and therefore I am an

Augustinian because I know myself. And I think that's what Augustine also did. Pelagius was also, as a monk, able to know himself. But in comparison to the distorted world, he rightly pointed to the fact that in the monastic community much more good is actualized than in the completely disrupted pagan world of the decaying ancient culture. But this is a criterion which is always relatively acceptable and necessary, but which does not fit the absolute categories, the relationship to God. And there Pelagius did not realize what many monks and saints after them have realized, namely that the saints are, at the same time, the greatest sinners, that they are open to the greatest temptations, and that they have to fight, perhaps more than the average man, within themselves to overcome. That is what Augustine knew, from his experience, and what the Reformers knew who took the Divine demand absolutely seriously.

Now that is my judgment about Augustinianism and Pelagianism. I repeat: if we have a kind of Manichaean distortion of Augustinianism as we have it in some Neo-Orthodox theologians, or in Flaccius and many others in the Reformation period, then we have to maintain the Pelagian point of view. If, however, the human situation is described, then we do better – with all that we know about man today – to become Augustinians.

Now the main points about the epistemology of the medieval philosophers and theologians were discussed yesterday. I gave you the great conflict between the Augustinians and the Aristotelian, or the Franciscan and the Dominican, point of view and the consequences for our own situation today. Then I went into the doctrine of God in all medieval philosophers and theologians, the doctrine of God which always starts with the statement that God is being itself, and then that He is intelligence, and then that He is will, but that the term "personality" or "person" is not used for Him, and that persona, if used at all, is used for the three hypostases – Father, Son, and Spirit God, a trinitarian concept, but not a concept describing God. Then I came to the difference between the Thomistic and the Scotistic concepts of God, and the great consequences of this – God is primarily intellect in Aquinas and primarily will in Scotus and, with will, the threat against everything which can be deduced, the impossibility of deducing anything because God's will is nothing other than what He wills, but you cannot make Him dependent on anything else, even on principles described that as the "threat" against the safety of rationalism, and described it also as one of the roots of the good sides in positivism, namely the humble acceptance of reality as it is given, given by the irrational ground of being, given by the irrational will of God.

Now I go back to Thomas Aquinas and discuss a few of his doctrines which are so important that we all must know them. The first is his doctrine of nature and grace. His famous statement reads: "Grace does not remove nature but fulfills it."

Now this is a very important principle – grace is not the negation but the fulfillment of nature. I can now use my long excursus about Pelagianism in saying that the radical Augustinians – or more exactly the Manichaean distortions of Augustine – would not follow Thomas in this sentence. They would say that grace removes nature, just as I said that the New Being is a negation of the old creation, and not only of the distortion of the old creation. For Thomas Aquinas, with whom I feel very much in unity in this point, nature and grace are not two contradictory concepts – only distorted or estranged nature and grace are contradictory concepts, but not nature as such. But now he says that nature is fulfilled in supra-nature; and supra-nature is grace. This is a structure of reality which was always, even by creation. God gave to Adam in Paradise not only his natural abilities but, beyond this, a *donum superadditum*, a gift which he added to his natural gifts, namely the gift of grace which made it possible for Adam to consist in his state of union with God.

Now this is a very interesting doctrine and one which we must discuss because it was a point in which Protestantism deviated completely from Thomas Aquinas. Protestantism said that the perfect nature doesn't need any grace any more, but that if we are perfect in our created status, then the grace which comes from above is not necessary; and therefore Protestantism removed the idea of the *donum superadditum*. Now this is a mythological story; whether Adam got that or didn't get it, that is not what is interesting – but in these mythological stories a very profound vision of the structure of reality is expressed. In Thomism the structure of reality has two degrees. For Protestantism, the situation is the following: creation is complete in itself, and therefore the created forms of reality are forms which are sufficient: God didn't need to add something to it. This is the same basic feeling towards life which we find in the Renaissance, where we also have creation which in itself is good, where man is in the center, in his created potentialities, without a supernatural gift which is added to him.

Thomas Aquinas has the two degrees: nature and supra-nature. Protestantism says: only if nature is distorted by man's fall, by man's estrangement from God, is another power necessary: the power of grace, whose center is forgiveness. But what forgiveness does is the *restitutio integrum*, the restitution of nature to its full

potentialities. This idea is ultimately monistic. The created world is perfect in itself: God doesn't need to give additional graces to His fulfilled creation. But He must come down into existence in order to overcome the conflicts of existence – and that's what grace is. So in Protestantism, grace is acceptance of that which is unacceptable. In Catholicism grace is a substance, which is in analogy to the non-grace, to the natural substances.

So I have now given you a positive and then a negative valuation of Thomas' doctrine. The positive valuation is that nature and grace are not contradictions, but that grace fulfills what in nature is disrupted, fulfills the possibilities of the natural, and in this I agree with the Thomistic tendency to bring creation and salvation together, to bring nature and grace into the one Divine act of creativity.

Secondly, I deviate from Thomas – or Protestantism does – in that we do not consider a supra-nature as a substance which is "added to" nature in order to fulfill it, but it is the Divine act in which He reunites us with Himself.

This of course is also valid for the relationship of revelation and reason. Revelation does not destroy reason but fulfills reason. And here again I agree with Thomas Aquinas. I believe that revelation is reason in ecstasy, that in revelation the depth of reason breaks into the form of reason, driving it beyond itself without destroying it. But I would not accept the Thomistic form in which reason is one realm, and revelation is another realm in which reason is completed. So we have two forms here, and I think this is so central that it is an inroad also to the understanding of Protestantism – namely, the central fact that the Catholic world view is essentially dualistic, between nature and supra-nature. Catholicism defends supernaturalism with all its power. Protestantism is united with the Renaissance in the monistic tendency – monistic in the sense of having one Divine world – and having salvation and regeneration (which are one and the same thing) as the answer of God to the disruption of this world. But this answer is not the negation of the created structure of this world.

So in some way the Protestant dualism is deeper, but it is not the dualism of substances, it is dualism of the Kingdom of God and the demonic powers which stand against it. It is not an identification of the created with the fallen world. The fallen world is the distortion of the created world, and therefore the New Being is not another creation but is the re-establishment of the original unity.

Now one of the consequences of this is that in Protestantism the secular world is immediate to God. In Catholicism the secular world needs the mediation through the supernatural substance, which is present in the hierarchy and their sacramental activities. Here again you have a fundamental difference. Therefore Protestantism is emphatic for secularity. And Luther's words about the value of the work of a housemaid in contrast to the value of the work of a monk, are very clear speaking about – namely, that the value of the housemaid's work, if it is done in the fear of God – or however you express it – is more valuable than the asceticism of the monks, even if it is done in the fear of God. Now here is the emphasis on the secular act as such, which if done in the right way is the revelation of God. And you don't need to become a monk. On the contrary, if you try it, then you claim to be in a supernatural realm and to make this. claim is to contradict the paradox of justification, namely, that as a sinner you are justified.

Now I come to a few other doctrines connected with the name of Thomas Aquinas, and which we must know. You all have heard about his (so-called) "arguments" for the so-called "existence" of God. Now the first thing which follows out of my epistemological description yesterday is that Thomas rejects the ontological argument. This was implicit in everything I said yesterday, but I will repeat it in connection with the ontological argument, namely that in the center of the human mind there is an immediate awareness of something unconditional. That is what the whole ontological argument is about. There is an a priori presence of the Divine in the human mind expressed in the immediate awareness of the unconditional character of the true and the good and of being itself. This precedes every other knowledge, so that the knowledge of God is the first knowledge and is the only absolute, sure and certain knowledge, namely the knowledge not of a being, somewhere, but the knowledge of the unconditional element in the depths of the soul. Now this is the nerve of the ontological argument. But as I said in connection with Anselm, the ontological argument was also elaborated in terms of a reasoning argument, of an argument which concluded from this basis to the existence of a highest being. And insofar as this was done, the argument is not valid, and all the critics of this argument – Thomas, Scotus, Kant – have shown very clearly that as an argument it is not valid. As an analysis of man in his tension between the finite and the infinite, it is valid; it is a matter of immediate certainty.

Thomas Aquinas belongs to those who reject the ontological argument because he saw the argumentative side in it, which indeed must be rejected and is not valid.

The same of course is true of Duns Scotus. I don't need to go into him at all. He emphasizes this even more.

But now in order to fill the empty space which was produced by the falling down of the ontological argument, and also, in Thomas, by the principle of the immediate awareness of the Divine in man, he had to do something else – I spoke about this point yesterday – namely, to find a way from the world to God. The world in itself is not the first, but it is the first which is given to us, he says. This is just the opposite of what the Augustinian and the Franciscans said: the first which is given to us is the principles of truth in us, and only with their help can we exercise the function of doubt, etc. Even the skeptical function is based on the spirit of truth in the depths of the mind. Thomas denied this. So he had to show another way: the cosmological way, which says that God must be found from outside. We must look at our world, and we find that our world is such that by logical necessity it leads us to the estrangement of a highest being. He has five arguments for it, which one should know because they appear again and again in the history of philosophy:

- 1) The argument from motion: Motion demands a cause. This cause itself is moved. So we have to go back to an unmoved Mover – which we call "God." – It is an argument from movement in terms of causality. To find a cause for the movement in the world, we must find something which itself is not moved.
- 2) There is always a cause for every effect, but this cause is itself an effect of a prior cause. So we go back from cause to cause, which would bring us into an infinite regression, and in order to avoid this we must speak of a First Cause. Now the "first cause" is not the first cause temporally, according to Thomas, but it is first in dignity; it is the cause of all causes.
- 3) Everything in the world is contingent. It is not necessary that it is as it is. It might have been otherwise. But if everything is contingent, if we can make disappear into the abyss of nothing everything that is, because it has no necessity to be, then this leads us back to something which has ultimate necessity, and from which we can derive all the contingent elements.
- 4) There are purposes in nature and man, but if we act in terms of purpose, we ask: for what? And if we have reached that, then we again ask: for what is that? We need a final purpose, an ultimate end behind all the means. The preliminary purposes become means when they are fulfilled, and this leads to the idea of a final purpose, of an ultimate meaning, as we would perhaps call it today.

5) This is very much dependent on Plato. It says: there are degrees of perfection in everything that is. Some things are better or more beautiful or truer than others. But if there is a more-or-less of perfection, there must be something absolutely perfect by which we measure this more-or-less. So whenever we value, we presuppose an ultimate value. Whenever we have degrees, we presuppose something which is beyond degree.

Now in all these arguments there is always the category of causality – it is always a conclusion from characteristics of this world to something which makes this world possible. Now I would believe that this is true, as analysis. Each of these arguments is true as long as it is not an argument but an analysis. It is one of those ways in which existentialist philosophy appeared in the whole history of Western thinking. In the doctrine of the arguments for the existence of God, we have probably the most adequate analysis of the finitude of reality in the whole literature of the past. This is the value of these arguments, and this is the reason why they have reappeared exactly as often as they have been refuted – which is a funny thing; I spoke about this already – and by the greatest men in the history of thought: some refuted them, some re-established them. The reason is that they included the existential analysis of man's finitude, and as such they have truth. Insofar as they go beyond this and establish a highest being which as a being is infinite, they make conclusions which are not justified. And this seems to me our attitude towards these doctrines.

I must give you another concept which we find in Thomas Aquinas, namely the concept of predestination. Here we have a cross-working of motives. Predestination is an Augustinian idea taken over by the Dominican Thomas Aquinas, on the basis of his principle of intellect, which understands the necessities, and can by necessity derive consequences from what has preceded. On the other hand the Augustinians, the Franciscans, especially under Duns Scotus' influence, emphasized the will so much that Divine as well as human will became ultimate realities, became, so to speak, ontological ultimates, not determined by anything other than by themselves. So they introduced the element of freedom – the Pelagian element. The Augustinians introduced a crypto- Pelagianism into medieval theology, i. e., a Pelagianism which is not an open but a hidden Pelagianism, while Thomas Aquinas on the basis of his intellectualism thought in deterministic terms. This is important because it shows that Thomas Aquinas was religiously much more powerful than the Protestant criticism of the Scholastic theology admits. It seems that Luther didn't know Thomas Aquinas at all. He knew the late nominalistic



theologians, of whom one can rightly say that they were distortions of Scholasticism, and he fought against them. But he could have found in Thomas Aquinas his own and Calvin's predestinarian thinking.

We must stop now, unfortunately. I must say something next time about Thomistic ethics because they are so much in the foreground of present-day discussions that we cannot leave them out completely.

## Lecture 27: Ethical Teachings (Aquinas). Nominalism (Wm. Occam). German mysticism (Eckhart).

The problem we left unfinished in the week before last was the ethical teachings of Thomas Aquinas. His ethical teaching corresponds to his system of grades, as do all the other realms of his system. There is an ethics, a rational sub-structure, and a theological super-structure. Exactly as nature and grace are related to each other, so the sub-structure and super-structure are related to each other. The sub-structure contains the four main pagan virtues, taken from Plato: courage, temperance, wisdom, and the all-embracing justice. They produce natural happiness. Happiness does not mean having a good time or having fun, but it means the fulfillment of one's own essential nature, which of course produces an awareness of fulfillment -- which means happiness. In Greek the word for happiness is eudaemonia, and you know that there is a philosophical school called eudaemonism. It is often attacked by Christianity that happiness is not the purpose of human existence but, let us say, the glory of God. I think this is a completely mistaken interpretation of eudaemonia. It is exactly what in Christian theology is called blessedness, but blessedness on the basis of the natural virtues, and Thomas knew this. Therefore he was not, but he accepted this concept. It is derived from the two Greek words eu and daemon - a "demon," a Divine power, which guides us "well" - (cf. Socrates' daemon.) The result of the guiding produces eudaemonia: being guided in the right way toward self-fulfillment. In this way eudaemonia has received the connotation of happiness or blessedness.

According to Thomas Aquinas, the four virtues of philosophy, the natural virtues, can give natural blessedness - eudaemonia, in the Greek sense. Virtue does not have the bad connotations it has today - such as abstinence from sexual relations, etc. But it means what the Latin term indicates: vir, "man," manliness, power of being. In all these different virtues, power of being expresses itself - the right power of being, the power of being which is united with justice. This is what these terms mean. So don't presuppose that if you find the same words in the 13th century that they mean exactly the same as they mean today, especially after at least one century has passed since that time, namely the 18th century, which has changed everything! So be aware of this fact, for all your historical studies, and don't use these terms in the wrong way. What Thomas does here is to combine ancient ethics - self-fulfillment - on the basis of what is given to man by nature: the courage to be, the temperance

which expresses the limits of finitude, the wisdom which expressed the knowledge of these limits, and then the all-embracing justice which gives to each of them the right balance in relationship to the others.

And now on this basis the Christian virtues are seen: faith, love and hope. They are supernatural, they are not what nature gives but what grace gives. So you have the two stories, so to speak: the normal ethics and the transcending, spiritual ethics. This of course was not simply a theoretical speculation, but it was something more: it was at the same time an expression of the sociological situation. The acceptance of the Platonic-Aristotelian virtues meant that a city-culture developed. And on the other hand the combination of these with the Christian virtues, faith, love, and hope, means that it is the period in which the orders of the knights developed, which had such a tremendous historical influence on the high Middle Ages. They united pagan courage with Christian love, pagan wisdom with Christian hope, pagan moderation with Christian faith. So it was at the same time a combination between humanistic and classical ideals on the basis of the developing of independent humanistic elements.!!!. the universally Christian culture.

The ethical purpose of man is the fulfillment of what is essential for man. And as you know, in Thomas Aquinas what is essential for man is his intellect, which doesn't mean his shrewdness, but his ability of living in meanings and in structures of reason. This makes him man, not the will. Man has the will in common with the animal. Intellect, the rational structure which forms his mind, is peculiar to man.

Thomas combines ethics with esthetics, He is the first in the Middle Ages to develop a theological esthetics. The beautiful is that kind of the good in which the soul rests without possession." You don't need to possess a picture, you can enjoy it. You don't need to possess the woods or ocean or houses or men depicted in the picture. But you enjoy them by their mere form. It is, according to him, disinterested enjoyment of the soul which is in every art – also in music. Beautiful is that which is pleasant in itself. Here again we have something which leads in the direction of humanism. But it is not humanism in autonomy, in independence; it is humanism which is always the first step to something which transcends the human possibilities.

Similarly, he deals with the problems of states. We have two degrees: the values represented by the state, and the higher, supernatural values embodied in the Church. The Church therefore is higher in what it represents. Therefore the Church has authority over the states, over the different national governments. The Church can, if necessary, ask the people to be disobedient.

Now with these remarks, which are given by Thomas Aquinas in what is usually quoted as the "secunda secunde," the second part of the second section of his Summa, where he develops his ethics – and whenever you hear this quotation, remember that this means the Thomistic ethics. These Thomistic ethics are at least as influential in the history of the Western world as his dogmatic statements, and they all have the same character which we discovered in him everywhere, namely the character of grades and mediations; the secular realm and the religious realm are related to each other in a different way than in Augustine. In Augustine the secular realm was completely swallowed by the religious realm. In Thomas they were put into a system of grades, in the secular realm the sub-structure, and in the religious realm the super-structure. The next step was that they were put beside each other; and in our period of secularism, finally the secular realm swallowed the religious realm.

In these four steps you have the whole history of the Western world.

Now the man who is mostly responsible for the putting beside it, is Duns Scotus. But I discussed him already in connection with the doctrine of the will and the arguments for the existence of God. But I want to go now directly to the man of whom I spoke very often and whose philosophy I often mentioned, who is in some way the spiritual father of all of you: William Ockham (or Occam), the father of nominalism.

Let me say a little more about what nominalism means. We discussed it in the big survey of the Middle Ages, but we did not discuss it in a detailed way. This fight between nominalism and realism is the destiny of the Middle Ages and largely the destiny of our own time. In our own time it is repeated, partly at least, as a discussion or a fight between idealism and realism, whereby "realism" today is what "nominalism" is in the Middle Ages, and "idealism" today is what "realism" was in the Middle Ages. So here again you must be very cautious about the words. When I speak of medieval realism, I usually add the adjective "mystical" realism. Now if you hear this word, you are immediately terrified, of course, and don't think of the modern, sound realism of empiricists and other good people! – they all are based on nominalism in the Middle Ages. What is this nominalism? Ockham criticized the mystical realism of the Middle Ages which thinks the universals are real, in saying that the universals, if existing independently, are special things. If they exist otherwise, they simply reduplicate the things. If they exist in the mind only, they are not real things. Therefore realism is nonsense. Realism which thinks

that the universals are real, has no meaning because realism cannot say what kind of reality the universals have. What kind of reality has "treehood"? Ockham says it is only in the mind, therefore it has no reality at all, it is something which is meant, but it is not a reality. The realists of that time said: No, the universal, "treehood", which directs every tree in a special direction, is a power of being in itself. It is not a thing – no realist ever said that – but it is a power of being. The nominalists said there are only individual things and nothing else. It is against the principle of economy in thinking, not to augment the principles. If you can explain something like the universals in the simplest term, that they are meant by the mind, then you should not establish a heaven of ideas as Plato did.

Now this criticism was rooted in the development towards individuals. This development became more and more the real power in the late medieval life. It was a change from the Greek mood and the medieval mood – the Greek feeling towards the world which starts with the negation of all individual things; the medieval which subordinated the individual to the collective. So it was not simply a logical play in which the nominalists won for the time being, but it was a change of the attitude towards reality in the whole society. You will find that nominalism and realism are discussed in books on the history of logic, and rightly so, but that does not give you the impression of what that means. This discussion was a discussion between two attitudes towards life. Today we discuss it in terms of collectivism and individualism. Of course the collectivism of the Middle Ages was only partly totalitarian; it was basically mystical. But this mystical collectivism – which is the Church as the body of Christ and as the mystical body, generally speaking – is something else from our present-day collectivism. But it is collectivism. And for this collectivism the realists fought; the nominalists dissolved it. And in the moment in which the success was on the side of the nominalists, the Middle Ages actually dissolved.

Then if this is the case if there are only individual things, what are the universals, according to Ockham? The universals are identical with the act of knowing, and as far as they are this they are natural, they rise in our minds, they must be used, otherwise we could not speak. He called them the *universalia naturalia* .

Beyond them are the words which are the symbols for these natural universals which we have in our mind. They are the conventional universals. Words can be changed; they are by convention. The word is universal because it can be said of different things. Therefore these people also were called "terminists" because they

said the universals are merely "terms." They were also called "conceptualists" because they said the universals are mere "concepts" but have no real power of being in themselves. The significance of a universal concept is that it indicates the similarity of different things – that's all it can do,

Now all this comes down to the point that only individual things have reality. Not man as man, but Paul and Peter and John have reality. Not treehood, but this tree here, on the corner of 116th and Riverside Drive, has reality, and the others on the other corners, too. We discover some similarity between them. Therefore we call them trees. But there is no such thing as treehood. -- Now that is nominalistic thinking.

Now this was also applied to God. God is called by Ockham *ens singularissimum*, the most single being. I. e., God has become an individual Himself. As such, He is separated from the other individuals, He looks at them and they look at Him. God is not in the center of everything any more, as He was in the Augustinian kind of thought, but He has been removed from this center into a special place distant from the things, just as man. I. e., God Himself has become an individual. The individual things have become independent. The substantial presence of God in all of them doesn't mean anything any more, because that presupposes some kind of mystical realism. Therefore God has to know the things, so to speak, empirically, from outside. He is in our situation. As man approaches the world empirically, because he is not the center any more, he doesn't know anything immediately, he can only know empirically – so God knows everything empirically, but empirically not as before, by being in the center. God Himself has ceased to be the center in which all reality is united. He is no more center. The whole thing is a pluralistic philosophy in which there are many individual beings, of which God is one, although the most important one. In this way the unity of the things in God has come to an end. Their individual separation has the consequence that they cannot participate in each other immediately because each of them participates in a universal. The one tree does not participate in the other as it did before, when mystical realism gave them the universal treehood as the space in which they participated in each other. Community, as we had it in the Augustinian: type of thinking, is replaced by social relations, by society. We live today in the consequence of this nominalistic thinking, in a society in which we are related to each other in terms of cooperation and competition, but neither the one nor the other word means something of the type of participation. Community is a matter of

participation. Society is a matter of common interests, of being separated from each other and working together with each other or against each other.

We don't know each other except by the signs, the words, which enable us to communicate and to have a common activity. Now this, of course, was another anticipation of the life of the technical society in which we are existing, which developed first of all in those countries in which nominalism was predominant, as in England and in this country. The attitude of the relationship between man and man, between man and things, is nominalistic, in this country in the traditions of American philosophy, as it is largely in England and in some Western European countries. The substantial unity which was preserved by realistic thinking has disappeared.

Now this means that we have knowledge of the others not by participation but only by sense perception – seeing, hearing, testing: it's always a form of sense relationship. This refers to all our reality, but it doesn't mean that there is a world of essences, in which our mind a priori participates. We deal with our sensual intuitions and the reflections of it in our mind. This of course produces positivism: we have to look at what is positively given to us. From this many things follow: Irrational metaphysics is impossible. For example, it is impossible to establish a rational psychology which proves the immortality of the soul, its pre- or post-existence, its omnipresence in the whole body. All this is, if it is affirmed, a matter of faith but not a matter of philosophical analysis. In the same way, all sides of rational theology are impossible. God does not appear to our sense apperception. Therefore since we have no direct immediate relationship to it as we have in Augustinian thinking, He remains unapproachable. We cannot have direct knowledge of God. We can have only indirect reflection, but reflections, discourse, never leads to certainty but only probability, of a lower or higher degree. And this probability never can be elevated to certainty, and even its probability is doubtful. It is quite possible that there is not one cause of the world, but different causes. The most perfect being – which is the definition of God – is not necessarily an infinite being. A doctrine like the Trinity which is based on mystical realism – the three personae participate in the one Divinity – is obviously improbable. They all, therefore, are matters of irrational belief. Science must go its way and faith must guarantee all that is scientifically irrational and absurd.

Now if this is the case, then you see immediately that authority is now the most important thing. Faith is the subjection to authority, and this authority is even

more an authority of the Bible, in Ockham, than it is an authority of the Church. Ockham not only dissolved the realistic unity in thought, but also in practice. He fought with the German king, who was not emperor any more at that time, against the Pope. He fought for one Pope against the other. He produced autonomous economics as well as autonomous national politics. He was doubtful in all realms of life for the establishment of independent realms.

Now all this means that he was a most radical dissolver of the medieval unity. What we call "nominalism" and "realism" is a most realistic problem – in our sense of the word "realistic" – namely, a problem of the end of the Middle Ages, because of the loss of its unity; and nominalism has produced this unity. Our present ordinary attitude towards reality is thoroughly nominalistic, and especially in those countries where in the Middle Ages nominalism already was decisive.

Now I come to another movement which also was an end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of many new things, namely the movement which is called German Mysticism.

Its most important representative, Meister Eckhardt, also belongs to the 13th century. What did these mystics do? They tried to interpret the Thomistic system for practical purposes. It is not so that they were speculative monks, sitting beside the world, but they wanted to give the people, and themselves, the possibility of experiencing what was expressed in the Scholastic systems. This refers to all fundamental problems. And so it happened that this mysticism of Meister Eckhardt unites the most abstract Scholastic concepts – especially that of being – with a burning soul, with the warmth of religious feeling and the love-power of religious acting. He says: "Nothing is so near to the beings, so intimate to them, than being-itself. But God is being-itself." And from this the identity of God and being is stated. "Esse est deus" -- being-itself is God. But it is not a static being. I often have been attacked, when I use the word "being," of making God static. Not even of the medieval mysticism of that of Meister Eckhardt is this true. Being is a continuous flux and return, as he calls it – Fluss und Wiederfluss – a stream and a counterstream. It always moves away from and back to itself. Being is life. It has dynamic character.

In order to make this clearer, he distinguishes between the Divinity and God. The Divinity is the Ground of Being, in which everything moves and counter-moves. God is *essentia*, is the principle of the good and the true. From this he can even develop the Trinitarian thought. The first is the being which is neither born nor



giving birth; the second is the process of self-objectivation – the Logos, the Son; the third is the self-generation, the Spirit, which creates all individual things. For the Divinity he uses the terms of negative theology. He calls it the simple ground, the quiet desert. It is the nature of the Divinity not to have any nature. It is beyond every special nature. The Trinity is based on God's going out and returning back to himself, He recognizes Himself, He re-sees Himself, and this makes the Logos. The world is in God in an archetypal sense – "archetype" is a word which is renewed today by Jung; it is the Latin translation of the Platonic "idea." The essences, the archetypes of everything, are in the depths of the Divine. They are the Divine verbum, the Divine Word. Therefore the generation of the Son and the eternal creation of the world in God Himself. are one and the same thing. Creaturely being is receiving being. The creature doesn't give being to itself – God does. But the creature receives being from God. But it is a Divine form of being. The creature, including man, has reality only in union with the eternal reality. The creature has nothing in separation from God. And the point in which the creature returns to God is the soul. Through the soul, what is separated from God returns to Him. The depths of the soul in which this happens is called by Meister Eckhardt the "spark," or also the innermost center of the soul, the heart of the soul, or the castle of the soul. It is the point which transcends the difference of the function of the soul; it is the uncreated light in man. Therefore the Son is born in every soul. This general event is more important than the special birth of Jesus,

But all this is in the realm of possibility. Now it must come into the realm of actuality. God must be born in the soul. Therefore the soul must separate itself from its finitude. Something must happen – which he calls *entwerden*.. the opposite of becoming, going away from oneself. losing oneself; that man gets rid of himself and of all things, is the process of salvation. as he says.

Sin and evil show the presence of God, as everything does. They push us into a situation of awareness of what we really are. (That is an idea which Luther took over from Mister Eckhard.) God is the *Nunc sternum*, the Eternal Now, which takes us in this moment, as we are now, into repentance – not as we were in the last moment, namely sinful. God comes to the individual in his concrete situation. He doesn't ask that the individual first develop some goodness and then he will come to him. But God comes to the individual in his estrangement.

In order to receive the Divine substance, serenity, patience, not moving is needed. Work is not the way in which we can come to God, but it is the result of our having

come to God. He fights against purposes, in the religious relationship. All this is a strange mixture between quietism – being quiet in one's soul – and a tremendous activism. The inner feeling must become work and vice versa. This removes also the difference of the secular and the sacred worlds. They are expressions of the Ground of Being, who is in us.

Now this mysticism was very influential in the Church for a long time, and is still influential in many people. The Dominican mysticism is a counter-balance against the nominalistic isolation of the individual from the individual. In the realm of the religious, one could say that the impulses given by German mysticism prevailed. In the realm of the secular culture, it is the nominalistic attitude which prevailed.

And now I come tomorrow to the so-called pre-Reformers, especially Wyclif, and after this we must have a survey on the development of Catholicism, and then to the Reformation. Now you see this means, practically, that we have dealt very thoroughly with the ancient and medieval Church. And this was our intention, because that is what you will never hear again. You will hear about the Reformation, and you will hear sometimes, very often, about the modern development, But you will not hear about the Early Church and the Middle Ages. So we intentionally put this into the center, because of the limits of our time.

## Lecture 28: Pre-Reformers, the Counter-Reformation. Council of Trent.

We discussed yesterday the movements which somehow prepare the Reformation, I gave you some ideas about the meaning of nominalism, some ideas about the meaning of German mysticism, and now I want to come to some people who often are called by the questionable term

The Pre-Reformers.

The whole period before the Reformation is quite different from the period of the high Middle Ages. It is a period in which the lay principle becomes important and in which biblicism prevails over the Church tradition, An expression -- and perhaps the most important expression -- of this situation is the Englishman Wyclif. It is not the Reformation that he represents, but he has a large amount of ideas which the Reformers have themselves used, and it has certainly prepared the soil for the Reformation in England. What is lacking in all the pre-Reformers is the one fundamental principle of the Reformation, the breakthrough of Luther to the experience of being accepted in spite of being unacceptable, called by him, in Pauline terms, justification through faith by grace. This principle does not appear before Luther. Almost everything else does appear in the so-called pre-Reformers. Therefore if we call them "pre-Reformers," we mean many of the critical ideas against the Roman church, almost all of them which were later used by the Reformation. If we say one shouldn't call them "pre-Reformers," then we mean the main principle of the Reformation, the new relationship to God, appeared only in the real breakthrough of the Reformation. So we must be clear, when we use such a word, as to what we mean, either the one or the other

Wyclif is dependent on Augustine and on a man in England who represents an Augustinian reaction against the Pelagian invasions which are connected with nominalism. This man was Thomas of Bradwardine -- an important link from Augustine to the English Reformation. The title of his book is characteristic, "De Causa Dei contra Pelagium." the cause of God against Pelagius -- not Pelagius as the enemy of Augustine, but Pelagius in the nominalistic theology and in the practice of the Church. Against this he followed Augustine and Thomas Aquinas with respect to the doctrine of predestination. He says: "Everything that happens, happens by necessity. God necessitates whatever act is done, Every act or creature

which is morally evil is an evil only accidentally." Now this means God is the essential cause of everything, but evil cannot be derived from Him. From this follows, also for Augustine, that the Church is the congregation of the predestined. It is not the hierarchical institution of salvation: . This true Church is in opposition to the mixed and hierarchical Church which is now living and is a distortion of the true Church, and nothing other than a distortion. The basic law of the Church is not the law of the Pope, but is the law of the Bible, and this is the law of God, or the law of Christ. All this was not meant to be anti-Catholic. Neither Bradwardine nor Wyclif thought of leaving the Roman church.

There was only one Church, and even Luther needed much time before he separated himself. This was not the idea. But there were dangers for the Roman church in the Augustinian principles. And therefore, as you remember, the semi-Pelagian and crypto-semi-Pelagian movements after Augustine, removed the dangers of Augustinianism from the Roman church. Here these dangers appear again under the name of Augustine, taken up by Thomas of Bradwardine, and by Wyclif. If predestination is applied, then that means that many people are not predestined – for instance, many of the hierarchs – and this gives the basis for finding symptoms in the hierarchy which show that they are not predestined. These symptoms are found by the application of the law of Christ, which is, for instance, the Sermon on the Mount, or the sending of the disciples – all kinds of laws and ideas which are dangerous in an organized hierarchical church. From the criticism of the hierarchy, Wyclif revises the doctrines of the Church and its relationship to the state. This also has a long tradition. In England there was, since the 12th century, a movement represented in the name of the so-called Anonymus of York, a man who wrote for the king, making the king the Christ for the British nation. There was an anti-Roman tendency towards a British territorial church, similar to the Byzantine situation, where the king and the highest bishop of the English church are not identical but are at least spiritually the same thing. The king is the Christ, he is in hymns and in pictures depicted as the Christ, namely the Christ for the nation, as Constantine in Byzantium as the Christ for the whole Eastern church. Now these analogies are preparations for the revolt of the crown of England against the Pope. This revolt did not yet happen, but it was prepared.

Wyclif posed two forms of human domination, the natural or evangelical domination, which is the law of love; and the civil domination, which is a product of sin and a means of force for the sake of the bodily and spiritual goods. So we have on the one hand the natural law, which according to classical tradition is always the

law of love, and all that it includes. This is the law which should rule. And then there is unfortunately also needed the civil domination, which is necessary because of sin, which uses force and compulsion as inescapable means in order to maintain the goods of the nation, bodily and spiritually. The first law, the law of love, is sufficient for the government of the Church, since the Church is the body of the predestined; there, force is not needed. Its content is the rule which Jesus had given, namely the rule of serving. And sometimes when I hear how, in Rotary clubs and other institutions in this country, service is the ultimate principle – which actually means the most ruthless business competition, but which is called "service" – then I feel that even in such deviations from the law of love, a reverence is still made to the law of love in such a kind of phraseology. And we shouldn't underestimate this. It is always good if the wise bows to virtue by dissimulating that it is wise. And this is somehow present in such a terminology.

In any case, for Wyclif the law of Christ is the law of love, which expresses itself in service. From this follows, for him, that the Church must be poor; it must not be the economically and politically ruling Church, but it must be the Church which is poor, the Church as it was anticipated by the radical Franciscans and originally by Joachim di Fiore, whose effect becomes visible here again.

But now the whole of the Church is not holy. And so a mixed domination occurs and is something which is a consequence of sin. But for the actual Church, this actual element is determining. Therefore the wealth of ministers is inadequate. It is an abuse which must be removed and, if necessary, by the power of the kings. If the Church answers with excommunication, then no king should be afraid of this because it is impossible, he says, to excommunicate a man except he has firstly and basically excommunicated himself. And the self-excommunication of a Christian is his having cut the communion with Christ.

Therefore the hierarchy has lost its main power. It cannot decide any more about the salvation of the individual. And it can be criticized if it acts against the law of Christ, which is the law of poverty, the law of spiritual rule. From this follows, further, that dogmatically speaking there is no necessity to have a pope. This was also in the line of Joachim di Fiore. You remember that he speaks of the papa angelico, of the angelic pope, the pope who is really a spiritual principle. Wyclif also says we don't need a pope who dominates; if we have an angelic or spiritual principle, it is all right, but it is not necessary.

All this is in the line of the sectarian protest against the rich and powerful Church. But it remains mostly within the line of the official doctrine. It is not yet Reformation because it is still a matter of law. It is another law than the law of the Church, but it is a law which is still law and not Gospel.

But the basis of this attack was the law of Christ as given in the Bible. So he developed the authority of Scripture against that of tradition and against the symbolic interpretation of the Bible. He even comes to the point, also on Biblical grounds, that the *predicatio verbi*, the preaching of the word, is more important than all the ecclesiastical sacraments. Here another development was important which we find already in the Middle Ages by the transition from realism to nominalism, namely the predominance of the ear against the eye. In the early centuries of the Christian Church, in the development of religious art, in the development of the sacraments, the eye, the visual function of man, was predominant. Since the 13th century, since Duns Scotus, and then even more since Ockham, the ear, the hearing of the word, becomes important; – not the seeing of the embodied reality of sacramental character, and therefore the seeing in terms of religious is the most important thing. All this is very slow and overlapping; the emphasis; there develops the emphasis on something quite different: the word. This is much older than the Reformation. It develops already in the 13th century, but comes to the foreground in nominalism. Why? Because realism sees the essences of things. "Idea" comes from *idein* seeing. *Eidos*, "idea," means the picture, the essence, of a thing, which we can see in every individual thing. Of course this is an intuitive spiritual seeing, but it is still seeing, and it is expressed in the great art. The great art shows the essences of things, visible to the eye. In nominalism we have individuals. How can they communicate? By words. It is the only way in which this can be done. Therefore if God has become the most individual being, as we have seen in Ockham (*ens singularissimum*), then we can get from Him not by a kind of intuition of His Divine essence, as expressed in all His creations, but by His word which He speaks to us. So the word becomes decisive against the visual function.

Now the importance of the word against the sacraments appears already in Wyclif. Again I must say: this is not yet Reformation, because the word is the word of the law: it is not yet the word of forgiveness. And this is always the difference between Reformation and pre-Reformation.

If there is a Pope, he must be the spiritual leader of the true Church, which is the Church of the predestined; otherwise he is not really Pope, i. e., the Vicar of Christ,

the Spiritual power from which all spiritual power is derived, but he is a man who falls into error. He is not able to give indulgences; only God is able to do so. Here you have the first statement against the indulgences, before Luther's 95 theses. On y God can give and can release what He has ordered. And if the Pope is not living in humility, in charity and in poverty, he is not the real Pope. Here you have again the angelic pope of the radical Franciscans and of Joachim di Fiore. When the Pope, however, receives the worldly dominion – as he has done; the Constantinian gift was the great foundation of the political power of the Pope, which was a falsification historically, but which was a part of the political power of the Pope, that he was the prince of Rome at the same time in which he was the spiritual leader – if the Pope accepts such a dominion, as he did, of course, then he is a permanent heretic. It is heretical for the Pope who is a Spiritual power to become a prince. And if he does this, he is the Antichrist. We know this word from the Reformation, and from the Bible. It is a term going all through Church history, used by sectarians who criticized the Church. They say: If the Pope represents Christ – which is his claim – but is the opposite of Christ, namely the ruler of this world, he is the Antichrist.

I spoke once with Visser 't Hooft, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, in the period of Hitler in Holland, when it was conquered. He said: We Dutch people, and many other Christians, had the feeling Hitler might be the Antichrist because of all the anti-Divine things he did, in a really Satanic way. But then we looked and looked and finally realized: No; he is not good enough for this; the Antichrist must at least maintain something of the religious glory of the real Christ, so that it is possible to confuse them and to adore him. But he is too nothing for this. And then we knew the end of all times had not yet come, and Hitler is not the Antichrist.

Here you see it is not a dogma. Visser 't Hooft in these ideas was in the real tradition of the sectarian movements going through all Church history, when he had this feeling. This is a very interesting contribution to the understanding of the Church. If we call somebody the Antichrist today, it is usually simply understood as name-calling. You could also call him "swine," or something else nice! But that is not the case. "Swine" is not a dogmatic term. But "Antichrist" is. When Luther called the Pope "Antichrist," he did not want to attack the Pope in this way, except dogmatically; I. e., on the place where Christ is represented, everything is done which is against the Christ. And this is the whole tradition of the sectarian movements of the Church, and we have it also in Wyclif.

One of the criticisms which shows the Antichrist character of the Church is that they are big business. The banking house of the world was the Vatican, especially in the period in which Luther came, but long before also, The bishops were bankers, in a reduced way; but all this Wyclif insisted must be abolished. And even the monks, even the Franciscans in whose tradition he very much lives, have lost their ideal of poverty and have accommodated themselves to the general desire of the Church to be a rich Church.

But this criticism brought him to more radical consequences. He attacked transsubstantiation, saying that the body of Christ is, spatially speaking, in Heaven. He is actually, or virtualiter (I. e., with its power) in the bread, but not spatially. This of course is a complete contradiction to the idea of transsubstantiation. And now he realized that the Church rejected him, and since he knew that he was right, on Biblical grounds, in these criticisms, he realized that the official Church can err with respect to articles of faith. This was the great experience of Luther, that the Church rejected something which was a criticism of errors and which represented truth, From this follows that he is able to criticize any Church decision which is unbelievable, because the Bible is the real law of Christ. From there he criticized the number of the sacraments, special sacraments such

as marriage, etc; he criticized the character *indelibilis* , the idea in Catholicism that he who is baptized, confirmed, and ordained has a special character which he never can lose, even if he cannot exercise it. He even criticized the celibacy of the priests. He criticized the idea of the treasury of the saints, and the superstitious elements of the popular religion. The monks must be abolished because they produced separation between the one Church. And there should not be a division in the status, in principle; there should be a *communis religio* , a common religion, to which everybody belongs; and even what the Catholic church calls the monastic counsels is something which everybody shall fulfill – for instance, the love of the enemies. In this way one can say: negatively Wyclif has almost anticipated all positions of the Reformers. He was supported by the king who was of course on his side, because the English crown was for a long time in national opposition against the influence of Rome on the affairs of the English nation, religiously and, indirectly, politically. He was attacked very much, but never hurt; he was protected. After his death his movement slowly ebbed away, but the seeds were in the soil and became fertile when the real Reformation broke through.



Now this shows you cannot reform the Roman church on the basis of sectarian criticism, even if this criticism is as radical as it was in Wyclif. You can reform only in the power of a new principle, the power of a new relationship to God. This is what the Reformers did.

### **Counter-Reformation; Roman Catholicism.**

Now I am at the end of the pre-Reformers and should come to the Reformation. But before doing so, I will go to the Counter-Reformation development of the Roman church, from the Council of Trent up to the present day, in order to get: rid of this part which is so important for you that you must – no, not “get rid,” because it is one of the most important things we must learn: what is, really, the Roman Catholic church, with which we live on every place together? Do we really know what it is? You know much about the Reformation, and it is important that you learn about the history of the Church and also the history of the Roman church after the Reformation.

Through councils, there were many attempts in the Reformation period to overcome the splits. There were many councils – the great one of Worms and Augsburg, in which the Reformation got its final formulation and its classical expression. But the demand for a general council never stopped and finally a council was called to the place which you call Trent – Triente, in the southern slopes of the Alps, a very beautiful place. And there, for several decades, continuously interrupted, sessions took place from which the Reformers were actually excluded. So instead of becoming a universal council, it became a council of the Counter-Reformation.

Now the Counter-Reformation is reformation: it is not simply reaction. It is reformation insofar as the Roman church, after the Council of Trent, was not what it was before. It was a church determined by its self-reaffirmation against the great attack of the Reformation. And this is always something quite different. If something is attacked and reaffirms itself, it is not the same. One of the characteristics is that it has been narrowed down. Don't see the medieval Church in the light of present-day, post-Tridentine Catholicism. It is something quite different. The medieval Church was open, in every direction, and had for instance such tremendous contrasts as that of the Franciscans and Dominicans (Augustinians and Aristotelians); it had the tremendous contrasts of the realists and nominalists, of the Biblicists, and mystics, etc. All this was possible. Then in the Counter-Reformation, many possibilities which the Roman church had, were shut

off completely forever. The Roman church now became the church of "counter" – namely, the "counter" of reformation, as the Protestant church, the prophetic principle, became the principle of protest against Rome.

This is the unwholesome split of Christianity. The Reformation, instead of becoming the reformation of the whole Church, became the dogma of the protesting group, the "Protestants," to which we belong. The non-protestants reformed themselves, but in terms of "counter," in terms of opposition to something, not in terms of immediate creativity. And this is also always the historical situation: if group has to resist, it narrows down. Now take simply the attack of Communism on the Western world, on this country, and the tremendous amount of narrowing down of the freedoms, for which this country stands, in the defense of these freedoms. It is exactly the same situation, and the situation which we always have in history. The Reformation itself was very wide open. Then in and against the Reformation, all kinds of attacks were made and the result was a very narrow Protestant Orthodoxy – we call it here "fundamentalism" – which was not the Reformation itself, but the narrowing down of the Reformation, in the resistance against external attacks. This leads me immediately to the first points of the Council of Trent. which is the basis for the development of the Roman church..

### **Council of Trent. The doctrine of the authorities in the Catholic Church.**

1) The traditional holy Scriptures and the Apocrypha of the Old Testament are both Scriptures and of equal authority. Now Luther had removed the Apocrypha of the Old Testament from canonic validity. He would have liked to remove many more books from canonic validity, e. g., the Book of Esther, and things like that. But he was able to remove the Apocrypha – the books which were not openly acknowledged, but "hidden." Why is this important? The important thing is that these Apocrypha have a very special character, the character of legalism. They are legalism in terms of proverbs, to a great extent. And this legalistic spirit entered for a long time the Roman church, and now was preserved in terms of the authority of the Apocryphal books. So we have two Bibles, the Roman and the Protestant, and they are not identical.

2) Scripture and tradition are equal in authority – "with equal piety and reverence accepted," was the phrase. This was the form in which the Council of Trent negated the Scriptural principle. What the tradition is, was not defined. Actually the tradition became identical with the decisions of the Vatican from day to day. But it was not defined and the fact that it was open made it possible that the Pope used it,

however he wanted to use it. Of course he could not want to use it absolutely willfully, because there was an actual tradition deposited in the Councils and former decisions, but the present decision is always decisive, and the present decision about what the tradition is, is in the hands of the Pope.

3) There is only one translation which has ultimate and unconditional authority: the Vulgate of St. Jerome. This was said against Erasmus, who had edited a text of the New Testament in terms of higher criticism. This was used by the Reformers. The Pope excluded this kind of higher criticism for dogmatic purposes by making the Vulgate the only sacred translation. This was the 3rd decision, and of equal importance.

4) This point is always decisive, when the principle of Biblicism prevails: Who interprets the Bible? Here the answer was unambiguous: The Holy Mother Church gives the interpretation of Scripture – not, as in Protestantism, the theological faculties.

Now the difference is that the Pope is one, and his decision is final; the theological faculties, who were actually the leaders in the centuries of Orthodoxy, if they differed from each other, had no authority above them: there were many faculties. This of course made the authority of the theological faculties ineffective in the long run.

Now this is the doctrine of authorities. You see, this doctrine alone is a restatement of everything against which the Reformers had fought. It makes the position of the Pope unimpeachable; he cannot be attacked or criticized, He is beyond any possibility of being undercut by a competing authority, even the Bible, because he has the sacred text, the Vulgate, and he alone has the interpretation of this sacred text, in ultimate decision.

5) This doctrine is decisive for the different interpretation of man: the doctrine of sin. Sin is a transformation of man into something worse – in deterius commutatum – commuted into something worse, or deterioration. This is what the Council of Trent says against the Reformers who said that man has completely lost freedom, by his fall. His freedom – and freedom does not mean psychological freedom, in any of these discussions; this, everybody accepts – but the freedom to contribute to one's relationship to God: this freedom is completely lost. But for the Roman decision, it is not lost, it is not extinguished, but it is only weakened. The sins before baptism are forgiven in the act of baptism, but after baptism

concupiscence remains. But this concupiscence shouldn't be called sin, according to the Roman church; while the Augustana (Augsberg Confession) says that sin is lack of faith, the Roman church says that although concupiscence comes from sin and inclines to sin, it is not sin itself. Now this means man is not completely corrupted, but even his natural drives are not sin. This is one important thing because that had the consequence that Catholicism – perhaps except in this country, where it was from the beginning very much influenced by the general climate here – in Europe, in any case, Catholicism is not puritan. Catholicism can be radically ascetic, in monastics, but it is not puritan in the ordinary life. And when we from Protestant sections of north and eastern Germany came to Bavaria, we always had the feeling that we are now in a country which is gay, in comparison to the northern religious and moral climate, which had some similarity to American Puritanism. This is the difference in this doctrine. Concupiscence for the Reformers is sin in itself; for the Roman church it is not. Therefore it can admit many more liberties in the daily life, much more gaiety, many more expressions of the vital forces in man than Protestantism can.

On the other hand the doctrine of sin of the Reformers was based on the fact that sin is unbelief. Against this the Catholic church says: No, sin is neither unbelief nor separation from God. Sin is acts against the law of God. This means the religious understanding of sin was covered, by the Council of Trent. And this of course, again, is a fundamental difference. From this point on, sin was understood in Roman churches as special sins, which can be forgiven in the act of confession and absolution, and most Catholics go and tell the priest some sins which they can remember – they try hard to remember them; sometimes to forget them – in any case, if they have confessed these sins, they are liberated from them, and this again contributes to the general mood, in originally Catholic countries, namely a much fuller affirmation of the vital element of life; while in Protestantism, sin is separation from God and "sins" are only secondary. Therefore something fundamental must happen. A complete conversion and transforming of being and reunion with

God is necessary. This gives a much deeper burden to every Protestant than any Catholic. But on the other hand, the Catholic of course is in principle legalistic and divides sin into "sins." And if Protestants do this, as they sometimes do, they follow the Catholic and not the Reformation line of thought.

## **Lecture 29: Justification by Faith Alone. Sacraments. Papal Infallibility. Jansenism.**

I started to show the development of the Roman church from the period of the Reformation to the present, and discussed the meaning of the term Counter-Reformation and its consequences. This was confirmed by the definite establishment of the authorities, to which I referred yesterday. Then we started discussing something of the doctrines, first, the doctrine of sin which was formulated and included another interpretation of human sin than that of the Reformers. Now I come to the central discussion between the Reformers and the Catholic church: the doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone (*sola fide*), the formula given by the Reformers for polemic purposes, and which was the main point, of all the controversies in the Reformation period.

In the doctrine of justification, the Roman church in the Council of Trent repeats the Thomistic tradition, but with a diplomatic tendency. The Catholic church knew that this was, as the Reformers called it, the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesia*, the article with which the church stands or falls. And since this was the main point of the Reformation opposition, it was a point where the Roman church felt it had to be as conciliatory as possible. It avoided some of the distortions of this doctrine in nominalism, and attacked by the Reformers in this form. But it remained clear – and had to be, of course, from the point of view of the Roman church – in the main statement, namely, that the *remissio peccatorum*, the forgiveness of sins, is not *sola gratia*, by grace alone. It adds other elements, It speaks of the preparation for the Divine act of justification whereby a *gratia preveniens*, a prevenient grace, is effective in man, but so that this prevenient grace can be rejected or accepted, whatever the man decides. So here is the first point, where man must cooperate with God in the prevenient grace. After justification is received by man, it is given to him in the degree of his cooperation. The more man cooperates with God in the prevenient grace, the higher is the grace of justification given to him.

Justification as a gift of God contains two things: faith on the one hand, and hope and love on the other hand. Faith alone is not sufficient. And according to the Council's decision, it is even possible that justification may be lost by a Christian through a mortal sin, but that faith remains. Now the Reformers would say: if you are in faith, you never can lose your justification. But the Roman church understood

faith in its old tradition, namely, somehow an intellectual and a moral act. Of course, if faith is an intellectual act and a moral act it can be lost, and nevertheless justification can be there; but faith according to the Reformers is the act of accepting justification; and this cannot be lost if there shall be justification.

.Nothing has been more misunderstood in Protestant theology than the term *sola fide* – by faith alone – because this has been understood not only by the Romans but also by Protestants themselves as an intellectual act of man called “faith,” which forces God to give His forgiveness. But *sola fide* means that in the moment in which our sins are forgiven, we can do nothing else than receive this forgiveness, and that is what *sola fide* means. Anything else would destroy the activity of God, His exclusive grace.

Now this central position of the Reformers, the doctrine of grace received only – and therefore by faith alone – was first misunderstood and then rejected. This means that from this moment on, the split of the Church was final. There was no reconciliation possible between these two forms of religion – the one in which the act of our turning to God and receiving His grace is unambiguously a receptive act, in which God gives something to us and we don’t do anything; and the Catholic doctrine that we must act and prepare for it, that we must cooperate with God, and that faith is an intellectual acknowledgment, which may or may not be there. All the anathemas given by the Council of Trent in this point are based on this misunderstanding of *sola fide*. The central position of the Reformers was rejected and condemned, in the Council of Trent.

The next point is the sacraments. While in the doctrine of justification, the fathers of Trent tried to have at least some approximation to the Protestant position, they didn’t try that at all in the realm of the sacraments. Here caution was unnecessary because every caution would have undercut the very essence of the Roman church, namely, to be a church of the sacrament. So the Council of Trent says: “All true justice starts, and if it has started, is augmented, and if it has been lost, is restituted, by the sacraments.” This is the function of the sacraments, I. e., it is the religious function altogether.

They didn’t say much about the way in which the sacraments are effective; they didn’t say very much about the personal side of him who receives the sacrament; but they formulated it in the following way: the sacraments are effective *ex opere operato non ponentibus obicem*, i. e., by their very operation for those who do not resist. -- If you do not put before the effectiveness of the sacraments in yourselves an

impediment (obice), something which prevents them from being effective, then they are effective, however you may be subjectively, *ex opere operato* – by their mere performance, by their very operation. Now this was another central point for the Reformers, that there cannot be a relationship to God except in the person-to-person relationship, in the actual encounter-with Him – I. e. faith. And this is much more than non-resistance; it is an active turning towards God. Without this, the sacraments are not effective for Protestants. For Catholics they are.

With respect to the number of the sacraments, which was reduced by Luther and Calvin to two sacraments, all seven sacraments are instituted by Christ. And this is *de fide*, I. e. a matter of Catholic faith, which means no historical doubt as to whether they are really instituted by Christ or not is allowed any more. If you read in a Catholic book the formulation of a dogma and then under this formulation the two words "*de fide*," then this means it is a matter of dogmatic statement of the Roman church which you cannot deny or doubt, except by risk of being cut off from the Roman church.

There is no salvation without sacraments. The sacraments are saving powers, and not only strengthening powers, as in Protestantism. They have a hidden force of their own and to all those who do not resist grace they give this force. Baptism, confirmation, and ordination are of indelible character – this is against the Reformers, again. During your whole life you are baptised – and this had great practical consequences in the Middle Ages, namely, you fall under the law against heresy. If you were not baptised, you would fall under the law which limits strange religions as that of the Jews and the Islamic people and other people, and you wouldn't be persecuted. But if you are baptised, you are a Christian and you can be persecuted by the law of heresy. Now here you see what such "*indelible character*" means. It is a life-and-death problem in the practice of the Roman church of that time. The same is true of the "*indelible character*" of ordination. It means that the excommunicated criminal priest, if he happens to marry somebody in prison – which

happened often at that time – then they are married: the sacramental power in him overcomes his criminal situation and even his being excommunicated as an individual. If he marries you in prison, though excommunicated he still has the indelible sacramental power, which is always there and never can be taken from him. Here again you have a strong practical consequence of this doctrine of the "*indelible character*."

Now this, of course, stands against the Protestant doctrine of the universal priesthood. Not every Christian has the power to preach and to administer the sacraments, but only those who are ordained, and being ordained means having received sacramental power.

This sacramental power is even embodied in the ritual form of the sacraments. If there is a given ritual formula, no priest, no bishop, can transform it, can omit something from it, can change it, without sinning. The sacramental power is communicated from its origin in the actuality of the Church to the forms which are used – there is no arbitrariness possible.

Baptism is only valid in infant baptism... . . . The water of baptism washes away the contamination of original sin... But to have faith later during one's life, as Luther demanded, in the power of baptism as the Divine act which initiates all Christian being, is not sufficient for the forgiveness of sins, and this means baptism loses, religiously speaking, its actual power for the later life. It does mean anything any more except for the fact of the "character indelibilis. It is not a point to which one religiously returns"

The doctrine of transubstantiation is preserved, and where it is preserved you always find a clear test of it, namely, the demand to adore it besides its use. For Protestants, the bread is not the body of Christ, except in the act of performance. For Catholics the bread and wine are the body and the blood of Christ after they have been consecrated. So when you come into an empty Catholic church – which you always do when you travel in European countries, because they are the greatest objects of interest in most of the small and big cities – then you come into a sacred atmosphere, not into a house which is used on Sundays, and sometimes even on weekdays, but you come into a house in which always, for 24 hours, God Himself is present in the holiest of the holy, on the altar, in the shrine. And this transforms the whole mood which prevails in such a church. There are always lights and always people who go around; there is always God Himself in a defined, circumscribed way present on the altar. I believe this is the reason why the attempt of some great Protestant churches, also in this city, to be open for prayer and meditation during the whole day, has a very limited effect, because nothing happens. But if you go into a Roman church, something has happened, the effects of which are still completely there – namely, the presence of God Himself, of the body of Christ, on the altar.

On this basis, of course, the Roman church also preserved the Mass against the criticism of the Reformers, and not only the Mass for those who attend, not only the



Mass for those who are living, but the Mass, I. e., the sacrifice of the body of Christ, also for those who are dead and in Purgatory. In all these respects, the Council of Trent gave practically no reform at all, nor did it give a better theological foundation. It simply consecrated and confirmed the tradition.

A little different was the attitude towards the sacrament of penance, /which another of the main attacks of Protestantism was directed. But the sacrament was, generally speaking, maintained as a sacrament, and even the weakest point of this sacrament, the doctrine of attrition – or as Luther called it ironically, the repentance evoked by the gallows == even this kind of repentance by fear was accepted as a necessary preparation. Contrition, the real repentance, the real metanoia in the New Testament sense, is not sufficient. It is fulfilled only in connection with the sacrament and with the word of absolution. And this word does not just declare that God has forgiven, but it itself gives the forgiveness – not that the priest gives the forgiveness, but through the priest, and only through the priest, does God give forgiveness. And Christians need not only the word of the ministers, the word of absolution, but they also need satisfactions, because the punishment is not removed with the guilt, and therefore some punishments must be imposed on the people even after they have taken the sacrament – these are the satisfactions, e.g., praying the "Our Father," a hundred times, or giving money, or making a pilgrimage, etc. And this was the point where the Reformers disagreed the most.

Marriage is maintained as a sacrament, although in contradiction to this preservation of virginity is valued higher than marriage. And this is still the situation in the Roman church. In all this, something is fixed which before the Reformation still was in some kind of flux. Now it is fixed against the Reformation, and now the Roman church has lost its dynamic creativity; and you can feel this if you read systematic theologies in Catholic thinking, they deal with very secondary problems, because all the fundamental problems are solved.

The basic doctrine of all of them is the doctrine of ordination, because here the point is given in which all the others are united. The priest does what makes the Roman church Roman church: he exercises the sacramental power. Preaching is very secondary and often omitted. Sacrifice and priesthood are by Divine ordination – sacrifice in the sense of sacrificing the body of Christ in the Mass. Both are implied in every ecclesiastical law. Both are presupposed, and this church of the sacramental sacrifice is the hierarchical church; and the hierarchical church is the church of the sacramental sacrifice. This is Rome. This is Catholicism, in the Roman sense.

Now these decisions decided about the split of Christianity/ Rome actually had accepted nothing, only external remedies against abuses. But many problems were left. The first was the problem of Pope against Councils. And it is the development between Trent and the Council of the Vatican in 1870 to which we must now go.

In Trent two opinions were fighting with each other. The first was that the Pope is the universal bishop, the Vicar of Christ – universal bishop meaning that every episcopal power is derived from the power of the Pope, so that every bishop participates in the Pope and the Pope participates in him, because he is the Vicar of Christ. The other opinion was that the Pope is the first among equals, representing the unity and the order of the Church. This is the Conciliaristic point of view – the Councils finally have the ultimate decision – while the former is the Curialistic point of view: the Curia, the court of the Pope, is the central deciding power. This was the question. How was it decided? Not at all at Trent. It took a few more centuries. One of the presuppositions for this decision was that the historical development more and more destroyed those groups which were most dangerous for the Pope within the Roman church, namely the national churches. One of them was France, and the movement for an independent

French church – called Gallicanism – was a real threat to Rome. We have similar developments in Germany, in Austria, and in other places, where the national churches under the leadership of their bishops resisted many papal aspirations. The rulers had an alliance with the national bishops against the Pope. But this did not hold. It was undermined by the development itself. It could be destroyed, because the rulers, e. g., the leaders of the French revolution Napoleon, the German princes, used the Pope against their own ecclesiastical forces. Diplomacy always uses the one against the other and the other against the one. The national princes used their own bishops against the encroachments by the Pope, but they used the Pope against the power of their own bishops, if necessary.

Now the result of these oscillations was that finally the Pope prevailed by far. The result was the Vatican decision of 1870, the statement of the infallibility of the Pope.

This decision has many presuppositions. First it was necessary to give to the term "tradition" a definite sense. One now distinguished between ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition. The apostolic tradition is the old traditions which came into the Church through ways which are not given in the Bible. But the ecclesiastical tradition is the tradition about which the Pope has to decide, whenever it appears in Church history. This was the situation; the ecclesiastical tradition, which was the

only living tradition, was identical with the papal decisions. This is the positive statement.

And now its negative side: The Jesuits more and more undercut all other authorities. In contrast to Thomas Aquinas they undercut conscience and made themselves the leaders of the consciences of the princes, and of the other people too, But their important role was that in this period of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, where the Jesuit order was born in Spain, most of the deciding political personalities had Jesuitic advisors around themselves who were leaders of their consciences. Now if you guide, the conscience of a prince, you can apply this guidance to all political decisions because in all of them some moral elements are included. And that is what the Jesuits did. They turned the consciences of the Catholic princes towards all the cruelties of the Counter-Reformation. So the conscience was no authority any more.

Also the authority of the bishops was undercut by the Jesuits. The episcopalian primacy in the Councils was undercut by Jesuitic interpretation. The Councils themselves and their decisions have to be confirmed by the Pope. This was the complete victory of the Pope over the Councils. This was done in Trent. The Pope was accepted by the majority of the bishops in Trent as he who has to confirm the Council of Trent. This means that no council can have validity ever since, which is not confirmed by the Pope. Therefore the Pope is beyond criticism.

Even the Church Fathers are undercut by the Jesuits. The Jesuits were especially anti-Augustinian. There is only one Father of the Church, namely the living Pope. All earlier Church Fathers are full of heretic statements, of errors, even of falsifications. The Jesuits, as you see from this, were very modern people. They knew about the historical problems and used them in order to undermine the authority of the Church Fathers. The Protestant historiography did the same thing, in order to make possible the prophetic authority of the Reformers. So the criticism was made by both: by the Jesuits in order to give absolute power by the Pope; and by the Protestants in order to liberalize the authority of the Bible.

The constitution of 1870: "Pastor Eternus" If you read a papal bull, you will always find two or three words at the beginning which serve also as the title of the bull – e. g. , "Una Sancta," etc. This means the first words of the text are put into the title. Pastor eternus has a very full sound – the eternal shepherd – and immediately implies the feeling for the eternal function of the earthly shepherd. First pp the Pope is declared as the universal power of jurisdiction over every power of the

Church. There is no legal body which is not subjected to the Pope. Secondly he is declared universal bishop. This means, practically, that he has power over every Catholic of New York, through the bishop of New York; but if this doesn't work, he can have episcopal power directly and can revolutionize the subjects of the other bishops against their bishops, if he likes to. Thirdly, the Pope is infallible if he speaks *ex cathedra*. This of course is the most conspicuous decision of the Vatican Council and a decision which has even separated some of the Catholics who, as they called themselves, became "Old Catholics," but they remained a very small group in Western Germany, and never took over the Roman church. On the contrary. Your generation has experienced, in the year 1950, the first *cathedra* decision since 1870, and therefore a decision which is *de fide*, namely, a decision about the bodily ascension of the Virgin Mary. Now here you see how things go – the Pope has asked most of the bishops before he made this decision. The majority was on his side; a minority was not. The Pope asked about the tradition – the tradition is more than a thousand years old; we have pictures in many periods of Church history about Mary elevated to Heaven and crowned by Christ, or received by God. But now the question was: Is this a pious opinion in the Church which is tolerated, and even further? or is it a matter *de fide*? As long as it is a pious opinion, every Catholic can disagree with it, without losing the salvation of his soul. In the moment in which it is declared *de fide*, as it was done in the year 1950 by the Pope, in this moment every Catholic is bound to accept it as truth, and nothing can relieve him from this necessity. Many Catholics were deeply shaken about this, but they subjected themselves.

So infallibility does not mean that there exists a man who in whatever he talks is infallible; since the decision 80 years ago, no pope did anything which is infallible, in the strict sense; but then he did something. And as I heard yesterday, when President Shuster of Hunter College (who is a Catholic) spoke at our faculty luncheon, he was (recently) the governor of Bavaria, the most Catholic part of Germany, and he was also in connection with Rhineland Catholicism. He said there was a very hopeful development of cooperation between Protestants and Catholics. But in the moment in which this doctrine was proclaimed, cooperation almost ceased. Now he hopes that it will return again, but this showed to the Protestant and to the secular world – to all of us – that these dogmas about the infallibility of the Pope are taken absolutely seriously, without restriction. We should have known this always. Now we are reminded of it again. And this means there is no approach, from a Protestant or humanist point of view, to this doctrine and its implications.

This was finally confirmed in the fourth important point: The Pope is irremovable, by any action of the church. You must compare this with the impeachment procedures, which in America is possible against any president; they are very rare, but they have happened and can happen again. They happened, of course, against the pope in the Middle Ages, and some popes were dispossessed, removed, and others put in their place. All this came to an end in 1870, because there is no power which can remove a pope. The pope is in this sense absolute and irremovable. No impeachment is possible. In this way, implicitly every dogma formulated by the pope is valid. This means that, for instance, one doctrine which was formulated before 1870 – the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary the Virgin, in the birth of Christ, which the Franciscans wanted to have all the time was now *de fide*, while before that the Dominicans, who were against it, still could say that it is not a valid dogma. Now it is a valid dogma because of the implication that the pope has accepted it *ex cathedra*.

There was a last strong movement in the Roman church back to the original Augustinianism of the church. This movement is called according to a man named Jansen, Jansenism. The Jesuit Molina wrote against the Thomistic Dominicans who teach, as you remember, the doctrine of predestination. The Jesuits were against this doctrine and they fought for human freedom. The doctrine of predestination, although it is a strong Augustinian doctrine, was revoked. But now Jansen and the Jansenists – the most important of them is Pascal – arose and fought against the Jesuits. But the Jesuits prevailed, The popes followed them. The Jesuit was the modern man, in the Roman church – disciplined; very similar to totalitarian forms of subjection as we experience them today; completely devoted to the power of the church; and at the same time nourished with much intellectual education and modern ideas, deciding for freedom and reason.

## Lecture 30: The Reformation: Luther and Catholicism

I started yesterday to speak about one movement which, in opposition to the Counter-Reformation Catholicism, tries to return to the genuine Augustinian tradition of the Catholic past. It is the Jansenist movement, a movement opposed and finally destroyed by the Jesuits, but in such a way that the Jesuits themselves lost a lot of standing in the public valuation, and that in the 18th century they were thrown out of many Catholic countries. There was one interesting point in the discussion, namely that if the sentences of Cornelius Jansen are condemned, then it isn't only a matter of content which is condemned but also a question de fait (a question of fact) that he has really said that Now this seems very foolish, but there was a very important point behind it, namely, that if the Pope interprets the text of somebody whom he inquires into, and perhaps rejects or condemns, then the Pope is right not only in rejecting his ideas but also in stating that these ideas are really in the text. That is, the Pope is the interpreter of every text, and philological defense is not possible if the Pope says that this is what the text means. Here you have the natural extension of the totalitarian and authoritarian principle even to historical facts. The Pope decides what is a fact, not only what is true in theological terms.

Jansenism produced other writings. There was one man, Quesnel, who tried to introduce Augustinian principles again and to defend them against the Jesuits. But again the Pope took the side of the Jesuits and Augustine was removed, to a large extent, from Counter-Reformation Catholicism. In the bull, "Unigenitus," the Pope drives out the best of the Roman tradition. He drives out Augustine's doctrine of grace, of faith, and of love. For instance, it is anathema if somebody says, with Augustine, "In vain, Lord, Thou commandest if Thou dost not give what Thou orderest." This means that the commandments of God can be fulfilled only if God gives what He commands - that's Augustinianism. If somebody says this in the Roman church, after the Jansenistic struggle - he is condemned - and that means, implicitly, that Augustine is condemned.

If you have to deal with modern progressive Catholics - there are more of them in Europe than in this country, where Catholicism is completely polytheized, and has almost lost (with a few exceptions: some of our neighbors here around) the Spiritual power - then you find that these people always fall back to Augustine and always are at the edge of being thrown out, being excommunicated or forbidden or cut off

or reduced in their power of self-expression. I happened to discuss problems several times with Catholic groups, in my last trips to Germany – especially impressive was last summer, with the Rhineland – and it's astonishing how near we were with each other! But these people all have the expression of persecuted people. They feel that if they agree with me in Augustinian principles, they are in danger. And they are!. Now this is a tragedy because in the moment in which – no, it is not only the discussion itself; it is also their whole activities which come out in such discussions – they are in danger of being cut off. And this means that the condemnation of Augustinianism in the Jansenistic struggle is like a sword over every form of spiritualized Catholicism that is a threat against changes going on there.

Now the last problem I want to mention is Probabilism – that which is probable. Probable are opinions, given by authorities in the Roman church, about ethical questions. The Jesuits said: If an opinion is probable, then one is allowed to follow it even if the opposite is more probable! Now this means that in ethical respects, you have no autonomy – of course not; that's something the church would deny radically. You always have to follow the guidance of the Roman priest, of the confessor especially. But the confessor himself has many possibilities. Since he himself has not to talk to you in the power of his spirit, but has to talk to you on the basis of authorities, of the Fathers, these authorities always contradict each other, or at least are different. So he can advise you something which is probably right, in an ethical act, but it may be more probable that other things are right. But if he can find an acknowledged authority of the Church which has said something about a problem – even if it is not very safe, even if other things probably seem to be better – you can follow it. Now the result of this doctrine was a tremendous ethical relativism and laxity, chaos, and this of course was very advantageous in the 18th century, in which the church followed the new morals of bourgeois society, which was in the development, by making the ethical demands relativistic. Of course this was so abused that finally a reaction arose in the Roman church.

Alphonse Liguori – a name which you will often read – reacted against it, but he himself really didn't overcome, because he also says that it is not I who can decide, but my confessor must decide. And how can the confessor decide? Finally the principle of the probable triumphs.

Another development connected with this was that now every sin becomes a venial sin. And here again Jesuitism and the bourgeoisie – the greatest enemies – went

together in taking out the radical seriousness which the Jansenists and the early Protestants maintained.

This is the situation. Much more can be said about present-day Catholicism. I said a few things about it yesterday, about the way in which the last decisions of the Pope have continued this line. Let me refer to one decision which is not known so much as the decision about the bodily ascension of the Holy Virgin. This was a previous encyclical of the Pope in which he said things which went even beyond what was said in the Vaticanum about the infallibility of the Pope. In the Vaticanum the infallibility referred only to statements *ex cathedra*, I. e., if the Pope officially, as Pope, makes a statement of dogma or ethics. But in this encyclical of 1950, he made statements about philosophies, and sharply directed his statements against existentialism. In these statements he said that if after many considerations the Pope has decided that a philosophy is unsound, then no faithful Catholic can work in the line of this philosophy any more.

Now this goes far beyond everything which the Pope has said before. And then of course he puts Thomas Aquinas again into the role of the Catholic philosopher. That meant that some of the French existentialists, Lubac and others, and others – had to give up their teaching positions because philosophically they were existentialists – although they answered the existentialist questions in religious terms. So you see one line which goes on even against all probability.

I remember when in March 1950, the Holy Year of the Roman church – I asked Dr. Niebuhr, "What do you think: will the Pope make this declaration *ex cathedra*, about the ascension of the Holy Virgin?" Then he answered: I don't think so; he is too clever for that; it is a slap in the face to the whole modern world and it is only dangerous for the Roman church to do that today. And a few months later it was done! Now this means even such a keen observer as Reinhold Niebuhr couldn't imagine – and I was of course convinced by him, even more than he himself probably!! – I was convinced that he was right because none of us could imagine that the Pope would dare to do this today. But he did it. And what does that mean? This means two things, that an authoritarian system, in order to fix itself, has to become narrower and narrower. It has to do what the other totalitarian systems do: they exclude, step by step, one danger after the other, threatening them by the presence of other traditions. In the Middle Ages, before the Crusades, there was no other tradition than the tradition of the ancient Church, which was the great educator of the barbaric nations. This was a simple situation. The problem already



became actual when since Frederick II, ca. 1250 – the same year in which there was the 4th Lateran Council – in this moment the danger started and the Church reacted with anti-heretic laws and crusades. The same thing is in the development of the Roman church and in the development of all other totalitarian systems: they must try to prevent their subjects from meeting other traditions. Of course, the Roman church did this consistently for many, many years, in terms of the Index Librorum Vetitorum, the index of forbidden books, which are forbidden not for the scholars, of course, but for the populace; the general people is not allowed to read any of the books which are on the Index, and students must have a general or special permission, for instance, to read theological books of Paul Tillich, and others – which they sometimes do; and then they are very clever about them. I just got an article about my systematic theology from a Catholic; he gave me the manuscript, and it is an excellent analysis. They can do it very well, but they must have special permission for that. The ordinary man is not allowed to read such “dangerous” things, which means other traditions are not allowed to hit the souls of those who shall be well preserved. Now that is one of the reasons for the so-called “iron curtain.” This is why Hitler completely cut off Germany from any intellectual influence, year by year a little more. And this is an inescapable development of all authoritarian systems, and this is why this encyclical in the year 1950 was so interesting, with the declaration of the dogma.

But it has another connotation: that the liberal world has become so weak that the Pope doesn't need to be afraid of it any more. This was our error – Dr. Niebuhr's and myself – that we thought he would respect the Protestants and the humanists – perhaps even the Communists all over the world, and not put himself in a position that almost everybody would speak of the superstitious attitude of the Roman church, in making such a dogma. But he was not afraid – and probably he was right, because the very weak Protestant resistance against this and similar things cannot hurt the Catholic church any more. And the humanist opposition is almost non-existent because humanism itself is in a process of self-disintegration. And the greatness of the existentialists is that they describe this disintegration, but they themselves are in the midst of it.

Now this is the situation, and in this situation an understanding of the Roman church is more needed by all of you, in your actual ministry, than it was in the last hundred years. We are threatened by all forms of totalitarianism and authoritarianism. Now I distinguish between totalitarianism and authoritarianism: Rome is not totalitarian – only a state can be; but Rome is

authoritarian, and exercises many functions which otherwise totalitarian states have exercised. So the question which the existence of Catholicism puts before us is the question whether, with the end of the liberal era, liberalism at all will come to an end. This leads me to the question, which is very near to my heart, whether with the end of the Protestant era, the Protestant principle will also come to an end. This leads us to the problem of the Reformation.

Now I will deal with this large problem in a very short survey, after having agreed with Professor Handy that in view of the fact that you come from Protestant traditions and are nourished, so to speak, with Protestant ideas, you do not need this as much as you need a knowledge of the ancient and medieval Church. I am not so sure that you don't need it and for the very reason that the kind of Protestantism which developed in this country is not very much an expression of the Reformation, but has much more to do with the so-called Evangelical Radicals, and their influence on the forms of Protestantism as they have developed in this country. On the other hand, there are the Lutheran and Calvinistic groups, and they are strong; but they have adapted themselves to an astonishing degree to the climate of American Protestantism; and this climate is not made by them but by the sectarian movements. Therefore when I came here 20 years ago, the Reformation theology was almost unknown in Union Theological Seminary, because of the different traditions and the reduction of the Protestant tradition more to the non-Reformation traditions.

So I hope that when next fall Professor Pauck comes and gives his treatment of the Reformation, in the one and one-half year course on Church history – which will replace this one lecture I gave to you – then you will have much more occasion and better guidance for a full study of the Reformation. In any case, today I will put the Reformation into the broad sweep of Church-historical development.

### **Martin Luther:**

Now the turning point of the Reformation and of Church history as a whole is the experience of an Augustinian monk in his monastic cell – Martin Luther. Martin Luther didn't teach other doctrines – that, he also did; but this was not important, there were many others also who did; cf. Wyclif. But none of those who protested against the Roman system were able to break through it. The only man who really broke through, and whose! breakthrough has transformed the surface of the earth, was Martin Luther. That is his greatness. Don't measure his greatness by comparing him with Lutheranism; that's something quite different, and is something which

has gone through the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy and many other things – political movements, Prussian conservatism, and what not. But Luther is something different. Luther is one of the few great prophets of the Christian Church, and even if his greatness was limited by some characteristics he had, and by his later development, his greatness is overwhelming. He is responsible – and he

alone – for the fact that a purified Christianity, a Christianity of the Reformation, was able to establish itself on equal terms with the Roman tradition. And from this point of view we must look at him. Therefore when I speak of Luther, I don't speak of the theologian who has produced Lutheranism – there are many others who have done this, and Melanchthon much more than Luther – but I speak of the man in whom the breakthrough occurred, the break through the Roman system; and that is he, and nobody else.

This breakthrough was a break through three distortions of Christianity which make the Roman Catholic religion what it is. The breakthrough was the creation of another religion. What does "religion" mean here? "Religion" means nothing else than another personal relationship between man and God – man to God and God to man: that is what the difference is. And this is why it was not possible, in spite of tremendous attempts during the 16th century and sometimes later on, to produce a reunion of the churches. You can compromise about different doctrines; you cannot compromise about different religions! Either you have the Protestant relation to God or you have the Catholic, but you cannot have both; you can't make a compromise.

The Catholic system is a system of objective, quantitative and relative relations between God and man for the sake of providing eternal happiness for man. I repeat:

The Catholic religion is a system of objective, quantitative, and relative relations between God and man for the sake of providing eternal happiness for man. They are quantitative relations, which must come together – here a piece and there a piece; they are relative: none is absolute, each is relative; and they are objective, in the sense of being things and not personal relationship.

Now this is the basic structure – objective, not personal; quantitative, not qualitative, and conditioned, not absolute.

And this leads me to another sentence, namely, that the Roman system is a system of divine-human management, represented and actualized by ecclesiastical

management.. It is a system of Divine-human management represented and mediated by ecclesiastical management.

Now first the purpose: The purpose is to give eternal blessedness to man and to save him from eternal punishment. The alternative is eternal suffering in Hell or eternal pleasure in Heaven. This is the purpose of the whole thing. Now the way to do is the way which we have described when we discussed the Catholic sacraments, in which a magic giving of grace is the one side, and moral freedom which produces merits is the other side – magic grace completed by active law; active law completed by magic grace.

The quantitative character comes through also in terms of the ethical commands. There are two groups: commandments and counsels -- commandments for every Christian; counsels, the full yoke of Christ, only for the monks and partly for the priests. For instance, love toward the enemy is a counsel of perfection but not a commandment for everybody. Asceticism is a counsel of perfection but not a, commandment. for everybody.

There is a difference between two types of degrees, moral demands. There is also a quantitative character in the Divine punishments There is eternal punishments for mortal sins; there is Purgatory for light sins; there is Heaven for fully purged people in Purgatory, and sometimes, as saints, already on earth. All these are quantitative and relative elements. Under these conditions nobody ever knew whether 'he could be certain of his salvation, because you never could do enough, you never could receive enough grace of a magical character, nor could you ever do enough in terms of merits and asceticism. The result of this was a tremendous amount of anxiety at the end of the Middle Ages. In my "Courage to Be" I have

described, as one of the three great types of anxiety, the anxiety of guilt, and I have related this anxiety of guilt socially and historically to the end of the Middle Ages, It is always present, of course, but at that time it was predominant and almost like a contagious sickness. People couldn't do enough in order to get a merciful God, in order to get over their bad conscience. There was a tremendous amount of anxiety expressed in the art of that time, expressed in the demand for ever and ever more pilgrimages, in the collection and adoration of relics, in prayers of "Our Fathers," in giving of money, buying indulgences, self-torturing asceticism – and doing everything possible in order to get over one's guilt Now it is interesting to look into this time. We are almost unable to understand it. Now with the same anxiety of guilt and condemnation, Luther was in the cloister. Out of it he went into it, and

out of it he experienced what he experienced, namely, that no amount of asceticism is ever able to give us, in the system of relativities, quantities, and things, a real certainty of salvation. He always was in fear of the threatening God, of the punishing and destroying God. And he asked: how can I get a merciful God? Out of this question and the anxiety behind this question, the Reformation arose.

Now what does Luther say against the Roman quantitative, objective, and relative point of view?:

The relation to God is personal. It is an ego-thou relationship, not mediated by anybody or anything – only by accepting the message of acceptance, which is the content of the Bible. This is not an objective status in which you are, but this is a personal relationship, which he called "faith"; but not faith in something which one can believe, but acceptance that you are accepted: this is what he meant.

It is qualitative, not quantitative. Either you are separated or you are not separated from God. There are no quantities of separation or non-separation. In a person-to-person relationship you can say: there are conflicts, there are tensions, but as long as the relationship is a relationship of confidence and love, it is a quality. And if it is separated, it is something else. But it is not a matter of quantity. And in the same way, it is unconditional and not conditioned, as it is in the Roman system. You are not a little bit nearer to God if you do a little bit more for the church, or against your body, but you are near to God completely, absolutely, if you are united with Him; and you are separated if you are not. The one is unconditionally negative; the other is unconditionally positive. The Reformation restates the unconditional categories of the Bible.

From this follows that the magic element as well as the legal element in the piety disappear. The forgiveness of sins, or acceptance, is not an act of the past done in baptism, but it is continuously necessary. Repentance is an element in every relationship to God, in every moment. It never can stop. The magic as well as the legal element disappear, for grace is personal communion with the sinner. There is no possibility of any merit; there is only the necessity of accepting. And there is no hidden magic power in our souls which make us acceptable, but we are acceptable in the moment in which we accept acceptance. Therefore the sacramental activities as such are rejected. There are sacraments, but they mean something quite different. And the ascetic activities are eternally rejected because none of them can give certainty. But here again a misunderstanding often prevails. One says: Now isn't that egocentric; I think Maritain told me that once – if the Protestants think

about their own individual certainty? – Now it is not an abstract certainty, that Luther meant; it is reunion with God – this implies certainty. But everything centers around this being accepted. And this of course is certain; if you have God, you have Him. But if you look at yourself, at your experiences, your asceticism, and your morals, then you can be certain only if you are extremely self-complacent and blind toward yourselves; otherwise you cannot. And these, are absolute categories. The Divine demand is absolute. They are not relative demands, which bring more or less blessedness, but they are the absolute demand: joyfully accept the will of God. And there is only one punishment – not the different degrees between the ecclesiastical satisfactions, between the punishment in purgatory, and its many degrees, and finally Hell. There is nothing like this. There is only one punishment, namely the despair of being separated from God. And consequently there is only one grace, namely, reunion with God. That's all. And to this, Luther – whom Adolf Harnack, the great historian of the dogma, has called a genius of reduction – to this simplicity, Luther has reduced the Christian religion. This is another religion.

Now Luther believed that this was a restatement of the New Testament, especially of Paul. But although his message has the truth of Paul, it's by no means the full Paul; it is not everything which Paul is. The situation determined what he took from Paul, namely Paul's conception of defense against legalism – the doctrine of justification by faith. But he did not take in Paul's doctrine of the Spirit. Of course he did not deny it; there is a lot of it; but that is not decisive. The decisive thing is that a doctrine of the Spirit, of being "in Christ," of the New Being, is the weak spot in Luther's doctrine of justification by faith.

In Paul the situation is different. Paul has three main centers in his thinking, which make it not a circle but a triangle. The one is his eschatological consciousness, the certainty that in Christ eschatology is fulfilled and a New Reality has started. The second is the doctrine of the Spirit, which means for him that the Kingdom of God has appeared, that it is here, and there; that the New Being, in which we are, is given to us in Christ. The third point in Paul is the critical defense against legalism: justification by faith.

Luther took all three, of course. But the eschatological point was not really understood. He, in his weariness of the theological fights – you cannot become more tired of anything in the world than of theological controversies, if you always are living it; and even Melancthon, when he came to death, one of his last words was: "God save me now from the rabies theologorum – from the wrath of the

theologians! This is an expression you will understand if you will read the conflicts of the centuries. I just read with great pain, day and night, the doctor's dissertation of a former pupil, Mr. Thompson, Dr. McNeill's former assistant, an excellent work in which he describes in more than 300 narrow and large pages the struggle between Melancthonism and Lutheranism. And if you read that and then see how simple the fundamental statement of Luther was, and how the rabies theologorum produced an almost unimaginable amount of theological disputations on points of which even half-learned theologians as myself would say that they are intolerable, they don't mean anything any more - then you can see the difference between the prophetic mind and the fanatical theological mind.

### Lecture 31: Penance and Luther's Attacks. Erasmus. Muenzer.

Today I come to the point where Luther's breakthrough was externally occasioned. It is the sacrament of penance. You remember that I said there are two main sacraments in the Roman church, the Mass, which is a part of the Lord's Supper; and the subjective sacrament which had an immense educational function, namely the dealing with the individual in the sacrament of penance.

This sacrament can be called the sacrament of subjectivity, in contrast to the Mass which was the complete sacrament of objectivity. Between these two, the medieval situation goes on. But it was not the Mass – although it was tremendously attacked by Luther – which was the real point of criticism; but it was the subjective sacrament and the abuses connected with it. The abuses came from the fact that the sacrament of penance had different parts: contrition, confession, absolution, and satisfaction. The first and the last points were the most dangerous ones.

Contrition – the real repentance, the change of the mind – was replaced by attrition, the fear of eternal punishment, which Luther called the repentance inspired by the imminent prospect of the gallows. So it has no religious value for him. The other dangerous point was satisfaction, which did not mean that you can earn your forgiveness of sins by works of satisfaction, but that you have to do them because the sin is still in you after it is forgiven, and that the humble subjection to the satisfactions demanded by the minister is the decisive thing.

Now this means that the priest imposed on the communicandus all kinds of activities and sometimes such difficult ones that the people wanted to get rid of them. And that was accepted by the Church in terms of the indulgences, which are also sacrifices – you must sacrifice some money, in order to buy them, and then you could get rid of the satisfactions. The popular idea was that these satisfactions are effective for overcoming one's guilt consciousness. This was a point where one can say that a kind of market with eternal life was going on: you could buy the indulgences and in doing so you could get rid of the punishments, not only on earth but also in Purgatory. The abuses brought Luther to a thinking about the whole meaning of the sacrament of penance. In doing so he came to conclusions which were absolutely in opposition to the attitude of the Roman church, and not only to the abuses: the criticism went to the source of the abuses, namely the



doctrine itself. And so Luther put on the door of the Wittenberg church the famous 95 Theses, the first of which is the classical formulation of everything which is Reformed Christianity: "Our Lord and teacher, Jesus Christ, saying 'Repent ye,' , wished that the whole life of the believers be penitence." Now this means the sacramental act is only something in which a much more universal attitude comes to a sacramental form; it is not the sacramental which is important but the relationship to God. It is not a new theological doctrine but a new relationship to God which the Reformers brought about, and this comes out in this one sentence – the relationship is not an objective management between God and man, but it is a personal relationship of penitence, first of all, and then faith.

Perhaps the most striking and paradoxical expression is given by Luther in the following words: "Penitence is something between injustice and justice. Therefore, whenever we are repenting we are sinners, but nevertheless for this reason we are also righteous, and in the process of justification, partly sinners, partly righteous – that is nothing but repenting.," This means that there is always something like repentance in the relationship to God.

Luther at that time did not attack the sacrament of penance as such. He even thinks the indulgences can be tolerated. But he attacked the center, out of which all the abuses came, and this was the decisive event of the Reformation.

But after this attack had been made, the consequences were clear. The money of indulgence can only help against those works which are given by the Pope, i. e., the canonic punishments. The dead in Purgatory cannot be released by the Pope; he can only pray for them; he does not have power over the dead. The forgiveness of sins is an act of God alone, and the Pope can only declare – and "Pope" also means every priest – that God has done it already. There is no treasury of the Church out of which the indulgences can come, except the one treasury, namely the work of Christ. No saint can do superfluous works because it is our duty to do everything we can anyhow; how can something be superfluous? The power of the keys, namely of forgiving sins, is given by God to every disciple who is with Him. The works of satisfaction are only the works of love; all other works are an arbitrary invention by the Church. And there is no time and space for them, because in our real life we must always be aware of the works of love which are demanded from us in every moment. Confession, which is made by the priest in the sacrament of penance, is directed towards God. You don't need to go to the priest for this. In every "our Father" we confess our sins, and that is what matters and not the

sacramental confession. Arid about satisfaction he said: this is a completely dangerous concept because we cannot satisfy God at all; if there is satisfaction, it is done by Christ to God, but is not done by us. So this concept has to disappear. Purgatory is a fiction and an imagination of man, with no biblical foundation. The only thing which remains is absolution. And of course Luther was psychologically educated enough to know that a solemn absolution may have psychological effects, but he denied that it is necessary. The message of the Gospel, which is the message of forgiveness, is the absolution in every moment, and you can get it as the answer of God to your prayer for forgiveness; you don't need to go to church for this.

This means the sacrament of penance is completely dissolved. Penitence is transformed into a personal relationship to God and to the neighbor, against a system of means to obtain the release of objective punishments in Hell, Purgatory, and life, which the Roman system demanded. In reality, all these concepts are undercut at least, if not abolished. Everything is put on the basis of a person-to-person relationship between God and man. You can have this relationship even in Hell. That means Hell is simply a place, but it is not a state. And that is abolished by the kind of Reformation idea of relationship to God.

Now of course this was a danger and a difficulty, that in this way many educational degrees have been abolished by Luther and only the absolute categories of the relationship between God and man: are left. The Pope did not accept this, of course, and so the conflict between Luther and the Church arose. Now let's make clear beforehand that this was not the beginning of the Reformation. Luther hoped to reform the Church, including the Pope and the priests. But the Pope and the priests didn't want to be reformed in any way. The last great bull defining the power of the Pope says: "Therefore we declare, pronounce and define that it is universally necessary for salvation that every human creature is subject to the Roman high priest." This is the bull which defines most sharply the unlimited and absolute power of the Pope.

Now Luther criticized the Church when the Church did not follow his criticism of the sacrament of penance. There is only one ultimate criterion for Christianity, namely the message of the Gospel. Therefore there is no infallibility of the Pope. The Pope may fall into error. -- Then his Catholic enemies showed him that it is not only the Pope but also some of the Councils which deserved to be attacked now. Then he didn't retire, but said: Then also the Councils may fall into error. -- And this was actually the break, because this meant even if you go from the curialistic

theory that the Pope in Rome alone is the monarch who decides... ; if you go then to the conciliaristic theory that the great Councils of the Church are absolutely infallible, even then Luther said: No, they are human, they may fall into error. The Pope could be tolerated, he says, if he were only by human law, by the law of expediency, as the chief administrator of the Church. But that is not what the Pope claims. He claims to be by Divine right, and that means he is an absolute figure in the Church. And here Luther said this cannot be stood, because no human being can ever be the vicar of the Divine power; the Divine right of the Pope is a demonic claim and actually the claim of the Antichrist. Of course, when he said this the break was clear. There is only one head of the Church, namely Christ, and the Pope as he is now is the creation of the Divine wrath to punish Christianity for its sins. This was meant theologically, and not as name-calling; he meant it very seriously, theologically, when he called the Pope the Antichrist. It was not directed against a special man and his shortcomings – everybody criticized the behavior of the Pope at that time – but he criticized the position of the Pope, namely that the Pope is by Divine right the representative of Christ. In this way the Pope destroys the souls, because he wants to have a power which God alone can have.

This was Luther's criticism of the Church, and this was the basis for the break with the Church. The basis for this break was not that he taught another theology, but the break was that the Pope did not admit criticism because he claimed to be of Divine right in everything he does and thinks, officially.

One of the main things which Luther himself experienced was the importance of monasticism in the Roman church – he himself was a monk. Out of the monastic attitude of the Roman church a double morals followed, the morals of counsels, advices for higher goodness, greater nearness to God, namely the monastic attitude; and then the rules which are valid for everybody and which everybody has to fulfill. The higher counsels for the monks, such as fasting, discipline, humility, celibacy, etc., make the monks something ontologically higher than the ordinary man. He has higher substantial graces, whatever he may be personally.

Now this was demanded by the historical situation when the Church became larger and larger and the masses of the people couldn't take upon themselves, as it was said, the whole yoke of Christ; they couldn't because it was too heavy for them. So a special group did it, and this group follows the special advices for higher morality and piety. They were the religiosi, those who are religious in their whole attitude,

who are not religious as everybody has to be, but who make religion, so to speak, their "vocation."

Now the double morals are the main point of Luther's attack. The Divine demand is absolute and unconditional. It refers to everybody. This absolute demand destroys the whole system of religion. There is no status of perfection, as the Catholics ascribed to the monks. Everybody has to be perfect and nobody is able to be perfect. Not man's power is able to give one the graces to do the right thing; but not a special endeavor, as the monks have it. Decisive in all cases is the intention: the good will, not the magic habit of which the Catholic Church spoke. And this intention, this good will, is right even if its content is wrong. But the valuation of a personality is dependent on the inner intention of a person towards the good. Luther took this very seriously. For him it is not enough if you will to do the good, the will of God, but you must will what God wills joyfully, with your voluntary participation. And if you fulfill the whole law but you don't do it joyfully – because you are allowed to do it, because you are a child and the image of God – then it is worth nothing. The obedience of the servant is not the fulfillment of Christian ethics. Only he who loves, and joyfully loves, God and man is able to fulfill the law. But this is what is expected from everybody.

This means Luther turns religion and ethics around. We cannot fulfill the will of God without being united with Him. And this is impossible without forgiveness of sins. Even the best people have elements of despair, and aggressiveness and indifference and self-contradiction. Only on the basis of Divine forgiveness can the full yoke of Christ be imposed on everybody. This is completely different from a moralistic interpretation of Christianity. The moral is that which follows – it might or might not follow; it should follow, essentially; sometimes it does not – but the prius of it is the participation in the Divine grace in His forgiveness and in His power of being.

This makes all the difference in the world, and it is one of the most unfortunate happenings that Protestantism always is in the temptation to turn around the thing into its opposite, namely, to make the religious dimension dependent on morality. Wherever this is done, we are outside the realm of true Protestantism. You should never forget this in your congregations and everywhere: if somebody says, "Oh, God must love me, and I love Him because I do almost everything He demands." – namely, what the suburban neighbor demands! – then the religious and ethical situation is completely turned into its opposite. But if somebody says: "I

know that I don't do anything good, or so little seemingly good, so ambiguous that the only thing which is good in me is that God declares that I am good and that I am able to accept this Divine declaration, and if I accept it, then it may happen that there may be a transformed reality; but the other side is the first." And that is one of the centers of the whole Reformation. Therefore the famous phrase, "by faith alone," (*sola fide*.)

This phrase is the most misunderstood and distorted, phrase of the Reformation. People have taught it means that if you do the good work of believing, having faith in something – something unbelievable, especially – then you do that good work which makes you good before God. The phrase should be not "by faith alone" but "by grace alone, which is received through faith." So if you want to be correct, don't translate *sola fide* by the English phrase "by faith alone," but "by grace alone, through faith," whereby "faith" means nothing than the acceptance of grace. That is what Luther was concerned about, because he had experienced that if you do it the other way around, then you are always lost, and if you take it seriously you are in absolute despair, because if you know yourselves, you know that you are not good; you know it as well as Paul did; and that means that ethics are the consequence and not the cause of goodness.

Now I come to that element in the Roman Catholic Church which gave it its tremendous power; the sacramental element/ The Roman church Is essentially a sacramental church. This means that God is essentially seen as present, and not as somebody who is distant and only has to demand. A sacramental world-view is a world-view in which the Divine is seen as visible and real. Therefore a church of the sacrament is a church of the present God. But on the other hand the Roman church was a church in which this sacrament was administered as a magic means by the hierarchy, and only by the hierarchy, so that everybody who does not participate in it is lost, and he who participates in it, even if he is unworthy, gets the sacrament. And as you know, there were 7 sacraments. I discussed this fully before.

What does Luther do? He said: "No sacrament is effective by itself without full participation of the personal center, I. e., without the listening to the word connected with the sacrament, and the faith which accepts it. The sacrament *qua* sacrament cannot help at all. The magic side of sacramental thinking is destroyed.

From this follows that transubstantiation is destroyed because this doctrine makes the bread and wine a piece of Divine reality put on the altar. But such a thing does not exist. The presence of God is not a presence in terms of objective presence, on a

special place, in a special form; but it is a presence for the faithful alone. There are two criteria for this: it is only for the faithful, then it is only an action: Then if you come to a church and there is no sacrament spread; you don't need to do anything about it because it is pure bread. It becomes more than this only in action, only in the moment in which it is given to those who have faith. For the Roman theory it is there all the time. If you come into an empty Roman church, you must bow down before the shrine because there God Himself is present, even if there is nobody else present except you and this sacrament. "Present" means transformation, transubstantiation. This Luther abolished. He denounced the character *indelibilis* as a human fiction – the character which you get in baptism, confirmation, and in ordination, that whenever you have it you are always a Christian, and for instance, under the heresy laws and an object of persecution, which the Pagans and Jews are not; or if you are confirmed, you are always a soldier of Christ and have, so to speak, the invisible uniform of the Church. Or if you are ordained, you always have the power of the sacraments, so that even if you are thrown out of the Church, you can perform sacramentally valid marriages, and other things.

All this, Luther denied, calling it a human fiction. There is no such thing as a character which cannot be destroyed. If you are called to the ministry, you must minister exactly as everybody does who is called to some profession. If you go away from it, if you become a businessman or professor or shoemaker, then you are this and no longer a minister at all, and you have no sacramental power at all. You can have priestly power, if you are a pious Christian towards everybody else. But this is going on all the time, and doesn't need ordination.

Now this took away the sacramental foundation of the whole hierarchical system. But most important was his attack on the Mass. The Mass is a sacrifice we bring to God, but we have nothing to bring to God, and therefore it is a blasphemy, a sacrilege. And in most Protestant countries in the period of the Reformation, the state government, prohibited – as still in many countries today there are laws against printed or spoken, blasphemy – the Mass, which was supposed to be such a blasphemy, and therefore it was persecuted and it a blasphemy because here man gives something to God, instead of expecting that God has given everything He has to give, namely Himself in Christ, and that nothing more than this was needed. This was perhaps the most profound attack on the Roman system, which is a sacramental system completely, and which was dissolved just by this criticism.

Now this is the conflict of Luther with the Roman church – some of the main points in it. I now come to the other conflicts, the conflict with the humanists and the conflict with the Evangelical Radicals.

### **The Conflict with the Humanists**

The representative of humanism at that time was Erasmus of Rotterdam. In the beginning they had friendly feelings for each other, but then the attacks on both sides created a break between Protestantism and humanism, and this break has not been healed up to today, in spite of the fact that Zwingli tried to heal it as early as in the 20's of the 16th century. Erasmus was a humanist, but he was a Christian humanist; he was not anti-religious at all. He believed himself to be a better Christian than any Pope of his time, and he agreed in this in unity with Luther. But he was a humanist, and that means he had special characteristics distinguishing him from the prophet. You have Dr. Richardson's article on the prophet and the scholar, and the confrontation of Luther and Erasmus in these terms. What Luther couldn't stand in Erasmus, he has expressed very clearly. He couldn't stand his unexistential detachment, the detachment from the religious content without passion, as he says; the scholarly attitude towards the contents of the Christian faith. He felt that in Erasmus there is some unconcern, while the problems are matters of ultimate concern.

The second is that as every scholar has to be skeptical about the traditions and the meaning of the words and everything else which he shall interpret, Erasmus was a scholarly skeptic. Luther couldn't stand this. For him absolute statements in matters of ultimate concern are needed.

Third, Luther was a radical, in political and every other respect; but Erasmus seemed to be to him a man of adaptation to the political situation – not for his own sake but in order to have peace on earth.

Fourthly, Erasmus has a strongly educational point of view. The development of the individual in educational terms is decisive for him. And all humanism, up to today, has this educational drive and passion.

Fifth, Erasmus' criticism is rational criticism. It is lacking in revolutionary aggressiveness.

Now all this Luther sees in Erasmus. But the whole discussion finally focused around the doctrine of the freedom of the will. Erasmus was for human freedom;

Luther against. But now please don't write that down without writing down everything I have to add now!: Neither Erasmus nor Luther doubted about man's psychological freedom. They didn't think man is a stone or animal. And even Karl Barth says: I know well that man is not a turtle – But he doesn't know it well! because he doesn't see that this means that man has freedom, freedom of deliberation and decision, freedom of contradicting himself, and that in this freedom which is his rational structure his image of God is implied.

Erasmus as well as Luther knew that man is essentially free, that he is man only because he is free. But now on this basis they drew opposite consequences. For Erasmus this freedom is also valid if you try to come to God. You can help God. You can cooperate with God, for your salvation. For Luther this is absolutely impossible. It takes the honor from God and from Christ and makes man into something which he is not. So he speaks of "the enslaved will." . . . but it is the free will which is enslaved. It is ridiculous to speak of a stone that it has no free will. Only he who has free will can be said to have an enslaved will, namely enslaved by the demonic forces of reality.

Luther attacks the Anselmian point of view by saying that justification by faith is the only point of certainty, and that it is not our contribution to salvation that can give us quiet consolation. He says that in Erasmus the meaning of Christ is denied and finally that the honor of God is denied.

I think that here we have a very fundamental difference between the two attitudes. The attitude of the humanist is that of detached analysis. And if it comes to synthesis, it is that of the moralist, in contrast to the prophet, who sees everything in the light of God alone

Luther's conflict with the Evangelical Radicals: This is especially important for you because the prevailing type in this country is not produced by the Reformation directly, but by the indirect effect of the Reformation through the movements of Evangelical Radicalism. What is the meaning of this concept?

First of all we must agree that they all are dependent on Luther. They have a long history in the Middle Ages, but only Luther liberated the tendencies which were alive in the Middle Ages from the suppression to which they were condemned. Luther's emphasis on almost all points was accepted by the Evangelical Radicals, but then they went beyond him. They had the feeling that he stood half-way. First of all his principle of the Bible – to which we come tomorrow – is something which they



attacked. God has not spoken but once, in the past, and then has become silent; but He always speaks, He speaks in the heart or depths of every man, if this man is prepared by his own cross to hear. The Spirit is in the depths of the heart, although not by ourselves but from God. From this point of view, he says that it is always possible that the Spirit speaks through individuals.

Now I speak mostly of Thomas Muenzer, who is the most creative of the Evangelical Radicals. But in order to receive this Spirit, man must participate in the cross. Luther, he said, preaches a sweet Christ – the Christ of forgiveness. But we must, he said, also preach the bitter Christ, namely the Christ who says that we must take His cross upon ourselves. The cross is, so we can say, the extreme, the boundary situation. It is internal and external. And Muenzer, in an astonishing way, expresses that in modern existentialist categories. It is the human finiteness which, if he realizes it, produces in him a disgust about the whole world. Then he really becomes poor in spirit. Then the anxiety of creaturely existence grasps him. Then he finds that courage is possible. But then it happens that God appears to him and that he is transformed. And if this has happened to him, then he can have very special revelations. He can have individual visions, not only about theology as a whole, but also about matter of the daily life.

These groups felt on this basis that they are the real fulfillment of the Reformation, that Luther remained half-Catholic, that they are elected; while the Roman church has no certainty for any individual with respect to justification; while Luther has the certainty of justification but not of election; while Calvin had the certainty not only of justification but at least to a great extent also of being elected – Muenzer and his followers had the certainty of being elected within a group of elected, namely the sectarian group.

From this point of view of the inner Spirit, all sacraments fall down. And the immediacy of the procession of the Spirit makes even what is left of the office of the minister unnecessary in the sectarian groups. Instead of that, they have another impetus, namely the transformation of society either by suffering, if they cannot change it, and abstinence from arms and oaths and public office and all those things involving you in state existence; or if they are radical, then by political measures, by the sword overcoming the evil society in which one lives; and then one becomes a religious socialist. These two movements we have in that period, and these movements and the whole attitude have influenced this country very much.

## Lecture 32: Reformation Sects. Luther's Teachings – Faith, Concept of God.

We spoke yesterday of the doctrine of the Evangelical Radicals, or Enthusiasts, as they are often called. I gave you some of their main doctrines. The main difference is the emphasis on the presence of the Divine Spirit not only in the Biblical writings but also in every individual in every moment, giving even counsels for daily-life activities.

Now Luther had another feeling. His feeling was basically the feeling of the wrath of God, of God who is Judge. This was his central experience. Therefore when he speaks of the presence of the Spirit, he speaks of it in terms of repentance, of personal wrestling, which makes it impossible to have the Spirit as a possession. This seems to me the difference between all perfectionist and pietistic attitudes, that in Luther and the other Reformers, the main emphasis is on the distance of God from man. Therefore the Neo-Reformation theology of today, people like Barth, emphasize again and again that God is in Heaven and you are on earth. This feeling of distance - or as Kierkegaard has said, repentance, is the normal relationship of man to God.

The second point in which the Reformation theology differs from the theology of the radical evangelistic movements, is the different meaning of the cross. For the Reformers, the cross is the objective event of salvation and not the personal experience of creatureliness. This is a fundamental difference. Therefore the participation in the cross either in terms of human weakness or in terms of human moral endeavor to take one's own weakness upon oneself, is not the real problem with which the Reformation deals. This is presupposed. But this is something which we often have today as a nuance, even in our place here, that some of us emphasize more - following the Reformation theology - the objectivity of salvation through the cross of Christ; and others, the taking the cross upon oneself. These two are, of course, not contradictions in any way, but in most important problems of human existence it is not a matter of exclusiveness but of emphasis. And it is clear that those of us who are influenced by the Reformation tradition emphasize more the objectivity of the cross, as the cross of Christ, as the self-sacrifice of God in man, etc.; while others who come from the evangelistic tradition - which is so strong in this country - emphasize more the taking upon oneself one's cross, namely the cross of misery, etc. The next point is that in Luther the revelation is always

connected with the objectivity of the historical revelation, I. e., with Scripture, and not in the innermost center of the human soul, which as Luther felt was the pride of the sectarian movements that they believed that in the real human situation it is possible to have immediate revelation, apart from the historical revelation as embodied in the Bible.

The other is that Luther and the whole Reformation, even Zwingli, emphasized infant baptism, namely that baptism is the symbol of the prevenient grace of God and not dependent on the subjective reaction. Of course, the subjective reaction of the infants is either not possible or, as Luther and Calvin believed, a Divine miracle. But that is not decisive. The decisive thing is that God starts, and that before we answer much can happen; that the time difference between the indefinite moment of maturity and the definite moment of baptism doesn't mean anything in the sight of God. Baptism is the Divine offer of forgiveness, and to this we always can come back. But adult baptism emphasizes the objective participation, the ability of the mature man to decide.

Here you have again the difference.

Then a last point: Luther was very much worried, as were the other Reformers, by the way in which these sects isolated themselves and emphasized that they were the true Church, and that each of their members was elected. Such a possibility was completely out of the thinking of the Reformers, and I think in this they were right; psychologically it is well known that the sects of the Reformation period were very much out of love towards anybody who did not belong to the sect, and I believe that some of you probably have had similar experiences even today with sectarian or quasi-sectarian groups. What is most lacking in them is not theological insight, not even insight in their negativities, the love which identifies the negative situation in which we are, with the negative situation of everybody – outside or inside the center.

The final point was the eschatology: the eschatological negation of the state, the revolutionary criticism which we find in the sectarian movements in the Reformation period, either more passive or more active, were negated by the Reformers by their eschatology, namely the eschatology of the coming kingdom of God, from a vertical line – nothing to do with the horizontal line, which is, so to speak, given to the devil anyhow. Luther always spoke of the beloved last day, and he was longing for it, in order to be liberated – not so much as Melancthon, from

the "wrath of the theologians," but from the power-play which was at that time not much nicer than it is today.

So it was another mood, and again this mood is so visible in the present status of things in Europe and here. Here under the strong influence of the Evangelical Radicalist movements we have the tendency to transform reality. In Europe we have, especially today after the two World Wars, the eschatological feeling, the desire for and the vision of the end in a very realistic sense, and the resignation of the Christians with respect to the power-plays. Now all such things – I must emphasize again – are exaggerations, typical structures, and no typical structure is ever empirically real; everything empirically real is an approximation to a type. But I would say, after my double experience in Europe and here, that it is very visible that European Christianity is dependent on the Reformation especially, and the American more on the experiences of Evangelical Radicalism, especially in this political point of view.

Now I come from Luther's discussion with the Roman church, . . . Erasmus, and Thomas Muenzer, to Luther's doctrines themselves. There I am starting with the principle of biblicism which is attributed to Luther. Whenever you see a monument representing Luther, you will always find that he is represented with the Bible in his hands. This is a little misleading, and the Catholic church is right when it says that there was biblicism in the whole Middle Ages – and I have emphasized that in this class very often; the biblicistic attitude is especially strong in the late Middle Ages immediately preceding the Reformation. And in a Catholic nominalist theologian such as Ockham, we have already a radical criticism of the Church by the Bible.

Nevertheless in Luther the biblical principle means something else. What did it mean before? In the nominalistic theology of people like Ockham, it meant the law of the Church, which may be turned against the actual Church but which remains a law. And on the other hand, we have the Renaissance relationship to the Bible, in which the Bible is the source book of the true religion, to be edited by good philologists such as Erasmus. These were the two attitudes – the legal attitude in nominalism, the doctrinal attitude in humanism. But neither of these was able to break through the fundamentals of the Catholic system, which are anyhow the system of the law. Therefore only a new principle of the understanding of the Bible was able to break through the nominalistic and humanistic doctrines.

Luther had many of these elements in himself. He valued the philological edition of the New Testament by Erasmus; he often falls back into nominalistic attitudes of a legalistic character in connection with the doctrine of inspiration, that every word of the Bible is inspired by the dictate of God. This happened to him again and again, and especially when he had to defend a doctrine as in the case of the Lord's Supper, where a literal interpretation of the biblical word seemed to support his point of view. But beyond this he had something which is quite different from all this, and which brings his interpretation of the Bible in unity with, his new understanding of the relationship to God. I can make this clear when I speak of the word of God.

Now you don't hear any term more often – in Lutheran traditions here and in Europe, and in Neo-Lutheran Reformation tradition, as in Barth, and others – than the term "word of God." Now if you hear this term, then you hear a term which is more misleading than you can perhaps realize. In Luther himself it has at least six different meanings. But let's go to the first one which is of importance, namely the relationship to the Bible.

Luther said – but he knew better – that the Bible is the word of God; but he often said, when he really wanted to express what he meant, that in the Bible there is the word of God, the message of the Christ, and His work of atonement, His creation of the forgiveness of sins, and salvation. He makes it very clear, when he says, it is the message of the Gospel, which is in the Bible; and therefore the Bible contains the word of God. But he also says: The message existed before the Bible, namely, in the preaching of the Apostles. And as Calvin says, later, Luther says that the writing which led to the books of the Bible was an emergency situation; it was necessary, but it was emergency. Therefore only the religious content is important; the message is an object of experience. "If I know what I believe, I know the content of the Scripture, since the Scripture does not contain anything except Christ." The criterion of Apostolic truth is the Scripture, and the standard of what is truth in the Scripture is whether they deal with Christ and His work. (ob sie Christum treiben), I. e., whether they deal with, or concentrate on, or drive toward Christ. And only those books contain powerfully and Spiritually the word of God which deal with Christ and His work.

He distinguishes special books, from this point of view. He says: The main books in which this criterion is fulfilled are the Fourth Gospel, Paul's Epistles, and I Peter. These are the books in which Christ is dealt with centrally. From there, other books

can be judged. And even beyond the Bible, Luther can say very courageous things. He says, for instance, that Judas and Pilate would be apostolic if they gave the message of Christ, and Paul and John would not if they gave not the message of Christ. He even says that everybody today who had the Spirit as powerfully as the prophets and apostles, could create new Decalogues and another Testament; only because we have not the Spirit in this fullness must we drink from their fountain.

This of course is extremely nominalistic and anti-humanistic. This is emphasizing the Spiritual character of the Bible. It is a creation of the Divine Spirit in those who have written it, but it is not a dictation!

From this he was able to give a half-religious, half-historical criticism of the biblical books. It does not mean anything whether the five books of Moses were written by Moses or not. He knew very well that the texts of the prophets were in great disorder. He also knew that the later prophets are dependent on the earlier ones. He also knew that the concrete prophecies of the prophet often proved to be errors. He says that the Book of Esther and the Revelations of John do not really belong to the Scripture; the Fourth Gospel excels the Synoptics in value and power, and James' Epistle has no evangelical character at all.

Now I would say that although Lutheran Orthodoxy was not able to preserve this great prophetic tradition of Luther one thing was done by his freedom – namely it was possible for Protestantism to do something which no other religion in the whole world was able to do: it could receive the historical treatment of the biblical literature – we call it often with very misleading words "higher" or biblical criticism. It is simply the historical method applied to the holy books of a religion. Now this is something which is impossible in Catholicism – or at least in a very limited way only possible there. It is impossible in Islam – Prof. Jeffery once told the faculty that every Islamic scholar who would try to do what he did with the text of the Koran, would be in danger; research into the original text of the Koran would imply historical criticism of the present text, and this is impossible in a legalistic religion. So if we are legalists with respect to the Bible, in terms of dictation, we fall back to the stage of religion which we find in Islam, and we have felt nothing of the Protestant freedom which we find in Luther.

Now that is the main thing I wanted to say. There are many other problems. There is one with which you often probably deal when you discuss the relationship of systematic theology to the historical departments, especially to the Old and New Testament departments. There the question is: What has the biblical department to

do with the systematic, and vice versa? And I don't know that this is very often in your minds. Let me say one thing about it. Luther was able to interpret the ordinary text already in his translation, and then in his preaching and writings, generally, in such a way that he did not have to take refuge in a special pneumatic, let us say, or spiritual interpretation besides the philological interpretation. The ideal of a theological seminary – against which the historical departments are sinners as much as the systematic departments, including myself – would be to give biblical interpretations in such a way that the philological exactitude, including all that we call higher criticism, is combined with an existential application of the biblical text to the questions which we have to ask, and which are supposed to be answered in systematic theology. The separation into "experts" is a very unhealthy state of things – where the New Testament man tells me "I cannot discuss this problem with you because I am not an expert," and I say – which is always sinful – sometimes to an Old and New Testament colleague, "I cannot say that because I am not an expert in Old or New Testament." And insofar as we all do it, we really go against the original meaning of Luther's attempt to remove the allegoric interpretation and to return to a philological interpretation which is at the same time Spiritual.

So you see these problems are very actual ones, even today, and I think here the student body can do a good deal: you can simply not accept that from us, that we are "experts" and not theologians any more – only "experts." Don't accept that. Ask the biblical man about the existential meaning of what they give you, and the systematic theologian about the biblical foundation – in the real biblical texts, as they are philologically understood.

Now I come to two doctrines of Luther in which the Reformation is so far superior to everything which is going on today in popular Christianity that I want to emphasize this very much, namely his doctrine of sin and faith. For Luther sin is unbelief. "Unbelief is the real sin." "Nothing justifies except faith, and nothing makes sinful except unbelief." "Unbelief is the sin altogether." "The main justice is faith, and so the main evil is unbelief." Therefore the word 'sin' includes what we are living and doing besides the faith in God." Now this presupposes a concept of faith which has nothing whatsoever to do with the acceptance of doctrine so I come to this immediately. But first what does it do for the concept of sin? It means that the differences of quantity (heavy and light sins), of relativity (sins which can be forgiven, in this or that way) do not matter at all. What they mean is only sin if it is

related to God. Everything which separates us from Him has equal weight; they are not more or less; they have qualitative character.

This means that for Luther, life as a whole, nature and substance, are corrupted.

And here I want to say something immediately about this term "total corruption," or depravity, which you will often hear. Please understand this in the right way. It does not mean that nothing is good in man – no Reformer or Neo-Reformation theology ever said that. But it means that there are not parts in man which are exempted from existential distortion; for instance, not his thinking, or some other part in him. And in this sense the concept of total depravity would be translated by a modern psychologist: man is distorted, or in conflict with himself, in the center of his personal life. This means that everything is included, and that is what Luther meant. And if somebody speaks of "total," then please always ask whether he means it in the absurd way – which would make it impossible to say that he is totally depraved, because a totally depraved man would not say that he is totally depraved. Even saying that we are sinful presupposes something above sin. But what he can say is that there is no section in him which is not touched by self-contradiction, or sin. This is what Luther means, and this includes the intellect and all other things. The evil are evil since they do not fulfill the one command, which is not a command, but which must be done voluntarily, namely, the love to God. So it comes now to the fundamental principle that it is the lack of love towards God which is the basis of sin. As I said before, it is the lack of faith; both things are said by Luther all the time, but faith always precedes because it is an act in which we receive God, and love is the act in which we are united with God. Everybody is in this situation, and nobody knew more about the structural power of evil in individuals and in groups than Luther. He didn't call it compulsion, as we would call it today, in terms of modern psychology; but he knew that it was just this, that there is a power – he called it the demonic power, the power of Satan – which is more than individual decisions. These structures of the demonic – of which you all have had an experience in these last hours – is a reality, and Luther knows that it is impossible to understand sin in terms of special acts of freedom.. You must understand it in terms of a structure, of a demonic structure which has compulsory power over everybody, and which can be counterbalanced only by a structure of grace. And we all are in the conflict between these two structures. Sometimes we are ridden, as Luther describes it, by the one compulsion, the Divine; and sometimes by the other. But the Divine is not possession or compulsion; it is at the same time liberating, because it liberates what we essentially are.



Luther's strong emphasis on the demonic powers comes out in his doctrine of the Devil, whom he understood as an organ of the Divine wrath, and sometimes of the wrath of God itself. There are statements in Luther where one doesn't know whether he felt something as the wrath of God or as the Devil. Actually it is the same for him, when he says that as we see God so he is for us; if we see Him in the demonic mask then He is the demonic mask to us, and He destroys us. If we see Him in the infant Jesus, where in His lowliness He makes visible His love to us, then He has this love to us. So he was a depth psychologist in the profoundest way before knowing the methodological research we know. .. But he saw these things in non-moralistic depths, which was lost not only in Calvinistic Christianity to a great extent, but also in Lutheranism itself.

This leads to a consideration of Luther's doctrine of faith. Faith is for him receiving God, when He gives Himself to us. He distinguishes it completely from historical faith (*fides historica*), which acknowledges historical facts. It is for him the acceptance of the gift of God, the presence of the grace of God which grasps &. Luther has again and again emphasized the receptive character of faith – *nihil facere sed tantum recipere* – doing nothing, only receiving. These ideas are all concentrated in the acceptance of being accepted, namely in the forgiveness of sins, which produces a quiet consciousness, and which produces a spiritual vitality towards God and man. "Faith is a living and restless thing. The right; living faith can by no means be lazy." So in other words the element of knowledge in faith is an existential element and therefore everything else follows from it. "Faith makes the person; person makes the works, not works the person." Now that is something of which I would say that it is again confirmed by everything we know today in terms of depth psychology. It is the ultimate meaning of a life which makes a person. And a split personality is not a personality which doesn't do good works. There are people who do many good works – and again I refer to the example we have in our minds and hearts (referring to the recent death of a classmate) – but where the ultimate center is lacking. And this ultimate center is what Luther calls faith: that makes a person; but faith of course not as accepting doctrines, even any Christian doctrine, but faith .as accepting the power itself out of which we come and to which we go, however the doctrines may be through which we accept it.

Now you know, in my "Courage to Be," I have called that absolute faith, a faith which can lose every concrete content but which still can exist as an absolute affirmation of life as life, of being as being. Therefore the only negative thing is

what he calls disbelief, not being united with the power of being itself, with the Divine reality over against the forces of separation and compulsion.

This is in correspondence with Luther's concept of God, one of the strongest ideas of God in the whole history of human and Christian thought. It is not a God who is a being besides others, but it is a God whom we can have only through contrast. What is hidden before God is visible before the world, and what is hidden before the world is visible before God. "Which are the virtues (I. e. powers of being) of God? Infirmity, passion, cross, persecution: these are the weapons of God." "The power of man is emptied by the cross, but in the weakness of the cross the Divine power is present." And from this he says, about the state of man: "Being man means non-being, becoming, being. It means being in privation, in possibility, in action. It means always being in sin, in justification, in justice. It means always being a sinner, a penitent, a just one." Now this is paradoxical and it makes clear what Luther means with God. God can be seen only through the law of contrast.

This is confirmed by his idea of God when he goes to ontological considerations, as he does in his writings on the sacrament. He denies everything which can make God finite, or a being besides others. "Nothing is small, God is even smaller. Nothing is so large, God is even larger. He is an unspeakable being, above and outside everything we can name and think. Who knows what that is, what is called 'God'? It is over body, over spirit, over everything we can say, hear and think." And from this he makes the great statement that God is nearer to all creatures than they are to themselves. "God has found the way that His own Divine essence can be completely in all creatures, and in everyone especially, deeper, more internally, more present, than the creature is to itself and at the same time nowhere and cannot be comprehended by anyone, so that He embraces all things and is within them. God is at the same time in every piece of sand totally, and nevertheless in all, above all, and out of all creatures." Now here you have formulas in which the old conflict between the theistic and the pantheistic tendency in the doctrine of God is solved, in formulas which show the greatness of God, the inescapability of His presence, and at the same time, His absolute transcendence. And I would say, very dogmatically: Every doctrine of God which leaves out one of these two elements doesn't speak really of God but of something which is less than God.

This is also expressed in his doctrine of omnipotence "I call the omnipotence of God not that power by which He does not do many things He could do, but the actual power by which He potently does everything in everything." ;I e. . He does

not sit beside the world and look at it from outside but what He actually does is something quite different: He is acting in all of them, in every moment – that is what “omnipotence” means. The absurdity of a God who calculates whether He should do what He could do, is removed by the powerful idea of God as creation.

Luther then speaks of the creatures as the “masks” of God, I. e., God is hidden behind them. “All creatures are God’s masks and veils in order to make them work and help Him to create many things.” Therefore all natural orders and institutions are filled with Divine presence, and so is the historical process. He deals with all our problems of the interpretation of history. The great men in history, the Hannibals, the Alexanders, and Napoleons – and Hitlers he would add, or, when he speaks of the Goths, the Vandals. the Turks – or the Nazis or Communists. he would add today – they are driven by God to attack and to destroy; and in this sense He speaks to us through them. They are God’s word to us. even to the Church. Especially the heroic persons break through the ordinary rules of life. They are armed by God. God calls them and forces them, but gives them their hour, or as I would say. their kairos. Outside of this kairos they cannot do anything. Without the right hour, nobody can do anything. And in the right hour. no one can resist those who act in the right hour. But .although God acts in everything in history, history is at the same time the struggle between, God and Satan and their different realms. And the reason why Luther could makes these two statements is that God creatively works even in the demonic forces. They could not have being; if they were not dependent on Him as the Ground of Being, as the creative Power of Being in them, in every moment. He makes it possible that Satan is the seducer, and makes it possible at the same time that Satan is conquered.

This is Luther’s idea of God, and however you feel about it, it is certainly a great, powerful, religious, and. not moralistic idea of God. And that is what I wanted to mediate to you today.

### Lecture 33: Luther (cont.) Christology, Doctrines of the Church and State. Zwingli.

We now come to something about Luther's doctrine of Christ. He is interesting first of all in his method, which is quite different from the method of the old Church, It is, as I would call it, a real method of correlation., namely correlation between what Christ is for us and what we say about Him. The approach is an approach from the point of view of the effects Christ has upon us. Melanchthon in his *Loci*, his famous dogmatik, has expressed the same idea. The object of Christology is to deal with the benefits of Christ, not with Him and His nature besides His benefits. Luther says, describing this method of correlation, "As somebody is in himself, so

is God to him, as object. If a man is righteous himself, God is righteous. If a man is pure, God is pure for him. If he is evil, God is evil for him. Therefore He will appear to the damned as the evil in eternity, but to the righteous as the righteous, according to what He is in Himself." Now this is a correlative speaking about God. Calling Christ God means, for Luther, having experienced Divine effects which comes from Him, namely forgiveness of sins. If you speak about Him besides His effects, then this is a wrong objectifying method.. You must speak of Him in terms of the effects He can have. He who has Divine effects is Divine this is the criterion.

What we say about Him has always, therefore. the character of participation suffering with Him, being glorified with Him; crucified with Him, being resurrected with Him. "Preaching the Crucified means preaching our guilt and the crucifixion of our evils." "So we go with Him first servant, therefore now King, first suffering, therefore now in glory; first judged: therefore now Judge." So you must act: first humiliation, in order to get exultation!" Together condemned and blessed, living and dead, in pain and in joy!" This is said of Christ and is said of us. The law of contradiction, which we have discussed, the law of God always acting paradoxically is fulfilled in Christ; He is the key to God's acting, namely by contradicting the human system of valuations. This paradox is also valid in the Church. It is, in its visible form, miserable, humble, but in this humbleness exactly as in the humbleness of Christ, we have the glory of the Church. Therefore the glory of the Church is especially visible in periods of persecution, suffering and humility. Christ therefore is God for us, our God, God as He is in relationship to us. Luther also says: He is the word of God. This is the decisive thing, and from this point of

view Protestantism should think Christology in existential terms, namely in terms of never giving up the immediate correlation of human faith and what is said about Christ, and not making Him an object where you discuss chemical formulas, between Divine and human nature; or biological formulas, between Son of God and Son of Man all this has sense only if it is existentially received.

Luther emphasizes very much the presence of God in Christ. In the Incarnation the Divine Word or Logos is incarnated. Luther's doctrine of the Word has different degrees. First it is the internal Word, which he also calls the heart of God, or the eternal Son. Only this internal Word, which is God's inner Self-manifestation, is perfect. As the heart of man is hidden, so the heart of God is hidden. The internal Word of God, His inner Self-manifestation, is hidden to man. But Luther says: "We hope that in the future we shall look to this Word, when God has opened His heart, by introducing us into His heart."

The second meaning of the Word, in Luther: The Word which is Christ as the visible word. In Christ the heart of God has become flesh, i. e., historical reality. In this way we can have the hidden word of the Divine knowledge of Himself, although only for faith, and never as an object among other objects.

Thirdly, the Word of God is the spoken word, by prophets, by Jesus, by the Apostles, and so the Biblical word, in which the internal word is outspoken. But the revealing. Being of the eternal word in Christ is more than all the spoken words of the Bible. They witness to Him, but they are only in an indirect way the Word of God. Luther was never so bibliolatrous as so many Christians still are today. And when we speak today about the theology of the "word," then we can say Luther was not a theologian of the word in this sense, namely if "word" is translated by "talking." "Word" for him was Self-manifestation of God, and this was already by no means only in the words of the Bible. In it, it was in, with, and under, but not identical with it.

Luther has a fourth meaning of the word of God, namely the word of preaching, but this is only number four, and if somebody speaks of the "Church of the word," thinking of the predominance of preaching, in the services, then he is certainly not a follower of Luther in this respect.

Luther's doctrine of incarnation has a very special character. He emphasizes again and again the smallness of God, in the Incarnation. Man cannot stand the naked Absolute, God; he is driven to despair if he deals with it directly. Therefore He has

given the Christ, in whom He has made Himself small. "In the other works, God is recognized according to the greatness of His power, wisdom, and justice, and His works appear too terrible. But here, in Christ, appears His sweetness, mercy, and charity." Without knowing Him we are not able to stand God's majesty and are driven to insanity and hate. This is the reason why Luther was so much interested in Christmas, and has written some of the most beautiful Christmas hymns and poems. The reason is that he emphasizes the small God in Christ, and Christ is smallest in the cradle. And so this paradox, that he who is in the cradle is He who is Almighty God at the same time, was for Luther the real understanding of Christmas. This was Christmas for him, this mystical paradox of the smallest and most helpless of all beings, having in himself the center of Divinity. And this is something which we must understand, out of his thinking in the paradoxical nature of God's Self-revelation, that the slowest and weakest is the strongest, because God acts paradoxically.

#### **Luther's doctrine of the Church:**

Here we ask the question, which nobody can omit asking who knows the Reformation: Is it possible that on the basis of these principles of the Reformation, which I have developed, that a Church can live? Doesn't a Church mean something else, namely a community, organized, authoritarian, with fixed rules, traditions, etc? Isn't a Church necessarily Catholic, and is not the Protestant principle that God alone is everything and man's acceptance of God is only the secondary thing, doesn't this Protestant principle contradict the possibility of having a Church?

Now there is no doubt that Luther's doctrine of the Church is his weakest point, and that the Church problem was the most unsolved problem which the Reformation left to further generations. And the reason is that the Catholic system was not replaced and could not be replaced definitively by a Protestant system of equal power, because of the anti-authoritarian and anti-hierarchical form of Protestant thinking.

The type of the Church which Luther chooses and with him Zwingli and Calvin .against Evangelical Radicals, is the ecclesiastical in contrast to the sectarian type. You know all this distinction from Troeltsch, and it is a very good distinction. It is a distinction between a Church which is the mother, out of which we come, which always was there, which we have not chosen, to which we belong by birth and if we awake out of the dimness of the early stages of life, we can perhaps reaffirm that we belong to it in confirmation; but we already belong to it objectively.

Now this is quite different in the churches of the radical Enthusiasts where the individual deciding that he wants to be a member of the "church" is the creative power of the church. The church is made by a covenant by the decision of individuals to, make a church, namely an assembly of God. So here you find everything is dependent on the Independent individual who is not born from the Mother Church, but who produces active church communities. These differences are very visible if you come from the Continent, where we have the ecclesiastical, while you have, even in the old denominations here the sectarian type.

Luther's distinction between the visible and the invisible Church :is one of the most difficult things to understand. The one way in which you can understand it immediately is to understand when you hear those words that they are the same Church, they are not two Churches. This is the main point we must make. The invisible Church is the Spiritual quality of the visible Church. And the visible Church is the empirical and always distorted actualization of the Spiritual Church. So they are not two realities. They are one and the same. This Was perhaps the most important point of the Reformers against the sects. The sects wanted to identify the Church according to its visible and its invisible side. The visible Church must be purified, purged as all totalitarian groups call it today from everybody who is not Spiritually a member of the Church. This presupposes that you know who is Spiritually a member of the Church. And this presupposes judging, looking into the heart, into which God alone can look. This of course produces something which the Reformers could not accept, because they knew that there is nobody who does not belong to the "infirmiry" that is the Church, as they called it, the infirmiry which is the visible Church. But this "infirmiry" is for everybody; nobody can get out of it definitely. And therefore everybody belongs to the Church essentially, even if he is Spiritually far away from it.

Now what is this Church? The Church is an object of faith, according to its true essence. It is, as Luther said, "hidden in spirit." It is an object of faith. When you see the actual working, the ministers, the building, the congregation, the administration, the devotions, etc., then you know that in this visible Church, with all its shortcomings, there the invisible Church is hidden. It is an object of faith, and it demands much faith, if you look at the life of the ordinary present-day congregations, and have the faith that in this life, which is by no means a life of high standing, in any respect, the Spiritual Church is present. And you can believe it only if you believe that it is not the people who make the 'Church, but it is the

foundation, which is not the people but the sacramental reality, the Word, which is the Christ. Otherwise we would despair about the Church.

And don't ever forget that for Luther and for the Reformers, the Church in its true nature is a spiritual matter Luther also called it invisible; spiritual and invisible is usually the same in him; it is an object of faith and cannot be shown. And so when you tell somebody who criticizes you because of the Church, and you say: "Yes, it is a quite good institution; there are many good people who come out of it; some people in it are much more serious than some secular people; some are very willing to sacrifice, and the moral standards are always very high, on the average higher than other groups in all this you are right, but you don't speak of the Church. And then the next day you can find that you were much too optimistic and you find out it is rather miserable, what you say. This is not the basis of faith. The basis of faith is exclusively the foundation of the Church, namely Christ, the sacrament and the Word.

This is Luther's doctrine of the Church. What about the Church offices? Every Christian is a priest, and therefore has potentially the office of preaching and administering the sacraments. They all belong to the spiritual element. But for the sake of order, some especially fit personalities shall be called by the congregation for this purpose. The ministry is a matter of order. It is a vocation like all other vocations, but it is not a state of perfection or of higher graces or of anything like this. No priest is more a priest than any layman is priest. But he is the "mouthpiece" of the others, because they cannot express themselves and he can. Therefore only one thing makes the ministers, namely the call of the congregation. Ordination has no sacramental meaning at all.

"Ordaining is not consecrating," he says. "We give in the power of the Word what we have, the authority of preaching the Word and giving the sacraments: that is ordaining." But this is not producing a higher grade in the relationship to God.

The Church government became identical very soon with the state government in the Lutheran countries, and with the society government we call it "trustees in the Calvinist countries. The reason was that the hierarchy had been removed by Luther. There is no pope, no bishops, no priests, in the technical sense. Who shall govern in the Church? Now of course first of all the ministers, but they are not sufficient; they have no power. The power comes from the princes, or from free associations with society, as we have very often in Calvinism. Therefore the princes are called by Luther the highest bishops of their realm. But they are not to interfere with the



inner-religious things; they have to perform the administration the *ius circa sacrum*, the right around the sacred, but not into the sacred, which remains for the ministers, and every Christian.

The situation which produced this was an emergency situation. There were no bishops, no authorities, any more; but the Church needed administration and government. And so emergency bishops were created, and nobody else could be this except the electors and princes.

Out of this situation, which Luther accepted as an emergency situation, something occurred already, when it began to work, namely the state Church in Germany. The

Church became more or less and I think "more" than "less" a department of the state administration, and the princes became the arbiters of the Church in all respects. This is not intentionally so, but it shows that a Church needs a political backbone. In Catholicism it was the Pope and the hierarchy; in Protestantism it was the "outstanding members of the communion" who must take over, after the bishops have disappeared either the princes, or social groups in more democratic countries, or if the princes do not take it.

### **Luther's doctrine of the state:**

This certainly is not an easy thing, because many people believe that Luther's interpretation of the state is the real cause of Nazism. Now first of all a few hundred years means something in history, and Luther is a little bit older than the Nazis! But this is not the decisive point. The decisive point is that the doctrine of the state was a doctrine of positivism, of a Providence which was positivistically interpreted. Positivism means that the things are taken as they are. The positive law is decisive, and this is connected by Luther with the doctrine of Providence. Providence brought this power and that power into existence, and therefore it is impossible to revolt against this power. You have no rational criteria by which to judge the princes. You have, of course, the right to judge them from the point of view whether they are good Christians or not. But whether or not they are, they are God-given, and so you have to be obedient to them. Historical destiny has brought in the tyrant, the Neros, , the Hitlers. And since this is historical destiny, we have to subject ourselves to it.

Now this means that the Stoic doctrine of natural law, which can be used as criticism of the positive law, has disappeared. There is only the positive law. The

natural law does not really exist for Luther. The Stoic doctrines of equality and freedom of the citizen in the state, are not used by Luther at all. So he is non-revolutionary, theoretically as well as practically. Practically, he says that every Christian must stand every bad government because it comes from God providentially.

The state, for Luther, is not a reality, in itself, and it is always misleading to speak of the "state theory" of the Reformers. The word "state" is not older than the 17th or 18th centuries, but instead of that they had the concept of Obrigkeit, i. e. authority, superiors. The government is the authority, the superiors, but not the structure called the "state." This means there is no democratic implication in Luther's doctrine of the state. The situation is such that the state must be accepted as it is.

But how could Luther maintain this? How could he who more than anybody else has emphasized love as the ultimate principle: of morals, accept the despotic power of the states of his time? Now he had an answer to this and this answer is very much full of spirit. He says that God does two kinds of works, the one is His own, his proper work, as he calls it namely the work of love, which is mercy, grace, always giving. And then is "strange" work, which also is the work of love, but it is strange; it works through punishment, through threat, through the compulsory

power of the state, through all kinds of harshness, as the law demands. Now people say this is against love, and then ask the question: How can compulsory power and love be united with each other? And they derive from this a kind of anarchism, which we find so often in ideas of Christian pacifists and others. The situation formulated by Luther seems to me to be the true one. I believe that he has seen, profounder than anybody whom I know, the possibility of uniting the power element and the love element in terms of this doctrine of God's "strange work" and God's "proper work." The power of the state which makes it possible that we are sitting here, or that works of charity are done, is a work of God's love. The state has to suppress the aggression of the evil man, of those who are against love, and the strange work of love is to destroy what is against love.

Now if you call this a strange work, you are right, but it is a work of love, namely, without destroying that which is against love, love would cease to be a power on earth. Now this is the deepest form of the relationship of power and love which I know. This whole positivistic doctrine of the state makes it impossible for Lutheranism to accept revolution, from a theological point of view. Revolution is the

production of chaos and even if it tries to produce order, it first produces chaos, and then the disorder is even greater. Therefore Luther was unambiguously against revolution. He accepted the positive given as a gift of destiny.

One more point. One often has said that Luther has something to do with Nazism. I think this is completely wrong. Nazism was possible in Germany, because of this positivistic authoritarianism, because of Luther's affirmation that the given prince is given forever and cannot be removed. This was, of course, a tremendous inhibition against any German revolution, if it had been possible at all which I don't believe in modern totalitarian systems. But an additional spiritual cause was the negation of any revolution, and therefore the acknowledgment of the given authority as authority by everybody. When we say that Luther, is responsible for the Nazis, then we say a lot of nonsense. When we, for instance, think of the ideology of the Nazis, then it is quite clear that this ideology is almost the opposite of Luther's. He had no nationalistic ideology; he had no tribal ideology, no racial ideology. He praised the Turkish state for its good state administration. .. From this point of view, no Nazism is in Luther.

There is perhaps another point of view: the conservatism of his political thinking. That's true, but it also is nothing except a consequence of the basic presuppositions. So don't make this mistake, even if you hear it very often from seemingly expert people. It's only true in one thing: namely, Luther has broken the back of the revolutionary will, in the Germans. There is no such thing as a revolutionary will in the Germans, but that is all we can say, and nothing beyond it.

And let me add here: some say often that it was first Luther and then Hegel who produced Nazism. This is equally nonsense, because Hegel, even if he said that the state is God on earth, didn't mean the power state: he meant the cultural unity of religion and social life, organized in a state. And if this is done, he indeed would say that there is a unity of state and Church. But ""state"" is for him not the party movement of the Nazis, the relapse to tribal systems; state is, for him organized society, repressing sin.

Now I go away from Luther. What I was able to give you was rather short. Even a whole semester's seminar on him is not enough. But I hope I gave you some kind of survey helping you to overcome at least some interpretations of this great prophetic personality. In him the Reformation broke through. -- Now I come to people who took over his breakthrough and carried it through in different ways.

**Zwingli** is not as original a theologian as Luther was, in whom the breakthrough occurred.

He is partly dependent on and partly independent of Luther, but he is never the first beginning, as it was in Luther.

What is the character of Zwinglian Christianity? This is not so easy. Zwingli was very much influenced by the humanists. He remained his whole life a friend of Erasmus, in spite of all the roughness with which Luther separated himself from Erasmus. Zwingli did not, as later on Melancthon also never did. These people were humanists besides being Christians. They were Christian humanists. And this is especially clear in a man like Zwingli. The authority of the Scriptures in Zwingli is based on the call of the Renaissance: Back to the sources! The Bible is the revelation of God. "God Himself wants to be the schoolmaster." (Luther could never have written such a sentence; He is certainly something more powerful than a schoolmaster!) But the decisive difference is that Zwingli had a fully developed doctrine of the Spirit, something which was lacking in Luther and the other Reformers. "God can give truth, through the Spirit, in non-Christians also," he said. The truth is given to every individual always through the Holy Spirit, and this Spirit is present even if the word of the Bible is not present. In this way he liberated somehow from the Biblical burden which Luther put upon people.

Luther had a dynamic form of Christian life. Zwingli and, as we shall see, Calvin also had a static one: faith is psychological health. If you are psychologically healthy, then you can have faith, and vice versa. They are identical, actually. Faith for Luther is a dynamic thing, going up and down, reaching heights and depths. This is always possible for Luther. For Zwingli it is much more static, much more humanistically balanced. It is much more something which is similar to the bourgeois ideal of health. Faith is psychological health. "Christian faith is a thing which is

felt in the soul of the faithful like health in the body." The continuous breaking down and re-arising of the community with the personal, wrathful and loving God, is Luther's type. The corresponding undynamic union with God is Zwingli's type. Zwingli is progressive; Luther is paradoxical. And therefore it is so difficult to speak about the paradox, on Zwinglian soil. Either the paradox is dissolved or, if not, then it is accepted. The paradox of the Christian life against the rational progressivism of the Christian life this is the basic difference. But there is another difference to which we shall go tomorrow.

## Lecture 34: Zwingli and Luther. Calvin.. Predestination and Providence. Capitalism. Church and State.

We started discussing Zwingli, but my state of tiredness prevented me from giving a full account of him. I don't want to go back to it, but I want to say that the interesting thing, in the first half of the Swiss Reformation, in Zurich where Zwingli was carrying it through, is that one could call it a synthesis of Reformation and humanism. When I say this, you remember that I spoke about Luther's relationship to Erasmus and the final break, but the continuation of humanistic elements in the further Reformation on Lutheran soil, represented especially by Melanchthon. These two men, Zwingli and Melanchthon ("Melanchthon" from the Greek, meaning "black earth,") Luther worked together with Melanchthon almost from the beginning of the Reformation, in Wittenberg (the theological wing which was dependent on him was often called Philippism) i.e. dependent on Philip Melanchthon, or "Blackearth," if you want to retranslate him out of the nobly sounding Greek into less nobly sounding language! This man was deeply influenced by Erasmus, and never broke with him. Similarly with Zwingli. Both were Reformers insofar as they followed Luther. They were at the same time humanists insofar as they accepted elements coming from the master and leader of all humanism, Erasmus.

This was the difference between Luther and the Swiss reformers. When we come to Calvin, keep in mind that he is largely dependent on Zwingli, as well as on Luther, that he turns back to a certain extent from Zwingli to Luther, but in spite of all this he also was humanistically educated and in his writings shows the classical erudition in style and content.

This is the general character of the Swiss Reformation, in contrast to the Lutheran. I believe that whenever liberal theology arises, as it did from the 17th to the 19th centuries, that since that time theologians develop in all denominations who are nearer to Zwingli than to Calvin. One of the main points I made is that Zwingli believes that the Spirit is directly working in the human soul and that therefore God's ordinary working goes through the Word, the Biblical message, but that God, extraordinarily, can also work on people who never had contact with the Christian message with people whom we speak of as living in foreign religions, or the

humanists. The examples given by Zwingli are mostly from Greek philosophers, such as Socrates, and others.

I just read yesterday a hymn which, besides Christ and Luther, I think Socrates was in the content to be sung by a congregation of southern Negroes or Middle Western peasants. And I don't think whether it is very wise to bring theology in this way into a hymn. And if people like Zwingli, Calvin, and others, speak of revelation and salvation in men like Socrates, and Seneca, and many others, whom they mention, then there is a mistake in this, the mistake that they know pagan piety only in these representatives; but pagan piety has exactly the same character as Christian piety in this respect, that it is at least equally intensive in the common people who are really pious with respect to what they know of God, and these are the men they should have mentioned. But since they were good humanists, they mentioned only their own sociological class, namely the people who were not only great men but who also belonged to the intelligentsia. And if you ever decide as ministers to take such things into a hymn, please decide against it. Although I gave you in these classes as much Socrates and Plato as I could, nevertheless I don't sing to them

Now I come to another point, the immediacy of the Spirit, the possibility of having the Spirit without the Word. I didn't discuss last time the special doctrine of God in Zwingli, which is a very important doctrine, namely the doctrine that God is the universal dynamic power of being in everything that is. In this sense you can recognize some of my own theological thinking in Zwingli and Calvin, but you can recognize it also in Luther only that the Zwinglian humanistic form in which this was conceived has much more rational deterministic character God works through the natural law. And therefore the idea of predestination which Zwingli strongly accepted has a color of rational determinism. We shall see that the same is true of Calvin, while in Luther it has much more the character of Occamism and Scotusism, namely the irrational acting of God in every moment, which cannot be subjected to any law.

This has something to do and here is another point of difference between the Lutheran and the Zwinglian Reformation, namely that the law plays a different role in both of them. In Zwingli it is not the law which makes us sinful, but the law shows us that we are sinful; while Luther had the profound psychology which we have rediscovered in modern psychological terms, that the law produces resistance and therefore, as Paul has called it, makes sin more sinful. This was lacking very much in Zwinglian and also in Calvinistic thinking. The concept of law has a very

positive connotation. Now this refers to natural law generally. And natural law, as you probably have not forgotten, means in ancient literature, first of all law of reason the logical, ethical, and juristic law. And secondly, also the physical law. So don't think of physics when you read of "natural law," in books of the past. Usually it means the ethical law which is in us, which belongs to our being, which is restated by the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount, but which in itself is by nature, i. e., by created nature, by that which we are essentially. And this kind of law is much more in the mind of Zwingli and Calvin than it is in the mind of Luther. Luther detested the idea that God has established a law between Himself and His world, between Him and the finite actions and things and decisions. He wanted everything as non-rational, non-legal, as possible, not only in the process of salvation but also in the interpretation of history and nature; while Zwingli and Calvin accepted nature in terms of law. When therefore Immanuel Kant defined nature as a realm in which physical law is valid, this was much more Calvinistic or Zwinglian; in any case, it was not Lutheran. For Luther nature is the mask of God through which..He in an irrational. way very similar to the Book of Job acts when He acts with mankind.

Therefore the attitude toward nature in Calvinism and in Zwinglianism is much more according to the demands of bourgeois industrial society, namely to analyze and transform nature for human purposes; while Luther's relationship to nature is much more in the sense of the presence of the Divine, irrationally, mystically, in everything that is. And if I hadn't known this before, very theoretically, and not very safely, .I would have learned it when I came to this country.

For Zwingli the law of the Gospel is law not only, of course: he accepts Luther's doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, as did every Reformer, naturally. But he at the same time spoke about a new evagelic law, as nominalists and humanists did. This law should be the basis of the law of the state. Don't forget that Wyclif and Occam had exactly the same idea, and that in this point a more Catholic element is in the Reformed thinking, namely the thought that the Gospel can be interpreted as the new law. This term, the "new law," is a very old one, appearing very early in Church history. For Luther, this would have been an abominable term; the Gospel for him is grace and nothing other than grace, and never can be the new law. But for Zwingli it can be. And this law is valid not only for the moral situation but also for the state, the political sphere. Politically, the law of the Gospel decides the laws of the city. If, therefore, cities do not subject themselves to the law, they may be attacked by those cities which' subject themselves to the law; and the law is against

Catholicism; so Zwingli started the war against the cantons in Switzerland, and died in the battle against them, and was conquered. But the principle remained, the principle that the law of the Gospel should be the basis of the state law, and this had tremendous influence in world history: it saved Protestantism from being overwhelmed politically by the Roman Church, by the Counter Reformation.

But there is still one deeper element of difference between Luther and Zwingli. It is the doctrine of the sacraments. The fight between Luther and Zwingli in 1529 in Marburg was a fight between two types of religious experience one, of a mystical interpretation of the sacrament; the other, of an intellectual interpretation Zwingli said: The sacrament is a sure sign or seal reminding us as symbols, and expressing our will to belong to the Church. This: Divine Spirit sets beside them, not through them. Baptism is a kind of an obliging sign, like a badge. It is a commanded symbol, but it has nothing to do with subjective faith and salvation, which are dependent on predestination.

In the doctrine of the Eucharist, the decisive point was seemingly a matter of translation, but, in reality a matter of a different Spirit. The open discussion went around the statement: "This is my body," about the meaning of the word "is." The humanists usually interpreted it by "signified." "m means." Luther emphasized that it cannot mean this but must be taken literally: the body of Christ is literally present. For Zwingli it is present for the contemplation of faith, but not per essentiam et realiter (by essence and in reality) "The body of Christ is eaten when we believe that He is killed for us." You see that everything is centered on the subjective side. It is the representation of a past event. The present event is merely in the subject, in the mind of the believer. He is certainly with His Spirit present in the mind, but He is not present in nature. Mind can be fed only by mind, or spirit by spirit, and not by nature.

Against Luther he says that the body of Christ is circumscribed (by circumscription) in Heaven, i.e., on a special definite place. Therefore it is a special individual thing; it does not participate in the Divine infinity. As man with a body Christ is finite, and the two natures are sharply separated. Therefore the Lord's Supper is a memory and a confession but not a personal communion with somebody who is really present. Luther emphasizes the reality of the Presence, and in order to do this he invented the doctrine of the omnipresence of the body of the elevated Christ.

The presence of Christ is repeated in every act of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Historical person and sacramental person are identical. In order to do this, Luther



said against this: "Where you put God, there you must put humanity: they cannot be severed or separated; it has become one person." To say that the Divine character of the bodily Christ is only said in symbolic or metaphoric terms is from the Devil. So Luther completely rejected the idea that the Divinity of Christ is separated from His humanity in Heaven, Even in Heaven, the Divinity and humanity of Christ belong together. He expresses this in the profound and fantastic doctrine of the ubiquity of the body of Christ the omnipresence of the body of the ascended Christ. "Christ is present in everything, in stone and fire and tree, but for us He is present only when he speaks to us through everything. Now this is the idea that God drives toward embodiment, towards corporeity. and that the omnipresence of the body of Christ in the world is the form in which God's eternal power is present in the world. Now if you want to carry this through in scholastic terms, namely taking it literally or superstitiously, then it is an absurd doctrine because it belongs to a body to be circumscribed. But if you take it symbolically, then it is a profound doctrine because it says that if God is present in anything on earth He is always also present with His concrete historical manifestation, namely with Christ.

Now Luther meant that much more primitively, but his meaning is that in every natural object you can have the presence of the Christ. And in a Lutheran service during the Sundays in Spring, you always find a tremendous amount of flowers and nature brought into the church, because of this symbol of participation of the body of Christ in the world.

Now what kind of principles are involved in this discussion?

When it came to an end, all the Reformers agreed that they denied the; transubstantiation doctrine and agreed about a lot of points about the Lord's Supper, but they did not agree about the ubiquity, I. e., the presence of Christ everywhere. This means there is a fundamental difference, which Luther stated when he left the castle of Wittenberg: "They have not the same spirit with us." What did this mean? First of all, it is the relationship between the spiritual and the bodily existence. In Zwingli you have the humanist intellectualism separating the spirit from the body, and ultimately the Neoplatonic background of this. Therefore in Calvinism there is a lack of interest in the problem of expression. But for Luther, spirit is only present in its expressions; it is directly present in consciousness which finally led to the amalgamation with Cartesian ideas.

The interest is incorporation. The (mystic) Oetinger said: "Corporality is the end of the ways of God." Therefore the great interest in the bodily reality of Christ, in history and in sacrament.

The second spiritual difference is the religious meaning of nature, the control of nature in Zwinglian thinking which demands regularly calculable natural laws the dynamic naturalism of Luther which often goes into demonic depths and is not interested in any law of nature.

And then the final and most important form which was expressed in two Latin formulas. *Finitum capax infiniti* the finite is capable of the infinite. For Zwingli this is not possible. They said directly: *finitum non capax infiniti* -- the finite is not able to have the infinite within itself. And this of course is a very fundamental difference, which first occurs in Christology and then is extended to the whole sacramental life and the whole relationship to nature.

It is perhaps wise to say that in the Swiss Reformation, from which, with Zwingli, we now turn to Calvin, the sociological background was co-determining for the special form in which the whole thing happened. In Luther we have the form of surviving aristocracy. In Switzerland we have the large cities which, like Zurich and Geneva, were mostly trade and small factory cities. That means that sociologically the background of the Swiss Reformation drives in the direction of industrial society. In the German Reformation especially the North German, the Lutheran Reformation it sticks to the pre-bourgeois situation as much as possible. If you read Luther's little catechism, you have there a paternalistic culture of small farmers and some craftsmen in villages and small cities. If you read, in contrast to this, some letters and other expressions in Zwingli and Calvin, then you have the men of the world. who have a world-wide horizon, through the trading relationships in the centers in which they lived. This produces a quite different attitude towards nature, the state, and everything.

### **Calvin:**

This leads us now to Calvin himself. The first point I want to make in my discussion of Calvinism is his doctrine of God and man. Here we have the turning point of everything in him. One has said that the doctrine of predestination is the main point. Now this is easily refuted by the fact that in the first edition of his "Institutes" it was not even developed; only in the later editions did it acquire great space. But it is to be refuted also from more important points of view.

In every theology, the decisive thing is always the doctrine of God I told you this with regard to Luther, to Augustine, etc. For Calvin the central doctrine of Christianity is the doctrine of the majesty of God. The attitude in which God is known as an existential attitude, more than in any other of the Reformers - -at least in formula, even more than in Luther. For Calvin human misery and Divine majesty are correlated. Only out of the human misery can we understand the divine majesty and only in the light of the Divine majesty can we understand the human misery. Calvin applies to God a word which has been rediscovered by Rudolf Otto *numen*, the numinous. God is a *numen* for him, He is unapproachable, horrifying, and at the same time fascinating. He speaks of "this sacred numinous nature," when he speaks of God. This is distinguished from all idols, from every polytheistic God. It is transcended in a radical way, so radically that you cannot speak directly of God. And here he has a very interesting theory of Christian symbolism. The symbols are significations of His incomprehensible essence. Symbols have to be momentary, disappearing, self-negating, He says they are not the matter itself. I think this self-negating is the decisive characteristic of every symbol with respect to God, because if they are taken literally, if they are not self-negating, then they produce idols. This is Calvin and not a mystical theology such as in Pseudo-Dionysius, who says this. So when you speak of symbolism when referring to God, you can refer to a man who is certainly beyond suspicion of being less than orthodox, namely, to Calvin.

The truth of a symbol drives it beyond itself. "The best contemplation of the Divine Being is when the mind is transported beyond itself with admiration." The doctrine of God can never be theoretical-contemplative; it must always be existential, by participation. The famous phrase by Karl Barth, which is taken from a Biblical text "God is in Heaven, and you are on earth" --is often said and explained by Calvin. The Heavenly "above" is not a place to which God is bound, but it is an expression of His religious transcendence, not an expression of a physical transcendence.

All this leads to a central attitude and doctrine of Calvinism, namely the fear of idolatry. This is tremendously strong in him. Calvin fights the idols wherever he believes he sees them. He is not interested in the history of religion, which is practically condemned as a whole as being idolatrous. Religion cannot help having an idolatrous element. Religion is a factory of idols all the time. Therefore the Christian and the theologian must be on his guard and prevent idolatrous trends from overwhelming his relationship to God.

He fights against the pictures in the churches, all kinds of things which can divert the mind from the merely transcendent God. This is the reason for the sacred emptiness of the Calvinist church buildings. There is always a fear of idolatry in the depths of men who have overcome idolatry. So it was with the prophets, so it was with the Arabians (Islam), so it was now with the Reformers. Calvinism is an iconoclastic movement crushing icons, idols, pictures of all kinds, because they deviate from God Himself.

Now this idea that the human mind is a perpetual manufacturer of idols is one of the deepest things which can be said about our thinking of God. Even orthodox theology very often is nothing other than idolatry.

Now we have on the other side the human situation, which is described in much more negative terms than it is by Luther. "From our natural proneness to hypocrisy, any vain appearance of righteousness abundantly contents us, instead of the reality, which is our sin. Man cannot stand his reality; he is unrealistic about himself or as we say in modern times, he is ideological about himself; he produces unreal imaginations about his being. -- This of course is a very radical attack on the human situation, but this corresponds to God as the God of glory. When Calvin speaks of the God of love, it is usually in context with those who are elected. There He reveals His love. But the others are from the very beginning excluded from love. Now you can say this is always true; but is it not then also true that in Calvin God is also the creator of evil?

I turn now to this question in connection with his doctrine of providence and predestination

Calvin was very well aware that his kind of thinking would easily lead to a half-deistic type of putting God at the side of the world. Hundreds of years before the deistic movement appeared in England, Calvin warned against deism, namely putting God beside the world. Instead of that, of course, 'he conceives of a general operation of God; in preserving and governing the world, so that all movement depends on Him. Deism is a carnal sense which wants to keep God at a distance from us. If He is sitting on His throne and does not care what is going on in the world, the world is left to us. And this is exactly what the Enlightenment and industrial society needed. They couldn't stand A God who is continuously in interrelation with the world, who continuously interferes. They had to have a God who has given to the world the first movement. but then sits beside it and doesn't disturb the activities of the business man and the industrial creators. So. this

anticipation of deism is a very important thing.. Against this he says: "Faith ought to penetrate further." .God is the world's perpetual preserver, "not by a certain universal action actuating the whole machine of the world and all its respective parts, but by a particular providence sustaining, nourishing, and providing for everything which He has made." All this implies a dynamic process of God within the law she has given. But he knew that the doctrine of natural law easily would make God into something beside reality. All things, therefore, have, according to Calvin, instrumental character; they are instruments through which God works in every moment. If you want to call this pantheism, then it could be right, which means everything is "in God." The things are used as instruments of God's acting according to His pleasure. (Here we are very near to Luther.) And he also gives a concept of omnipotence which is against the absurdity of imagining highest God sitting somewhere and deliberating with Himself what He should do, and knowing that He could do many other things or everything He wanted, by saying: No, I don't want to do this. I want to do that. This is exactly like a woman in the household who decides to do-this or to do that. This is an undignified view of God, and this the Reformers knew. "Not vain, idle or almost asleep, but vigilant, efficacious, operative, and engaged in continual action; not a mere general principle of confused motion, as if He should command a river to flow through the channels once made for it, but a power constantly exerted on every distinct and particular movement "For He is accounted omnipotent, not because He is able to act but does not,'and sits down in idleness.

Omnipotence is omni-activity. Providence consists in continuous Divine action. These elements of the idea of God in all: the Reformers are very important.

Now it comes to the problem with which Calvin was still wrestling on his death-bed: If this is so, isn't God the cause of evil? Now Calvin was not afraid to say that natural evil is a natural consequence of the distortion of nature. Secondly, he said: It is a way to bring the elect to God, and in such a way it is, justified. But then he said a third thing: It is a way to show the holiness of God, in the punishment of those whom He has elected and in the selection of those who are selected. Now this third point is that God has produced evil men in order to punish them and in order to save others who are evil by nature, from their evil nature. If you have this exclusively theocentric point of view, everything centered around the glory of God, then it is understandable that you also have the attack on Calvin (to which he was very sensitive), namely, he made God the cause of evil. But whatever this may mean, we

will discuss it the first hour of next week, and then in the last two hours we will have a survey on the Protestant development.

## Lecture 35: Calvin: Predestination, Providence, Capitalism, Church and State, Biblical Authority.

We finished Friday with, the general ideas of Calvin on providence, the tremendously powerful way in which he looks at the Divine activity in everything in every moment, and directing it. If this is the presupposition; if we almost have the feeling that Calvin approaches a kind of Divine determinism, then we must ask the question, "How is all this related to the actuality of evil?" We can distinguish different answers.

The suffering of the world is not a real problem for Calvin. Since his first principle is the honor of God, he can show that human suffering is 1) a natural consequence of the distorted, sinful world; 2) a way of bringing the elect to God; 3) a way to show His holiness in the punishment of a distorted world.

Physical evil is taken partly as a natural consequence, partly as educational means, partly as punishment for sin. But this does not solve the problem of moral evil. Here Calvin must accept, and tries to show that the evil acts of Satan and of evil men are determined by God's counsel. Even Pilate and Nebuchadnezzar are servants of God. God blinds the minds and hardens the hearts of men; He puts an evil spirit into their heart. "For God, as Augustine says, fulfills His righteous will by the wicked wills of wicked men.: Augustine declares that He creates light and darkness, that He forms good and evil, and that no evil occurs which He has not performed." Such statements which seem to make God the cause of evil, are understandable only if we understand what Calvin says, that the world is "the theater of .the Divine glory." In the scene which we call "the world," God shows His glory. In order to do this, He causes evil, even moral evil. Calvin says: to think that God admits evil because of freedom, is frivolous. Because God acts in everything that goes on; the evil man follows the will of God although he does not follow His command. By following His will they defy His command, and that makes them guilty.

Now this means that Calvin's idea of providence is strictly God – causes – I don't say "determined," but "God-caused." And if, as he realizes, some people feel that this is not what we can say about God, and that this kind of providence is a horrible thing, then he answers, "Ignorance of providence is the greatest of miseries; the knowledge of it is attended with the highest felicity.: The belief in providence

liberates us from anxiety, dread, and care. This period, at the end of the Middle Ages, was one of catastrophes and transformations, externally, and of profound anxiety internally. The doctrine of providence in Calvin is not an abstract one but is a doctrine which is supposed to heal anxiety, to be able to give courage, and for this reason he praises it.

But of course there is something more involved in this doctrine, namely his famous doctrine of predestination. Predestination is providence with respect to the ultimate aim of man. It is providence which leads man through his life to his final aim. And so predestination is nothing more than the logical implication and the final fulfillment of the doctrine of providence.

Now what does "predestination" mean? How does this problem arise? Why is it that most of the great names in religion, from Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, to Luther, are adherents of "predestination," while those who do not adhere, always are nearer to a moral interpretation of Christianity than to a strictly religious interpretation? This is a problem which we must ask ourselves. If we deny predestination, we deny the high line of religious personalities and their theology.

Now the question behind this doctrine is: Why does not everybody receive the same possibility to reject or to accept the truth of the Gospel? Why doesn't he get it historically? - he never knew Jesus. Why does he never get it psychologically? - his preconditions are such that he could not even understand the meaning of what is said to him. This is a question we must ask today, every day.

The answer is: By Divine providence, but, as we have heard, providence with respect to our eternal destiny is predestination. In the moment in which Christianity emphasizes the uniqueness of Christ, it must ask why most people have never heard about Him, while those who have externally heard about Him were preconditioned in a way that this hearing didn't mean anything. In other words, all these men observed something empirically, namely that there is a selective and not an equalitarian principle effective in life. Life cannot be understood in terms of an equalitarian principle; it can be understood only in terms of a selective principle.

Everybody asks these questions. Calvin says: You shouldn't suppress such questions in terms of a wrong modesty; one must ask them. "We shall never be clearly convinced. . . that our salvation flows from the fountain of God's free mercy till we are acquainted with His eternal election, which illustrates the grace of God by this



comparison, that He adopts not all promiscuously to the hope of salvation but gives to some what He refuses to others."

But this is only the one side. The other is that which gives to those who ask this question a certainty of salvation because it makes salvation completely independent of the oscillations of our own being. This was the second reason for this doctrine, in Paul, Augustine, and Luther. They wanted certainty of salvation. If they looked at themselves, they couldn't find it because their faith was always weak and changing. If they looked beyond themselves, they could find it in the action of God.

The concrete character of Divine grace is visible in an election which elects me especially, by not electing others. All this leads to the concept of predestination. "We call predestination the eternal decree of God by which He has determined in Himself what He would have every individual of mankind to become, for they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some and eternal damnation for others. C" That's his definition. What is the cause for this election? Only God's will, and nothing else. "If, therefore, we can assign no reason why He grants mercy to His people but because such is His pleasure, neither shall we find any other cause but His will for the reprobation of others." I. e., the irrational will of God is the cause of predestination.

Now here we come into an absolute mystery, as he calls it. We cannot call God to any account. We must accept it and we must drop our criteria of the good and the true. If someone says that is unjust, he answers: We cannot go beyond the Divine will to a nature which determines God because God's will cannot be dependent on anything else. even in Him. Here you have the full weight of the Scotistic-Occamistic thinking: the will of God is the only cause for what God does; nothing else.

Calvin himself feels the horrible character of this doctrine. "I inquire again how it came to pass that the fall of Adam, independent of any remedy, should involve so many nations with their infant children in eternal death, but because such was the will of God – it is an awful decree, I confess." Nevertheless, when he was attacked, and especially in his last years, in face of his death, then he answered in a little different way: Everything is dependent on Divine predestination. "Their perdition depends on the Divine predestination, in such a manner that the cause and matter of it are found in themselves"; the immediate cause is man's free will. i. e., Calvin thinks, as did Luther, in two levels. The Divine cause is not real cause, but decree, something which is mystery and for which the category of causality is only

symbolically and not properly applied. Besides this he knew, as did every Reformer and predestinarian, that it is man's finite freedom through which God acts when He makes His decree of predestination.

If we criticize it, we should not say it is a simple contradiction between God's causality and human freedom – that's too easy – because the levels are different, and there is no possible contradiction on different levels. If you want a contradiction, you can have it only on the same level. If you therefore have two levels, namely the Divine action which is mysterious because it doesn't fit our categories; and the human action in which freedom and destiny are mixed – then you have the real picture. Don't think of the Reformers, or of all great theologians, in a one-leveled thinking. Then you come to all these impossible statements which not only contradict each other – and, with a heroic attempt of your mind to destroy itself you say that this is a contradiction which we must accept; but think in terms of two levels, whereby enough mystery is still left, but not a simple logical contradiction, which simply means you use words without meaning. And this should not be done even if you emphasize the paradox: don't make it into a speaking of words without meaning. You can think in terms of two levels; for example, you can say, "I cannot escape the category of causality when I speak of God's action, and when I do so I derive everything from God, including my eternal destiny." This sounds like a mechanical determinism. But this is not what they mean. The two levels, of which the one uses the term "causality" properly, and then posits against it finite freedom – the human level; then the Divine level, where causality is used symbolically, and where everything which brings us to God is derived from God. These two statements must be made. And if you divide them up into two levels, they are not logical contradictions, i.e., meaningless sentences. But never demand of anybody to destroy his own logos, i. e., the Image of God, and to make meaningless statements. That is not the relationship between God and man.

This gives a problem, of course, for the individual Calvinist, i. e., the question: Is he elected? What gives us the assurance of election? And so the looking for the criteria, the marks, of election starts. And Calvin finds some of them: the first and decisive of course is the inner relationship of God in the act of faith. But there is also the blessing of God, the moral high standing of someone – which are all symptoms. Now psychologically this brought a situation in which the individual was not able to get certainty except in producing the marks of certainty, namely a moral life and an economic blessing. And this means he tried to become a good bourgeois industrial citizen, and believed that if he were this, then had marks of his

predestination. Of course, theology knew that predestination never can be caused by such actions. But if they are there, then you can have certainty. And this was the danger of this theology of the marks of predestination.

It is remarkable how little Calvin has to say about the Divine love. The Divine glory replaces the Divine love. And if he speaks of the Divine love, it is love towards those who are elected. But the universality of the Divine love is denied, and the demonic negation, the split of the world, has in Calvin a kind of eternity, through his doctrine of double predestination. Therefore this is a doctrine which contradicts the doctrine of the Divine love as sustaining everything that is, a doctrine which Dante still knew when he wrote, at the entrance of Hell, in his *Divina Comedia*, "I also have been created by Divine love." But if something is created by Divine love, then it is not eternal condemnation.

Now there are many discussions in Calvin about the doctrine of the Christian life. I only want to make a few statements about it. "When they explain vivification of that joy which the mind experiences after its perturbations and fears are allayed, I cannot coincide with them (I. e. , with Luther) since it should rather signify an ardent desire and endeavor to live a holy and pious life, as though it were said that a man dies to himself that he may begin to live to God." For Luther the new life is a joyful reunion with God; for Calvin it is the attempt to fulfill the law of God in terms of a Christian life. And the summary of the Christian life is self-denial and not love. It is departing from ourselves. "oh, how great a proficiency has that man made who, having been taught that he is not his own, has taken the sovereignty and government of himself from his own reason, to surrender it to God." Luther's fragmentary up and down, ecstasy and despair, is not what describes the Christian life in Calvin. The Christian life is a line upwards. exercised in methodical stages. And this gives to the whole type a quite different form.

There are two other elements in it: the world is a place of exile. The body is a valueless prison of the soul. -- Here you hear words more of Plato than the Old or New Testament. But this was in him. Nevertheless he denied any hatred of life. And his asceticism was not the Roman asceticism, to deny life itself, to deny the body in special activities of an ascetic character. But it was what Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch have called inner-worldly asceticism, an asceticism which has two characteristics: cleanliness, in terms of sobriety. chastity, temperance -- subordinated to the concept "clean." -- This has tremendous consequences in the whole life of the nations which were Calvinistic: an extreme external cleanliness, an

identification of the erotic element with the unclean – against the principles of the Reformation, but in consequence of this Calvinistic ethics.

And the other was that our activities in this world are activities of producing tools and, through tools, profit. It was what one has called the "spirit of capitalism." Now this word has been so much misunderstood that I would like to say a few words about it. There are some primitive people who think that a tremendous scholar like Max Weber and Troeltsch have said that Calvinism has produced capitalism. And then, of course, these people are much cleverer than Max Weber – probably the greatest scholar in the whole 19th century in the realm of the humanities and sociology – and they tell him that there was capitalism before Calvin lived, especially in the Lombardian plane in north Italy, in the south and north German cities, in London, etc. So we have capitalism before Calvin, and Weber is wrong and I, the clever boy, am right! -- This is probably

wrong. Weber said that there is something in the spirit of Calvinistic ethics and some related sectarian ethics which is useful for serving the purposes of investment in the capitalistic economy. In pre-capitalistic economy the rich man showed his riches in glorious living: he built castles or mansions, or patrician houses --and we still enjoy building houses today. But that is not the way in which Calvinism tried to show the people how to use their wealth. It should be partly used for endowments; as it is in this country, in which practically all culture is rooted (I. e., through endowment) and partly for new investments. And this indeed is one of the best ways of supporting the capitalistic form of economy, namely to make the profits into investments, I. e., means for new production, etc., instead of wasting them, as the Calvinists would say, in glorious living.

Now that is what he wanted to say. If you don't believe he was right, I can tell you that in eastern Germany, before the 20th century catastrophes broke in, those cities in which the Protestants were living were the rich ones, and the ones in which the Catholics lived were the poor ones. But perhaps the poor were happier than the rich ones! – you cannot say that in these terms; .but you can say that these Calvinistically influenced towns and cities produced German capitalism – and not the Catholics, or Lutherans in the east, etc.

So these men were right, if you don't make a childish nonsense out of what they said – and that one should not do with such a great scholar.

Calvin's doctrine of Church & State:

Calvin's doctrine of the Church is, like Luther's, the place where preaching is carried on and the sacraments correctly administered, ritually, Calvin, however, makes a much more radical distinction between the empirical Church and the invisible Church. While for Luther the invisible Church is only the spiritual quality of the visible Church, for Calvin the invisible Church is the body of those who are predestined in all periods of history, not dependent always on the preaching of the Word. This is connected with what we have learned about Zwingli and Calvin: the doctrine of the Holy Spirit working also apart from the Christian message, and therefore universally active.

• From this point of view the visible Church is an emergency creation, an adaptation of God to human weakness. Therefore it is not a matter of believing in the Church, but believing that there is a Church. The main function of the Church is educational. The Church always has to bring people, through those means, into the invisible Church, the body of the predestined. On the other hand, the emphasis on this educational work of the Church is much stronger than in Lutheranism. Although ultimately the Church is an emergency creation of God, actually it is the only way for most Christians to come to God at all. Therefore he has developed a doctrine of the Church which is quite different from the doctrine which had been developed by Luther. Instead of two marks of the Church, namely doctrine and sacraments he has three marks: doctrine, sacraments, and discipline. And this element of discipline is very decisive. "As some have such a hatred of discipline, as to abhor the very name, they should attend to the following consideration. As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the Church, so discipline forms the ligaments which connect the members together and keep each in its proper place." The discipline starts with private admonition – and this admonition was very serious, mostly; it goes through public challenge (this was ruinous, socially) and finally to excommunication. But even excommunication is not able to remove one from the saving power of God. While in Rome someone who is excommunicated can in this state not be saved, somebody who is in Protestantism can be, or possibly has been, predestined, and if so he will be saved in spite of the excommunication, namely, then the excommunication will not be effective.

These three marks are by Divine law. But there are other things by Divine law. There are four offices: pastors, or ministers (both words are used; ), doctors or teachers, presbyters, deacons.

The most important of these four are the pastors and presbyters. These four are by Divine order, and they have to be always there. They are derived from the Bible.

The Church has in itself, in its own mixed status, a community of active sanctification. This community is created by the Church and becomes manifest in the Lord's Supper. Therefore discipline precedes the giving of the Lord's Supper. Now I don't want to go much into the doctrine of the sacraments in Calvin. The main thing is that he tries to find a mediation between Luther and Zwingli. He does not want, with Zwingli, that the Lord's Supper is only a meal of commemoration; he wants the presence of God, but not a presence which he finds superstitious and magical, as he sees it in Luther, where even those who are not belief-ful eat the body of Christ

The doctrine of the State:

Calvin was a humanist and therefore gave to the state much more functions than Luther. Luther gave it practically only one function: to repress evil and preserve society from chaos. Calvin uses also the ideas of humanism, of good government, of helping the people, and many other things of a more positive way. I can give you this very drastically: the function of a policeman in Germany is to repress; the function of a policeman in this country may also be this function, but beyond this it is the function to help. For us, when we came 20 years ago, it was really an experience when you wanted something you could go to a policeman! Nobody could do that in Germany! Now I hope this has changed, but I don't believe too much. The state represses, but it never helps.

But Calvin never went so far as to say, with the sectarian movements, that the state can be the kingdom of God itself. He calls this a Jewish folly. But what he says was, with Zwingli, that a theocracy has to be established, I. e., a government which not priestly government, but the rule of God through the application of the evangelical laws, through the political situation. And for this he indeed works hard. And he demands that the magistrates of Geneva care not only for legal problems, the problems of order in the general sense, but also for the most important content of the daily life, namely for the Church; not that they shall teach in the Church or give decisions (as to what things) shall be taught. But they must supervise the Church to punish those who are blasphemers and heretics – and so he did, with the help of the magistrates of Geneva – and to create in all respects a kind of community in which the law of God governs the whole life. No priests and ministers are necessarily involved in it. Theocratic rulers usually are not priests<sup>4</sup>hen the theocracy becomes

hierocracy – they are usually laymen, and that is usually what he wanted. The state must punish the impious, he says. They become criminals because they are against the state law, which is based on the Divine law.

Calvinism has saved Protestantism from being overwhelmed by the Counter-Reformation. And it has done so on a world-wide scale by the possibility of alliances of Protestants all over the world – Cromwell especially did this – the world alliances

which we still have in this country, as an idea of allying the good people against the evil people; of course the evil people are the political enemies, but this is done in the name of the good people, which is something the Lutherans would not do; when they tried it they fell down. This gave Calvinism a tremendous international power.

There is another element in Calvinism, namely the possibility of revolution. If you read Calvin you think this is even worse than Luther. He certainly said that all revolution is against the law of God, as Luther did. Then he makes an exception which has become decisive for West European history, He said that although no individual citizen should be allowed to make a revolution, the lower magistrates should be able and willing to make a revolution if the natural law, to which every ruler is subjected, should be contradicted by this ruler. Then the lower magistrates have the duty to revolt against him

Now this of course is a possibility that in a democracy such as ours, where all of us are lower magistrates – by voting, we establish the government – under these

circumstances revolution is, universally permissible. And this was the situation in Western Europe, where the kings and queens were mostly on the side of Catholicism, and Protestantism could be saved only by people who were convinced that in the name of God they can fight against their kings and queens, if kings and queens suppress the true Gospel, namely the purified Gospel of the Reformation.

Let me say a few words about his doctrine of the authority of scripture.. This is a very important point insofar as it was the way in which, finally, biblicism developed in all groups of Protestant faith. The Bible for Calvin is a law of truth, and of course also a law of word. At length, that the truth might remain in the world in a continual course of instruction to all ages, he determined that the same oracles which he had deposited with the patriarchs should be committed to public records. With this design the Law was promulgated, to which the prophets were afterwards annexed as its first interpreters. The Bible, therefore, must above all be obeyed. It

contains a "heavenly doctrine." This was necessary – although again an adaptation – because of the mutability of the human mind. This was the necessary way to preserve the doctrines of Christianity by writing them down, and making, as Calvin says, God's instructions speaks of "the peculiar school of the children of God."

Now all this can be harmless, or can be the opposite, and there is much discussion going on as to how to interpret his doctrine of the Scripture. In any case the answer is that this doctrine is absolute, but it is absolute only for those to whom the Divine Spirit gives the testimony that this book contains the absolute truth. But if this is done, then we can witness to the whole Bible as an authoritarian book of a radically authoritarian character.

The form of the Biblical authority is derived from the fact that the Bible is composed under the dictation of the Holy Spirit. This term, "dictation of the Holy Spirit," is something which produced the doctrine of verbal inspiration, in a way which surpasses anything which existed in Calvinism, and in contradicting the Protestant principle as such: the disciples were "pens" of Christ; all elements which come from them were superseded by the Divine Spirit which testifies that in this book the oracles of God are contained. "Between the apostles and their successors, however, there is this difference – that the apostles were the certain and authentic amanuenses of the Holy Spirit, and therefore their writings are to be received as the oracles of God." Out of the mouth of God" the Bible is written, I. e., the whole Bible; the distinction between the Old and New Testaments largely disappears. And you can find this still today in every Calvinistic country.



## Lecture 36: Protestant Orthodoxy. Pietism.

We finished yesterday the theology of the Reformers. The next section is a lecture which would ordinarily last one semester, four hours a week, on the development of modern Protestant theology. But what we can do with these last two hours is to give a kind of survey on the rhythm in which Protestant theology has developed in the last 350 years. This development is important not only in itself, from the historical point of view, but also because elements of everything which has been created within this development are in your minds, souls and bodies, and you cannot get rid of it without knowing it. Therefore I believe, negatively and positively it is of extreme importance to have a history of Protestant theology or at least, if this is impossible, to show the tides – because this whole development is like a tide going up and down; but each wave and each low tide is different from the other.

Now the immediate wave which followed the Reformation period is the period we usually call Orthodoxy. Now Orthodoxy is a great and serious thing, much greater and much more serious than what you call Fundamentalism, in this country, which is a product of a reaction in the 19th century, and which is a primitivized form of classical Orthodoxy. Classical Orthodoxy was great theology. We can say it was Protestant Scholasticism, with all the refinements and methods which the word "Scholastic" includes. Therefore, when I speak of "Orthodoxy," I mean the way in which the Reformation established itself as an ecclesiastical form of life and thought, after the dynamic movement of the Reformation had come to an end. It is the systematization and consolidation of the ideas of the Reformation, partly in contrast to what I said before about the Counter-Reformation.

As such, Orthodox theology always was and still is the solid basis of all coming developments, whether these developments – as was mostly the case – were directed against Orthodoxy, or whether they were attempts of a restoration of Orthodoxy. In both cases, they are dependent on it. Liberal theology, up to today, is dependent on the Orthodoxy against which it fights. Pietism is dependent on the Orthodoxy which it wants to transform into subjectivism. The present-day and former restoration movements try to restore what was once alive in the Orthodox period. Therefore we should deal with this period with much more seriousness than it is usually done in this country. I can tell you that in Germany, at least, and I think everywhere in European theological faculties – France, Switzerland, Sweden, etc. –

every student of theology was supposed to know by heart the doctrines of at least one classical Orthodox theologian of the post-Reformation period, be it Lutheran, be it Calvinistic; and that in Latin Now even if we forget about the Latin today, we should know these doctrines, because they are the classical system of Protestant thinking. And it is a state of things of which I would say that it is unheard of, that the Protestant churches of today largely don't even know the classical expression of their own foundations – namely, the Orthodox dogmatics – so that you cannot even understand, really, even the opposition to them: you cannot understand people like Schleiermacher or Ritschl, or American liberalism or social-gospel theology, without understanding that against which they were all directed, and on which they are dependent – as everything which is against something is dependent on that which it is against; you know when you are against your parents, and your parents against you, or husband against wife. And in this sense, all theology of today is dependent on the classical Orthodox systems. So the next lecture should be a seminar on one of the classical Orthodox systems. Now all this has to be done in a short time. There should be a seminar on one of the classical Orthodox systems, and then we could go beyond it. This shows the shortcomings in our theological education.

Orthodox theology was not only theological, it was also political. It was political, because of the necessity to define the religious status in the political atmosphere of the post-Reformation period. It was a period which prepared the Thirty Years' War, in which the Roman Empire, namely Germany, and the German emperor, demanded that every territory define exactly where it stands, because this was the basis of its legal acknowledgment within the unity of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation.

Beyond this the theology was a theology of territory princes. They wanted to know from their theological faculties exactly what a minister was supposed to teach, and they had to know it because they were the legal lords of the Church, as *summi episcopi*, as highest bishops. So in all the theological problems of the Orthodox doctrines, a legal problem was involved. So when you read about the *Augustana variata* or *invariata* (re: the Confession of Augsburg), then you think, "What nonsense!" Not only the unity of Protestantism was threatened, but people were killed because the people introduced the *Augustana variata* against the *invariata*, without the princes' permission. ... It was not only nonsense; it was more than this, even theologically. It was the difference between what at that time was called not Barthianism, but Flaccianism, or *gnesio* (genuine-)Lutheranism, original

Lutheranism. (Flaccius was the greatest Church historian Protestantism produced, and was at the same time a gnesio-Lutheran, and as such had a very similar point of view of the total depravity of man, as today the Barthian school has – namely, as he called it, in Scholastic terminology, the substance of human nature is original sin – This was not accepted but the tendency was very strong.

On the other side, we had the tendency of Melanchthon – Philippism – which was similar to some Reformed ideas, so that it is even difficult today to find out how much in Philippism is Reformed and how much is Melanchthonian. This group was nearer to what we would call today a moderate liberal theology, against the gnesio-Lutherans.

All this shows that at that time the problems came immediately into the foreground which ever since have been problems, and your generation enjoys the fact that this fight against Philippism and gnesio-Lutheranism is now going on between Barthianism and moderate mediating theology.

The result of these struggles at the end of the 16th century, was the Formula of Concord, in which many of the territorial churches found an interpretation of which they believed it is the pure interpretation of the Confession of Augsburg, in its basic form.

All this has one implication, namely that the doctrinal element becomes much more important than it was in the Reformation period itself, where the Spiritual element was much more decisive than the fixed doctrines. Luther didn't fix doctrines, although he himself could be very tenacious. He had to stick to something which according to his own principles had to be condemned by him, but from some mystical theological reasons he stuck to it.

Then we must deal a little with the principles of Orthodox thinking One of the first was the relationship to philosophy. This is not a new invention of Union Theological Seminary since the year 1950, but it is very old and is old in Protestantism. Luther seems to be very much disinclined to accept anything from reason; in reality, this is not true. This is true in many of his angry statements against the philosophers – by whom he usually meant the Scholastics and their teachers, Aristotle, etc, But Luther himself, in his famous words at the Diet of Worms, said: "If he is not recanted either by Holy Scripture or by reason, then he will not recant." There he adds reasoning to Holy Scripture; he was not an irrationalist, But what he fought against was that

these categories transform the substance of the faith. Reason is not able to save, but must itself be saved,

Now this was the point of view in Luther's fight. But immediately it became clear – and Luther accepted it and gave Melanchthon this task – that you cannot teach theologically without philosophy, and that you cannot teach anything whatsoever without using, consciously or unconsciously, philosophical categories. Therefore, he did not forbid that Melanchthon again introduce Aristotle, and with Aristotle many humanistic elements.

There always were people who spoke – as some speak today – namely, in an attack on humanism, philosophy, Aristotle. There was a man, Daniel Hoffman, who said: "The philosophers are the patriarchs of heresy." Now that is what theologians sometimes say, even today, But if they then develop their own theology, then you can prove easily from which "Patriarchs of heresy: – namely from which philosophers – they have taken their category, That is an impossible way, But they said: "What is philosophically true is theologically wrong; the philosophers are unregenerated insofar as they are philosophers/" -- This is a very interesting statement, which means there is a realm of life which, by itself, is unregenerated and obviously cannot be regenerated, .But this contradicts again the emphasis on secularism in Protestantism. "Philosophers," said Hoffman, "try to be like God because they develop a philosophy which is not theologically given." -- Hoffman was not able to carry through his idea, but he produced a continuous suspicion against the philosophers, in the theological churches, a suspicion which is much greater than everything in the Roman church, And this suspicion, of course, is very much alive again in the present-day theological situation.

The final victory of philosophy within theology was the presupposition of all Orthodox systems. I will give you the man who developed the classical system of Protestant, especially Lutheran, theology: Johan Gerhard. He is a very great philosopher and theologian, in some way comparable with Thomas Aquinas for the Catholics. He represents the latest flowering of Scholasticism, not only of the Church. He distinguishes articles which are pure and those which are mixed. Pure are those which are only revealed; mixed, those which are rational possible and at the same time revealed. He believes, with Thomas Aquinas, that the existence of God can be proved rationally. But he was also aware of the fact that this rational proof doesn't give us certainty. "Although the proof is correct, we believe it because of revelation."

In this way we have two structures: the sub-structure of reason. the super-structure of revelation. The super-structure is the Biblical doctrines. What actually happened – and this is actually a preview of the next centuries – was that the mixed articles became unmixed, I. e., unmixed rationally, and that the sub-structure, namely rational theology, dispossessed the super-structure, drawing it into itself, and taking away its meaning. When this happens, we are in the realm of rationalism, or Enlightenment.

Protestantism, in the Orthodox doctrine, has developed two principles: a formal and a material principle of theology;(these are nineteenth-century terms, so far as I know). The formal principle is the Bible; the material, the doctrine of justification. According to Luther, they are interdependent: that in the Bible which gives the message of justification is that which deals with Christ, and is that which is authentic. And on the other hand, this doctrine is taken from the Bible and therefore is dependent on it. This was in Luther very free and creative; Bible and justification were inter-dependent, in a living way. But this was not the attitude of Orthodoxy. The two were put beside each other. This meant that the real principle became the Bible, namely the realm of authority.

What was the doctrine of the Bible in Orthodoxy? The Bible is witnessed in a 3-fold way:

- 1) by external criteria, such as age, miracles, prophecy, martyrs, etc.;
- 2) by internal criteria, namely, style, sublime ideas, moral sanctity;
- 3) by the testimony of the Divine Spirit.

This testimony, however, gets another meaning. It is no more the meaning that we are the children of God, as Paul speaks: the Spirit testifies that we are the children of God. -- It became the testimony that the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures are true and inspired by the Spirit. This means: instead of the immediacy of the Spirit in relationship of man and God, the Spirit witnesses to the authentia, the authenticity, of the Bible insofar as it is a document of the Divine Spirit. Now you see the difference: if the Spirit tells you are children of God, then this is an immediate experience, and there is no law involved in it at all. If the Spirit testifies that the Bible has true doctrines, then the whole thing is brought out of the person-to-person relationship into an objective legal relationship. And that is exactly what Orthodoxy did.

And if this is true, then something else is true, very interesting discussion: the discussion about the *theologia irrogenitorum*, the theology of those who are not converted.. the unregenerate. If the Bible is the legal law of Protestantism then it is possible that everybody who can read the Bible and interpret it scientifically is able to write a systematic theology even if he does not participate at all; only because he is able to participate in terms of the understanding of the meaning of the sentences and words. I anticipate something when I say that this was absolutely denied by the Pietists, who said there is only a *theologia regenitorum*, of those who are regenerated. When we look at this discussion in modern terms, we say Orthodoxy believed in a systematic theology which is not existential, while the Pietists believed in an existential theology which alone is able to give a theology.

Now both of these statements have something difficult. The unregenerated Orthodox theologian is able to say what the Church or the Bible says is necessary for salvation; but he is not able to do it in terms of the application of the present situation. The function of the Orthodox theologian is independent of his religious quality. He may be completely outside. But now what about the Pietist theology? He can say of himself, and others may say of him, that he is regenerated, converted, a real Christian. But then he has to state this with certainty; but is there anyone who can do this, and who can say, "I am a real Christian."? In the moment anyone does it, he has ceased to be in any way a real Christian, because to say it of oneself means to look to oneself in order to have the certainty of the relationship to God. And this certainly is impossible. Therefore this fight goes on through all Protestant churches, today too, and it is going on in you. Some of us would certainly say: "We are unregenerated, but we can understand what you say in systematic theology." And that is all right; otherwise he will say, or feel, that they are regenerated, and that they should have a good conscience, to make theology. How can we decide this problem? It is very important for students of theology because there may be very few, if anybody, who ever could say of himself that he is regenerated. On the other hand you feel that if you are not in the theological circle, existentially, you cannot be a real theologian. Now in my "Systematic Theology," I have solved the problem in the following way:

I have said that only he who experiences the Christian message as his ultimate concern is able to be a theologian, but after this nothing else is demanded. And it might be that he who is in doubt about every special doctrine is a better theologian as long as this doubt about doctrine is his ultimate concern. So you don't need to be converted in order to be a theologian – whatever this term may mean. You are not

requested to test whether you are good Christians or not, and then to say: "Now since I am a good Christian, I can be a theologian." – All this is completely impossible. But the fight is going on in a very important way, even today, and I think that every Pietist would tell you: "First, you must be converted before you can be really a theologian." Answer him: "The only thing which is first is that the ultimate concern coming from God has grasped me so that I am concerned about Him and His message; but more than this I cannot say, and even this I cannot say in these terms because even the term 'God' disappears, in some moments, and then I cannot use it as the basis for my belief that I am a good Christian and therefore a possible theologian."

The Orthodox doctrine of inspiration takes some of Calvin's elements and makes it more radical and primitive. The theologians are the hands of Christ, the notaries-public of the Divine Spirit, the "pens" with which the Spirit has written the Bible. The words, and even the pointing of the Hebrew texts, are inspired. Therefore a theologian of the Orthodox school, Buxtehuf, fought against the fact that the consonants of the Hebrew text did not receive their vowel-pointings in the 7th-9th centuries (A. D.), as they certainly did, but that they must be as early as the Old Testament itself. The prophets must have invented the pointing, (which was actually invented 1500 years later.) This is the consequence of a consistent doctrine of inspiration, because what shall the Divine Spirit do with the Hebrew text? The Hebrew words are ambiguous in many places, if the vowels are not in. Therefore you must put them in in order to make them unambiguous. Then, of course, there is the problem of the Lutheran and the King James translations, and the same problem arises again. You are driven into actual absurdities with this, but that was actually the problem.

Now if you have such an idea, what happens to you? You must make artificial harmonistics – there are innumerable contradictions in historical and many other respects in the Biblical – writings in order to maintain that they are all dependent on a special action of the Divine Spirit, making you into a (secretary with pen). These contradictions must be only seemingly contradictions. Therefore you must be very ingenious in inventing impossible harmonies between Biblical contradictions. And that was what they tried to do.

But there was something deeper in it, namely the principle of *analogia scriptura sanctae* – the analogy of the Holy Scripture – which means that one part must be understood in terms of the other. What was the result? It was the establishment of

creeds, which really were the analogy of the Holy Scripture. They were the formulae which everybody was supposed to find in the Bible. And this is another inescapable consequence of such a doctrine.

There was another help for these poor people who had to swallow the doctrine of verbal inspiration – after they had swallowed it, they were saved; nothing could happen to them. But then the question was: “What about the many doctrines we find in the Bible? Are they all necessary for salvation?” The Catholic church had a very good answer: You don’t need to know any of them; you only have to believe what the Church believes; only the ministers and studied people need to know of the special doctrines. The Catholic layman believes what the Church believes, without knowing what it is, in many respects. Protestantism could not do this. Since personal faith is everything, in Protestantism, the *fides implicita* and *explicita* was impossible for it.

Then an impossible task arose: “How can every little farmer, shoemaker, and proletarian in the city and country, understand all these many doctrines found in the Bible, which are more than even an educated man can know in his theological examinations?” The answer was that they distinguished between fundamentals and non-fundamentals – something which is popular even today, in your daily discussions. In principle this shouldn’t be, because if the Divine Spirit reveals something, how far can we say it is non-fundamental? And in any case, non-fundamentals proved later on to be very fundamental, when the consequences were drawn from non-fundamental deviations

So it was a dangerous thing. But it had to be done for educational reasons, because most people are not able to understand all the implications of the doctrine. Here two interests were fighting with each other – and here I speak with all of you who will become Sunday school teachers, or in any other way religious teachers: – the one interest, to increase the fundamentals as much as possible; the interest of the systematic theologian; everything is important, not only because he has spoken about it! but also because it is in the Bible. This attitude of the systematic theologian is contradicted by the attitude of the educator. The educator shall have as little as possible, so that it is understandable, and to leave out all the many and different doctrines of secondary importance.

Finally, the educator prevails. And what we find in rationalism is largely a reduction of the fundamentals to the level of popular reasonableness. That was the beginning. Education has produced, partly, the coming of the Enlightenment; there it becomes



a central concern of all great philosophers of that period. And even today the educational departments usually are more inclined towards a theology which is dependent on the Enlightenment than the other departments are. This is not general, but sometimes that is the case. And this has some good reason, one being that the educational needs are a limitation of content, and the theological needs are enlargements of content.

Now this was a short survey on Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy had one doctrine which was a transition to the next great movement, Pietism. In the Orthodox doctrine of the *ordo salutis*, the order of salvation, the last step was the *unio mystica*, the mystical union with God. For Luther this is the beginning of everything, namely the beginning of the faith in justification.. In the moment in which Orthodoxy accepted from the ecclesiastical tradition the *unio mystica* as a special point which can and must be reached, the concept of faith became intellectualized. In Luther both are together; in Orthodoxy they are asunder: faith is the intellectual acceptance of the Orthodox doctrine, and communion with God is a matter of mystical experience. This is a splitting of Luther – especially the younger Luther – into two pieces: the mystical piece and the intellectual piece, one beside the other.

What is Pietism? The word is much less respectable in this country than in Europe. "pious," "pietist" are words which can be used of people; but in this country it can hardly be used, having some connotations of hypocrisy or moralism or all kinds of disagreeable things. Now pietism does not necessarily have this connotation. Pietism is the reaction of the subjective side of religion against the objective side. In Orthodoxy the subjective side was dealt with, of course, in the order of salvation, but it, didn't mean very much. Actually, Orthodoxy lives in the objectivity of theological and ecclesiastical organization. But we shouldn't overemphasize this. We have the hymns of Paul Gerhard, for instance, in the highest development of Orthodoxy. There was always personal religious relationship to God. But for the masses of the people, it was the license to become licentious, in every respect; the state of things in moral respects was miserable, especially in the Lutheran countries, where the doctrinal element was decisive and no discipline existed.

So the pietists, and first of all the greatest of them, Spener, in Halle, (my own home university), wrote in continuous reference to Luther. And he showed something which was certainly true, Church-historically, that especially in the early Luther all the elements which Pietism rediscovered were present, and that Orthodoxy didn't preserve but removed them from the other side, namely the objective side of giving

the contents of the doctrine to everybody. What Spener tried to do was that Orthodoxy grasped only the one side of Luther. Therefore Pietism had a justification on the soil of justification. And not only in theological respect – I come immediately to it – but also in other respects: it has a tremendous influence on the whole culture. It was the first to act in terms of social ethics. The Pietists in Halle founded the famous orphanage there, the first one; they were interested in missionary enterprises; the first missions came from them. Orthodoxy said that the nations who are not Christian are lost, because one of the twelve apostles had already gone there.

Each nation had received apostolic preaching immediately after the foundation of the Christian churches – e. g., St. Thomas in Asia, and many other legendary figures like that. But they rejected the apostles, and so are guilty; and so we should not go to them and try to renew the missionary enterprise. – The Pietists had quite different feelings about it: they felt that everywhere human souls could be saved by conversion. So they began the first missions in foreign countries. This again gave them world- historical perspectives – a man like Zinzendorf, together with Wesley, looked at America, etc., while Orthodoxy was completely conventionally restricted in the orthodoxy of their provincial territorial churches.

The liturgical realm also was very much changed. One of the most important changes was the introduction of confirmation, the sacrament which the Reformers had thrown out and now the Pietists reintroduced, as a confirmation of the sacrament of baptism.

Pietism is especially important for theology in three points: it tries to reform:

- 1) theology
- 2) the Church
- 3) morals.

Theology is a practical habit. He who knows must first believe – the old demand of Christian theology. This demand brings in, at the same time, the central importance of exegesis. It is not systematic theology which is decisive, but Old and New Testament theology. And wherever Biblical theology prevails over against systematic theology, we have almost always a pietistic influence. The theologian shall first be educated to self-education, in order to be able to edify others.

The Church is a body which is not there only in order to listen to the Word; and the bearers of the Church are not just the ministers but all laymen. The layman shall have an active part in the priestly function, in different places – sometimes in the Church, but mostly in their houses, and in special *collegia pietatis*, colleges of piety, I. e., coming together in groups to cultivate piety. They should have hours of Biblical interpretation – they were therefore called “Stundists”, and they must drive towards conversion.

From this point of view they even introduced Presbyterian elements into the Lutheran churches. They tried to emphasize an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, a small church in the large Church. And then they changed moral theology, about which I will say something tomorrow.

**Lecture 37: Pietism. Enlightenment. Autonomy. Heteronomy. Locke. Deism. Modern Development. Final Remarks.**

This is my last lecture today. I will continue in the discussion of the main movements and tides, as I have called it – high and low – from the Reformation period to the present. I emphasized the importance of the Orthodox period and gave you some statements about the necessity for every Protestant theologian to study the classical period of Protestant theology, namely the Orthodox period. Then I spoke about the protest of the subjective piety, personal, inner piety, against the objectivism of the Orthodox doctrines. And in discussing Pietism, not in a derogatory sense but in a highly appreciative sense, as a breaking through of an element which was in the early Luther but got lost in the Orthodox development, I said that there are especially three problems with which they dealt, and which changed reality: theology, where they emphasized the existential point of view: you must participate in order to be a theologian; the Church, in which they re-emphasized Luther's principle of the priestly function of everybody, and established the small churches within the large Church.

The third point I want to make now is their influence on the morals in the Protestant world. The situation in the time in which they arose, at the end of the 17th century, was morally disastrous in Continental Europe. Everything was dissolved and in chaotic stages, through the Thirty Years' War, and the following attacks from outside. It was an extremely rough, brutal, unrefined, uneducated form of life. Against this, against which the Orthodox theologians didn't do very much, and didn't even try to do very much, the Pietists tried to collect individual Christians who took upon themselves the burden and the liberation of the Christian life.

The main idea was the idea of common sanctification – ideas which we have again and again in all Christian sectarian movements. This individual sanctification includes, first of all, a negation of the love of the world. And one point was very important in their discussion with the Orthodox theology, the question of the ethical adiaphora. (Adiaphoron means that which makes no difference, that which is not of ethical relevance.) The question was: Are there human actions which are of no ethical relevance, where we can do them or not do them, with equal right? Orthodoxy said they do exist; there is a whole realm of such adiaphora. The Pietists

denied it, calling it love of the world. And as things of this kind often used to go, Spener was mild in his condemnation; then Franke and the Hallensian Pietists became very radical. They fought against dancing, the theater, games, beautiful dresses, banquets, too much shallow talk in daily life (which is something which should be taken up), and things like that, which produced an attitude very similar to some Puritan ideas; but in this connection I like to say that according to my very limited knowledge of American Puritanism, it is not so much the Puritans who have produced this system of vital repression, as we have it in most American people, but it was much more the evangelical Pietistic movements of the middle of the 19th century and before that, which are responsible for this condemnation of smoking, drinking» going to the movies, etc.

Now wherever this may be, in Europe it was not Orthodoxy or Puritanism, but Pietism. And I think in this country it was at least half-Pietism which had this influence of repression of vitality.

The Orthodox theologians were under strong attack by the Pietists and reacted accordingly. One of them wrote a book with the title *Malum Pietisticum*, "The Pietistic Evil." There were different points in which they fought with each other, but finally the Pietistic movement was superior because it was allied with the whole development of the period, from the strict objectivism and authoritarianism of the 16th and 17th centuries to the principles of autonomy which appeared in the 18th and 19th centuries. And here I want to say something which is important for clear conceptual thinking:

It is entirely wrong to put into contradiction the Enlightened rationalism with the Pietistic mysticism. For most popular nonsense-talk in this country, reason and mysticism are the two great opposites. If somebody doesn't follow the reason either of rationalism or of naturalism, or of neither of them, and is restricted simply to logical positivism and its analysis of scientific endeavor, then he is called a "mystic" – and you all are mystics, for some people; everybody is a mystic for somebody, namely, everybody has a place in which he experiences levels of life which others do not experience, or refuse to experience; or, if they can help experiencing it – for instance, if they hear music or read poetry – then they push this whole realm into the dark corner of emotion: there it can stay and doesn't do much damage to clear thinking. That is the general feeling.

Now history shows an absolutely different picture. It shows that there was a strong conflict between Orthodoxy and both Pietism ("spiritualism," as it was often called

in that time, in the ecstatic not the occultistic sense) and Enlightenment together against Orthodoxy. And that is still the situation. Don't be betrayed by words here. The subjectivity of Pietism, the doctrine of the "inner light" – which became important not only for movements such as Quakerism, but also for many ecstatic movements in the territorial churches of Germany (and I think also of the Calvinistic countries) – everything which is done in the name of the Spirit against the authority of the church has a character of immediacy, of autonomy. Or, in order to make it sharper: modern rational autonomy is a child of the mystical autonomy of the doctrine of the inner light.

The doctrine of the inner light is very old; we have it in the Franciscan theology of the Middle Ages, in some of the radical sects (especially the later Franciscans); in many sects of the Reformation period; in the transition from spiritualism to rationalism, from the belief in the Spirit as the autonomous guide of every individual, to the rational guidance which everybody has for himself, by his autonomous reason. Or again, in another historical perspective, the third stage of Joachim di Fiore (12th century), the stage of the Holy Spirit, is the producer of all thinking of the Enlightened bourgeoisie in terms of a third stage which they called the age of reason, where every individual is taught directly, and the one as well as the others go back to the prophecy of Joel, in which every maid and servant is taught directly by the Holy Spirit, and no one is dependent on the Spirit of anybody else.

Now this is one line of thought – from Spirit to reason. So we can say that rationalism is not opposed to mysticism – if we call all this mysticism, namely, the presence of the Spirit in the depths of the human soul; rationalism is the child of mysticism. And both are opposed to authoritarian Orthodoxy.

We have the same situation today. But I come to this immediately.

Now I come to the sources of the enlightenment. Here we are in the good position that the Enlightenment appeared very early as theology. The movement which did this is called Socinianism, from Faustus Socinius, who fled from Italy to Poland where he found a haven of security against the Counter-Reformation and at the same time against the persecution – complex of some of the Reformation churches; he wrote a book called, "The Catechism of Rakovitz." where he developed the first fully rationalistic Protestant theology. Everything later is partly dependent on his ideas, and partly a restatement of the same ideas on the

basis of similar sources. Therefore Harnack, in his History of Christian Dogma says that Socinianism – you can keep in mind the year 1600 – was the end of the history of Christian dogma. In Protestantism there was still some dogma – at least the early dogmas – preserved. Socinianism dissolves all the Christian dogmas with the help of Renaissance rationalism. and humanism. So this is a very important movement, more important even than the repetition of it: first in English deism, where it is radicalized; and then in modern liberal theology, including Harnack himself, where it is carried through.

1) The Socinians accept the authority of the Bible, but they declare that in non-essential things the Bible may fall into error. Beyond this, historical criticism is necessary. The criterion for historical criticism is that nothing can be a revelation of God--and therefore in the Bible--which is against reason and common sense and nothing can be in the Bible as revelation of God which is morally useless. Therefore he speaks of *religio rationalis* , rational religion, which is given in the Bible and which is the criterion for the authority of the Bible.

2) In the doctrine of God he mainly criticizes the Trinitarian dogma. The Socinians are the predecessors of all Unitarian movements. He says – and in this he is historically right – the arguments of the Bible for the Trinitarian dogma, as it has later developed, are not developed. The Bible does not have the Trinitarian dogma, although it sometimes has Trinitarian formulations. The Greek concepts and this a very important criticism of the whole dogma in the Ritschlian school (upon which we all depend today) – are inadequate for the understanding of the meaning of the Gospel and are contradictory in themselves.

3) God has created the world out of the given chaos – Genesis 3 (*tohu wabohu*) , the chaos which all pagan religions and also Greek philosophy presuppose. Man is the image of God because he is superior to the animals; he has reason. Adam was not a perfect man, but he was primitive and by nature mortal. He had neither original immortality nor original perfection. (I believe this is much nearer to the Biblical text in both respects than the later glorification of Adam which makes his fall absolutely un-understandable. The Socinians derive the fall of Adam from the strength of his sensual impressions and on the basis of his freedom. This freedom is still in man; it has not been lost.

4) Therefore the idea of original sin, or hereditary sin, is a contradictory concept. He says: there is no sin without guilt; if we are guilty, by birth, then we must have sinned before we were born, or at least in the beginning of our life, which is a

meaningless statement. What really is true is that we are historically deprived and that our freedom is weakened. And this makes it necessary that God gives us a new revelation beyond natural revelation. This new revelation is Christ, but he negates the Divinity of Christ. Christ has a true human nature, but not a Divine nature. On the other hand, He is not an ordinary man; He is a higher type of man, a "superman," so to speak – in the Nietzschean, not the comic book sense. Therefore He is an object of adoration.

5) The priestly office of Christ is denied. He is prophet and He is king. All the ideas of substitute sacrifice or punishment or satisfaction are meaningless and self-contradictory, because guilt is always a personal thing and is attributed to individuals, and must be. But on the other hand, He is king and sits at the right hand of God and is really ruling and judging.

6) Justification is dissolved in a moralistic terminology. In order to be justified, we must keep the commandments. With respect to the state, passive resistance against the power forms of the state was favored.

7) Eschatology is dissolved; it is a fantastic myth. But the thing which remains – and which is important – is immortality: this must be preserved by all means.

Now here you have a lot of ideas which anticipate many elements of modern liberalism, and which anticipate the theology of the Enlightenment. What really remains in the Socinian criticism are the three theological ideas of the Enlightenment – god, freedom, and immortality – and nothing else. I like to quote Immanuel Kant in his little writing, "What is Enlightenment.": The Enlightenment is man's going out of his stage of inferiority, as far as he is responsible for it. Inferiority is the inability to use one's own reason without the guidance of somebody else. This state is caused by oneself, if it is rooted in a lack of understanding and in a lack of resoluteness, a lack of courage, namely the courage to use one's reason without the guidance of somebody else. :Venture to use your own reason,: is the advice of the Enlightenment. Kant continues to show how much more comfortable it is to have guardians and authorities, but he says this comfort has to be thrown away: man must stand upon himself; it is the nature of man to be autonomous.

This leads to the concept of autonomy:



Rationalism and Enlightenment emphasize human autonomy. The word "autonomy" is not used in the sense of arbitrariness, of man making himself, of man deciding about himself, in terms of his individual desires and arbitrary wilfulness. Autonomy is derived from the Greek *autos* and *nomos* (self-law). It does not say, "I am a law unto myself," but says that the universal law of reason, which is the structure of reality, is in me, and there I must face it. This concept of autonomy is often falsified by theologians who say this is the misery of man, that he wants to be autonomous but would be dependent on God. Now this is poor theology and poor philosophy, if you say that, because you don't know what you are talking about! Autonomy is the natural law given by God, present in the human mind, present in the structure of the world. Natural law means mostly, in all classical philosophy and theology, the law of reason, which is Divine law.

Now following this law as we find it in ourselves: this is autonomy. Therefore autonomy is always connected with the strong, almost emphatic, obedience to the law of reason, and is stronger than any religious idea opposed to anything arbitrary. The adherents of autonomy in the Enlightenment are very much opposed to any arbitrariness which they call, for instance, the Divine grace. They wanted to emphasize man's obedience to the natural law of his nature and the nature of the world.

The opposite concept is heteronomy. Arbitrariness is actually heteronomy; it is the opposite of autonomy! Arbitrariness is given in the moment in which fear or desire determines our actions, whether this fear is produced by God or by society or by one's own weakness. For Kant, the heteronomy, the authoritarian attitude of the churches – and even of God, if He is seen in an heteronomous light – is arbitrariness. Arbitrariness is subjection to authority, if this authority is not confirmed by reason itself. And then it is arbitrariness, because you subject yourselves on, the basis of fear, anxiety and desire.

Now we can say the Enlightenment is the attempt to build a world on this autonomous reason.

Then let me add quickly a few words about the term "reason," Autonomy is not willfulness. Reason is not calculation. Reason is the awareness of the principles of truth and justice.. In the name of this reason, the Enlightenment fought against the demonic authorities of the ancien in France of the 18th century, and in all Europe. They fought against it in the name of reason which is awareness of the principles of truth and goodness – not in the name of business, of calculcating, reason; not in the

name of controlling reason, of usefulness, but in the name of justice and truth. The 18th century had some heroic elements in it: reason is always seen fighting against the distortions of humanity in the regime of the French kings and the Roman popes and all those who worked with them for the suppression and distortion of humanity. So don't be contemptuous about the 18th century, about rationalism and Enlightenment. First know it, and then see what they did for us. It is the Enlightenment which produced the fact that we have no more witch trials. It is Cartesian philosophy applied to concrete problems which made such a superstition impossible. And so are innumerable other things. It is the general education which we enjoy in the Western countries which is a creation of the 18th century. And it is the democratic ideology which is produced by the same century.

Now that is all done in the name of reason, and this reason had another sound in the ears of most generations of men than it has in our ears, where it has become nothing other than an interdependent but shallow rational calculation.

Then there is a third concept, which follows immediately from the two others. If we find, in the depths of our own being, the principles of truth and justice; if every individual is able to do this, then one must ask: If these individuals have different interests, how then can a common knowledge, common symbols – democracy, economy, etc. , and finally Protestant theology – how can they be possible? Isn't this the end of a coherent society, if autonomous reason in every individual is the ultimate arbiter? The answer was: the principle of harmony. This principle again has nothing to do with harmony in the sense of a nice harmony of everybody with everybody. The 18th century knew how life really was, and it was terrible for many people at least, in the 18th century. The term "harmony" means that if every individual follows his rational, or even non-rational, trends, that then there is a law behind their backs which has the effect that everything comes out most adequately. This is the meaning of the Manchester school of economics, the meaning of the pursuit of happiness in the American Constitution; the meaning of the belief in democracy, that in spite of everybody deciding for himself about the government, a common will, a *volonte generale*, will develop in this way. This is the belief in ethics and education, that everybody is educated as a personality, and finally a community spirit will be the result. And this is the principle of Protestantism, that if every individual, in his way, encounters the Biblical message, then a kind of conformism of Protestant character will be the outcome.

And now the miracle is that this happened!, that actually, in all these realms, the prophecy, under the principle of harmony, was really verified. The greatest upward development of economy, a very strong type of religion, where 217 different denominations don't mean anything: if you come as an observer from the outside and see the Protestant world, it is a conformity in spite of all this. And if you look at democracy, in spite of the disruptive tendencies which again today are very much visible in America, democracy has worked and is still working. And so in all other realms. This means this third principle is the ultimate principle on which the belief in progress, in spite of lack of authority, is rooted.

Now I come to a few other representatives of the Enlightenment – John Locke. I want only to use one concept we must keep in mind, the concept: of tolerance, which is also a product of the development towards the Enlightenment. Tolerance has many reasons. One of the main historical reasons was that intolerance would have finally destroyed all Europe. The religious wars almost destroyed it, and it could be saved only by a tolerant state which is indifferent toward all the different fighting confessions. But this is only one point.

When John Locke wrote his letters on tolerance, he was very aware that tolerance never can be an absolute principle. So he limited it in a very interesting way. He was the leader of the Enlightenment; he, the type of man who influenced 18th century England more than anybody else – it is, very rare that a philosopher had such influence as John Locke had – he nevertheless said there are two groups which cannot be admitted, against which in the name of tolerance we must be intolerant. The one group is the Catholics, because they are by definition intolerant; they want to subdue any country they came to the authority of the Roman Church, with force. And the others are the atheists, not because they are intolerant but because they threaten the very foundation of Western society, which is based on the idea of God, however this may be formulated in rationalistic or Enlightened terms. And the greatest witness for John Locke is Friedrich Nietzsche who said that now the transformation of the whole of the whole society is at hand because "God is dead." And that was what John Locke wanted to exclude, in the name of reason.

Now I cannot go much more into these things. Another movement of great importance for modern theology was English Deism, i.e., a kind of people who were less philosophical than practical users of philosophy for the sake of theological problems. Deism is a movement of intelligentsia more than of real philosophy. They wrote attacks against the traditional Orthodoxy. They criticized in the same sense

ill which the Socinians did it, the problems of Biblical religion. All elements of criticism can be found around them. Between 1700-ca.1730, everything was developed which we now discuss in liberal and critical theology. The problems of Biblical history, the authority of Jesus, the problem of miracles, the question of special revelation, the history of religion, which shows that Christianity is not something very special, according to the Deists, the category of myth (which is not invented by Bultmann in the year 1950, in his demythologization book, but which has been invented already by the Deists. . . in the beginning of the 18th century, more than 250 years ago. ) There we have the problems which, since the middle of the 18th century, Continental theology started to deal with. Since ca. 1750 the great movement of historical criticism started. The greatest personality in the German Enlightenment, Lessing, the poet., philosopher, estheticist, etc., was the leader in this fight against a stupid orthodoxy which stuck to the traditional terms. And then the great critical statement in theology – by David Friedrich Straus Schleiermacher, all those in the 19th century up to Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer and Bultmann. All this line of development started in the middle of the 18th century and carried through the ideas of the Socinians and the others.

I spoke of "tides." Now it looks as if this were one all-embracing development, an ocean which flooded over continents. But that is not true. In all these periods there were reactions against this development. This is what I meant with the high and low "tides." There was reaction already in the early period – Methodism and Pietism, ca. 1730-50; there was reaction at the end of the 18th century, in the Romantic movement; there was reaction in the early middle of the 19th century, in terms of the revivalistic movements; there was reaction in the beginning of the 20th century, in terms of the movement which we call now "Neo-Orthodoxy. We always have one or the other of these reactions. And in all these movements, which determine our present. theological situation, one question is predominant, namely the question: "What about the compatibility of the modern mind with the Christian message?" That's what the great men in these developments tried to find out. It was always an oscillation between an attempt at a synthesis, in the Hegelian and Platonic sense, of the creative unity of different elements of reality – that is what synthesis should mean and always meant. Now in this sense the two greatest theological influences in the beginning of the 19th and end of the 18th centuries are Schleiermacher and Hegel. They together, each in his way, produced what I call the great synthesis. They took into themselves all the impulses of the modern mind, all the results of the autonomous development. And beyond this they tried to

show that the true Christian message can come out only on this basis, and not in terms of Orthodoxy; but also not in terms of the Enlightenment. They rejected both and tried to find a way beyond them – Schleiermacher more from the mystical tradition of his Pietistic past (he was a Moravian, as you know); Hegel more in the philosophical term out of the Neo-Platonic tradition from which he came. In the year 1840 both forms of this synthesis were considered as having broken down, completely and radically, and an extreme naturalism and materialism developed. In this time another theological school tried to save what could be saved. This was the Ritschlian school, the great names of which are Ritschl himself; then Hermann (who was the teacher of many, also professors of this Seminary, notably Professor Coffin); and then Harnack, who is still the teacher of all of us, in many respects. Now this development brought a new synthesis on a much more modest level, on the level of Kant's division of the world of knowledge from the world of values.

But this synthesis also broke down at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, partly under the impact of inner theological development – here I name my great teacher, Troeltsch; and then some of the theologians of the 19th century, my other great teacher, Martin Kaehler of Halle, from the Pietistic and revivalistic tradition; and then some others. And first of all of course, from the world-historical events which spell the end of centuries of European life, the First and then the Second World War.

Now again, represented by Karl Barth, “the diastasis against the synthesis between Christianity and the modern mind” was real. And we are now in a period in which even in many groups formerly liberal in this country, we find an understanding of the problem of the opposition against the synthesis.

Now when you want to hear now, at the end of this whole lecture, my own answer, then I say :

Synthesis never can be avoided, because man is always man and at the same time under God. But he never can be under God in such a way that he ceases to be man. And in order to try a new way beyond the former ways of synthesis, I try what I call the way of correlation, namely to accept all the problems which are involved in self-criticizing humanism – we call it existentialism, today; it is self-analyzing humanism – and then, on the other hand, to show that the Christian message is the answer to these questions.

Now that is not synthesis, but it is not diastasis either; it is not identification nor is it separation: it is correlation. And I believe that the whole history of thought as I tried to show it to you, points today in this direction.

End.