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# The History of Christian Theology

Course Guidebook

Professor Phillip Cary  
Eastern University



**PUBLISHED BY:**

**THE GREAT COURSES**

**Corporate Headquarters**

**4840 Westfields Boulevard, Suite 500**

**Chantilly, Virginia 20151-2299**

**Phone: 1-800-832-2412**

**Fax: 703-378-3819**

**[www.thegreatcourses.com](http://www.thegreatcourses.com)**

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# The History of Christian Theology

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## Scope:

This course surveys major developments in the history of Christian theology, which is the tradition of critical reasoning about how to teach the faith of Christ. Taking the centrality of Jesus Christ as the distinctive feature of Christianity, it focuses on theological concepts by relating them to Christian life and experience, including especially practices of worship.

The course begins with the first Christian theological writings, the books of the New Testament, the earliest of which, the letters of Paul, reflect a worship of the exalted Christ at the right hand of God, in light of which later documents, such as the Four Gospels, tell the story of the historical Jesus, his earthly life, death, and resurrection. The course proceeds to examine the theology of the early church, how it read the Jewish scriptures and how it used Greek philosophy, as well as how the very idea of official Christian doctrine and its opposite, heresy, arose in response to the large variety of early Christianities. The survey of ancient Christian theology concludes in Part I by presenting three key doctrines: Trinity, Incarnation, and grace.

Part II covers medieval and Reformation theology. The distinctive features of Eastern Orthodox theology are discussed, including the use of icons, the theology of the Transfiguration, the distinction between divine essence and energies, and the disagreement with the Western churches about whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father “and the Son.” Key developments in medieval Catholicism are examined, including scholastic theology, the use of logic and analogy, the seven sacraments, and the soul’s existence in heaven, hell, or purgatory in the time between death and resurrection. Reformation theology begins with the doctrine of justification by faith alone and the Lutheran distinction between Law and Gospel, followed by the Reformed tradition and the development of Calvinism, with its distinctive commitment to the knowledge of eternal salvation, from which flows its embrace of the doctrine of predestination. The Anabaptists, such as the Mennonites, form a third and radical wing of the Reformation, while the Anglican tradition of

the English Reformation aims for a middle way between Reformed theology and Catholicism.

Part III begins by tracing the course of Protestant theology through the modern period. Modernity means a gradual secularization of Western Christendom, as can be seen in the theology of Baptists and Quakers, both of which offer an alternative to state churches and advocate religious liberty for all. True religion comes to be seen increasingly as a private inner experience rather than outward conformity to an institutional church, as can be seen in the Puritan emphasis on conversion, which leads to the Pietist emphasis on true Christianity as well as to the tradition of revivalism that is so strong in America, including the Methodist emphasis on holiness and its offshoot, Pentecostalism. On the other hand, the increasing secularization of modern culture and especially of historical scholarship on the Bible poses new problems for Christian theology, to which deism, liberal theology, neo-Orthodoxy, evangelicalism, and Fundamentalism are responses.

The course concludes by treating the history of Roman Catholic theology in modernity, beginning with the doctrine of grace formulated by the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Council of Trent in response to Protestant challenges, proceeding to the high point of mystical and devotional theology in early modern Spain and France, and concluding with the first and second Vatican councils, the doctrine of papal infallibility, and questions about how the church's teaching may legitimately change. A final lecture examines the ecumenical theology that opens up after Vatican II, drawing Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants into ongoing conversation about the boundaries of the tradition of Christian theology and its center in Jesus Christ. ■

# What Is Theology?

## Lecture 1

**One of our problems as historians—whether we’re doing history of politics or history of theology—is that it’s very hard to be neutral, maybe impossible. Imagine trying to tell a neutrally objective story about American politics. That doesn’t work. ... We’re all located in a particular place within our traditions, and it’s important to be able to be generous and fair to these other traditions that are not your own traditions.**

**T**his course arose in part as a response to the many e-mailed questions received as a result of previous Teaching Company courses on Christian thought. Many Christians want to know where their particular form of Christianity (Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc.) fits in with or contrasts with others. By the same token, people from outside the Christian tradition (Jews, Muslims, agnostics, atheists, etc.) want to know what and how Christians think. In both cases, one finds out about oneself by coming to a deeper understanding of others and how they are different.

Christian theology is the central intellectual activity of the Christian tradition, consisting of critical reasoning about what should be taught in the Christian community, the church. The major world religions are all intellectual traditions, involving both the handing down of specific wisdom and critical reasoning about that wisdom. “Tradition” means the “handing down” of wisdom (both practical and theoretical) from one generation to the next. Both sciences and religions are traditions in this sense—they are intellectual traditions, in that what they pass on is a form of wisdom that requires critical reasoning. Whereas sciences are oriented toward discovery of new knowledge, religions are oriented toward fidelity, obedience, and propagation of a message or revelation already received.

Christian theology is a tradition of critical reasoning about Christian doctrine, that is, about what should be taught in the church about Jesus Christ and life in him. Christian theology focuses on doctrine rather than law, because Christianity is a faith more than a way of life, so the question

of what people should be taught to believe is of the essence. Unlike other religions, Christianity is essentially a faith because it is not fundamentally about how to live but about the life of another person, Jesus Christ. Theology is a normative discipline because it concerns not just what is taught in the church, but what ought to be. The wisdom and message at the heart of Christianity is not primarily a revelation about how to live but primarily the story about who Jesus is, called the Gospel.

The key concepts of Christian theology should be understood in terms of their relation to Christianity's central focus on Jesus Christ. In Christian theology, even the crucial theme of Jesus's own teaching, the Kingdom of God, is subordinated to teaching about who Jesus is—the Christ, which means the king in the Kingdom of God. Similarly, for Christian theology all other questions (including very important ones like “How do I get saved?”) are subordinate to the question, “Who is Jesus?” For Christianity, what is parallel to the Torah as the fundamental revelation of God in Judaism, or to the Koran in Islam, is not the Bible but Jesus Christ himself (of whom the Bible functions as a kind of witness).

Theology concerns concepts that cannot be understood apart from the way they shape Christian life. Although theological concepts can become quite abstract, they have meaning only as they relate believers to Christ and thereby give shape to Christian life. Once formed, theological concepts are used to guide and correct Christian practice, teachings, and storytelling. To understand what is at stake in Christian theological concepts is to see how they form Christian life and practices and their relation to Christ.

The focus of this course will be on theological arguments where something important is at stake for those involved. The aim is for listeners to understand the diversity of Christian theology today, where it comes from, and what is at stake for participants in the tradition. The lectures will aim not for neutrality but for fairness and generosity. Though there is much common ground, there is no purely neutral ground between rival Christian traditions,

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---

such as Catholicism and Lutheranism. Hence a better metaphor than “neutral territory” is “hospitality,” which is what happens when the people you disagree with are visiting your home turf and must be welcomed with generosity. Accordingly, these lectures will not aim for a neutral objectivity (which is not really possible) but a generous engagement with rival traditions—the kind of interest you take in friends with whom you enjoy a good argument.

This course will start with the New Testament documents and then will explore the early church and its relation to philosophy. We will move on to examine the fundamental issues of the Reformation, and then we will trace both Protestant and Catholic theologies through modernity and beyond.

Interestingly, Christianity does not start with what some scholars call the “historical Jesus.” The history of Christian theology begins with the Christ of faith, which the earliest Christian theology understands to be no different from the historical Jesus. This means that the history of Christian theology does not begin with the New Testament Gospels, which tell the earthly life of Jesus, but with earlier New Testament documents, which tell us how the early church worshiped Christ exalted at God’s right hand. To begin with accounts of the historical Jesus is to begin with modern historical research rather than with ancient Christian theology. ■

### Suggested Reading

Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions*.

Foster, *Streams of Living Water*.

Willis, *The Teachings of the Church Fathers*.

### Questions to Consider

1. What interests you about Christian theology enough to be listening to these lectures?
2. Do you think theology is worth arguing about?

# Early Christian Proclamation

## Lecture 2

**We're going to begin our series of lectures on the history of Christian theology by looking at the earliest Christian documents, the earliest theological writings of the Christian tradition, which are the familiar documents of the New Testament.**

**T**he first recorded Christian sermon is found in the second chapter of the book of Acts, part of the New Testament. The setting is Jerusalem on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which occurs 50 days after the feast of Passover, when Jesus was crucified. Jesus's followers, who were all Jews, gathered in Jerusalem. In fact, Jews from all over the world gather for the feast. The Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of the prophets of Israel, descends on Jesus's followers. They speak in other tongues—a whole variety of languages spoken by the people gathered in Jerusalem. A crowd comes together and asks, "What does this mean?" The Apostle Peter answers by giving the first recorded Christian sermon.

The sermon is about who Jesus is and what he has done. It is Jesus who has sent the Holy Spirit. He does so from his exalted position at the right hand of God; he has come to this position by being raised from the dead and ascending into heaven. He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, and now pours it out on his followers.

Focusing on what God has done, the sermon contains a brief narrative of Jesus's life. God appoints and approves Jesus by the miracles he does; God hands him over to be crucified according to his destined plan and foreknowledge; God raises him from the dead.

The sermon ascribes to Jesus some characteristic titles from the scriptures of Israel. He is Christ, which is to say the Messiah, the anointed Son of David, King of the Jews. They call upon his name as Lord, which suggests that in some way the name of the God of Israel ("the LORD") has been bestowed on him.



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**Christ's crucifixion and resurrection are central and crucial to Christian theology and worship.**

Quotations from the Old Testament are included in the sermon as ancient witness to Jesus Christ. King David's psalms, praising God for rescuing him from death, are applied to Jesus's resurrection. A central project of early Christian intellectuals, their reading and teaching, was to show how the prophets of the Bible (that is, what Christians later call the Old Testament) bear witness to Jesus.

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**The resurrection of Jesus is not a form of life after death; it means that he is no longer dead.**

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At the end, Peter urges his hearers to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Belief in Christ is understood to begin with an inward and outward change. The inward change is repentance, a change of heart, turning away from

one's old life to join the community of those who follow Jesus. The outward change is baptism, a ritual washing that signifies new life in Jesus and marks the social boundary of the church.

The picture of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ is extended by the early church in two directions, back before his birth and onward to his coming again as king. Although elements of the story are familiar, many of the early church's assumptions are not. The resurrection of Jesus is not a form of life after death;

it means that he is no longer dead. The underlying story (told at Easter) is not about an immortal soul but about a resurrected body. Astonishingly, Jesus at God's right hand is a living man. Believers in Jesus expected a resurrection like his—a resurrection of the body which is not so much life after death as the reversal and defeat of death itself.

Early Christian theologians, even in the New Testament, suggested that there was something scholars called the “preexistence” of Christ. This means that before Christ was born as a man, he was already seated at God's right hand. Although he was of the very essence of God, he humbled himself and took on the form of a servant. Thus, God has exalted him and given him a name that is above all others—the name of the Lord. The earliest Christian confession consists in this naming of Jesus as Lord. ■

### Suggested Reading

Book of Acts, chaps. 1–3.

Letter to the Philippians, chap. 2.

Bauckham, *God Crucified*.

Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship*.

### Questions to Consider

1. Why did the early Christians worship Jesus—what were they hoping for?
2. How is early Christian worship of Jesus compatible with the Jewish commitment to monotheism?

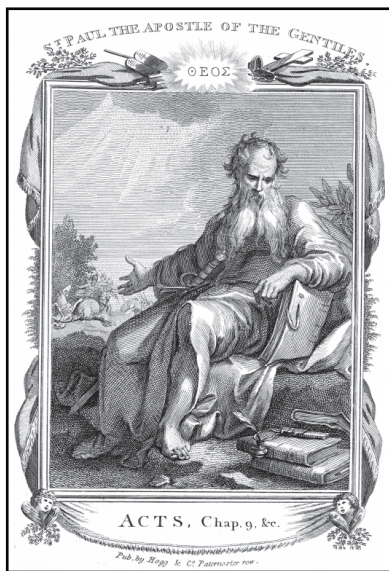


# Pauline Eschatology

## Lecture 3

Paul is a missionary, a founder of churches. He travels around the Mediterranean world, especially the northeast quadrant of the Mediterranean from Israel over to Rome, and he founds churches, he preaches the gospel, and he writes letters to churches that he had founded before. He wrote most of the letters in the New Testament.

The early Christians lived in a kind of expectation that is called “eschatological.” “Eschatology” means doctrine of the end (Greek *eschaton*). New Testament eschatology is about life in the time between the already and the not yet, between what Christ has already done (cross and resurrection) and what he is yet to do (*parousia* and establishing his kingdom on earth). Eschatology is the fundamental framework of early Christian theology, as can be seen in the earliest New Testament writer, the Apostle Paul. Paul is the first Christian theologian whose writings we have. He is a missionary and founder of churches in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean. In addition, he is author of most of the letters in the New Testament, which were written earlier than the Gospels. There is some disagreement among scholars about whether he wrote all of the letters ascribed to him by the New Testament, but all of them can be taken to illustrate Pauline theology, in the sense of the theology derived from Paul.



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Pauline eschatology is about life in Christ between his exaltation and his

**St. Paul's letters—not the Synoptic Gospels—gave us one of our first glimpses of Christian practices.**

return. The key expectation (that is, what is yet to be) is the resurrection of all the dead in Christ. When Christ returns, the dead are raised, for Christ's own resurrection makes him "the first fruits" of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15). The picture is not of us going to heaven after we die, but of Christ coming from heaven to earth, bringing life for the dead. Likewise, the picture is not of our souls leaving our bodies behind, but of our mortal bodies "putting on" immortality. Paul calls this a "spiritual body" and speaks of a heavenly dwelling which will clothe us. "Heaven" in Pauline eschatology does not mean the place to which we go but the place where Christ is, hidden from our sight but having the power of eternal life, with which we long to be clothed.

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**Pauline eschatology  
is about life in Christ  
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and his return.**

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The life of believers (that is, what is already) is in Christ, which is to say in his Body, the Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit. As at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is the source of prophecy, teaching, and all sacred speech, including "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19). It is also the source of holy or righteous living, "walking by the Spirit" and "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16, 22). Paul writes that the Spirit of God dwells in the plural you, be you all, meaning first of all the community of believers, which he calls the Church (Rom. 8:9). Paul describes the Church as the Body of Christ, one body made up of many members. As head of the Body, Christ is "the beginning, firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18) and "head of all things for the Church" (Eph. 1:22). Baptism marks the inauguration of this new life, as well as the death of the old self.

For Paul, both Gentiles and Jews are justified by faith in Christ. The early Christian movement was Jewish. They did not immediately know what to do when Gentiles started believing in Jesus. Who was the Messiah after all? King of the Jews! The crucial question was: Do Gentiles need to be circumcised and become Jews to join the Body of Christ? Paul's answer, which came to be accepted by the whole church, was no: Gentiles were justified, set right with God, simply by believing in Jesus, without converting to Judaism. Thus, Paul conceived of the Body of Christ as a place of reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles. Paul's famous doctrine

of justification by faith was about how both Jews and Gentiles were set right with God by believing in Jesus and thus becoming members of his Body by baptism, not circumcision; he contrasted faith with works, because he disagreed with Christians who thought Gentiles, too, must observe the Law of Moses, including circumcision, to join the Body of Christ. ■

### Suggested Reading

Colossians.

Corinthians 1 and 2.

Ephesians.

Galatians.

Philippians.

Romans.

Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*.

Wright, *Surprised by Hope*.

### Questions to Consider

1. Is this account of early Christian eschatology different from what you expected—and if so, how?
2. Is it possible to conceive of Christianity today as both Jewish and Gentile?

# The Synoptic Gospels

## Lecture 4

There are four books of the New Testament called Gospels which tell the story of the life of Jesus, also his death, and then very briefly, his resurrection. It's important to know, these were written down quite a long time after the letters of Paul.

**T**he Four Gospels of the New Testament are our main sources for the life of Jesus. “Gospel” translates a Greek word meaning good news. Hence it can mean simply the content of Christian proclamation, as it does in Paul. The four written Gospels are more than proclamations, but they are also more than historical or biographical documents; they have a literary agenda that attempts to make you answer the question, “Who is Jesus?” Three of the Gospels tell the story of Jesus’s life in roughly the same order (so that it’s relatively easy to make a synopsis of them all together) and are therefore called the Synoptic Gospels. These Gospels are the first three books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The order in which they were written is different: Probably Mark was written first, and then Matthew and Mark used it as a source.

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**The Synoptic Gospels are the first three books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, and Luke.**

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All the Synoptic Gospels reach a high point in the middle of the narrative when the leading disciple is confronted with Jesus’s question, “Who do you say I am?” Peter answers, “You are the Messiah,” that is, the Christ. Peter is not so happy when Jesus goes on to say he must suffer and die and rise again. Peter is evidently thinking: The Messiah is the long-awaited King of Israel, who is to restore the Kingdom of God in Israel—not to get killed. There is something very important about Jesus that Peter doesn’t understand: This is a Messiah who must suffer. Peter takes Jesus aside and tries to rebuke him. But Jesus rebukes Peter, saying “Get behind me, Satan!” Jesus follows up with the famous saying about taking up the cross and following him. But he also mentions that the Son of Man will

come in the glory of his Father, using a favorite New Testament image taken from the book of Daniel, 7:13.

Then Jesus is revealed in glory in an episode called the Transfiguration. He takes Peter, James, and John up on a mountain and appears to them in radiant glory. Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the prophets, appear with him. A voice from heaven says, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him!” This repeats what a voice from heaven had said at Jesus’s baptism, confirming his identity to the disciples: He is not just Christ, the Messiah, but the Son of God.

Jesus’s identity is the central issue in the narrative of his suffering and death, or the Passion narrative. When he comes to Jerusalem just before his death he is greeted as the son of David, that is, the Messiah. He rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, just like a king of Judea after winning a battle, and is hailed as the son of David, that is, the legitimate successor of David, King of Judea. In doing so, he generates the kind of Messianic buzz that makes Roman governors very nervous, especially on festival days when a great many Jews are gathered in Jerusalem—a perfect setting for a riot or the beginning of a rebellion.



**Jesus rides a donkey into Jerusalem during the Passover festival.**

Jesus’s identity as Son of God is the reason for his death. “Son of God” is another Messianic title, since the King of Judea was regarded in the Old Testament as the adopted Son of God, ruling on God’s behalf. He is tried before both Jews and Gentiles—the Jewish priests and the Roman governor, Pilate. In both trials, it appears that he could have escaped condemnation if he had clearly renounced any claim to be the Messiah.

The scenes in which Jesus confronts his judges constitute the high point of the Passion narrative, because once again the issue is who you say Jesus is. His enigmatic answer to the priests demanding that he say whether he is the Son of God is: “You’re saying it!” He is turning the tables on them: They want to know who he says he is, whereas he is pointing out who they say he is. It turns out the judges are being judged by whether they understand what they’re saying and by who they say Jesus is—like Peter! Pilate, the Roman governor, asks him if he is the King of the Jews, which is another way of saying Messiah. Again Jesus turns the tables by replying: “You’re saying it!”

After turning the tables on his judges in this way, Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man,” who will come on the clouds of heaven. Once again, he is alluding to Daniel’s vision of “one like a Son of Man” coming on the clouds of heaven to be presented before the throne of God. The title “Son of Man” is thus a reference to his exaltation at God’s right hand. It also points to his return in glory, coming on the clouds of heaven.

Because of their narrative strategy, the Gospels are not helpful in finding a historical Jesus apart from the Christ of faith. Ironically, Pilate had the charge against Jesus tacked up on his cross: “King of the Jews.” Without understanding at all, Pilate got it right. ■

### Suggested Reading

Gospel of Luke.

Gospel of Mark.

Gospel of Matthew.

Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*.

### Questions to Consider

1. What is it about the Gospel that is supposed to be good news?
2. Who is Jesus, really?

# The Gospel of John

## Lecture 5

**The Gospel of John is particularly puzzling because it claims to be an eyewitness document. And the tradition is that this is written by the Elder John (probably not the Apostle John), who lived in Ephesus into the 90s, and who was an eyewitness and a disciple of Jesus. And yet, boy, does he tell the story differently from the other Gospels. Perhaps that's because he's not drawing on the stories and documents that the other Gospels drew on.**

**T**he Gospel of John, probably the last of the Gospels to be written, is structured very differently from the others. It omits important episodes in the Synoptic Gospels, includes many episodes they do not, and reports some episodes in a strikingly different order. It omits the institution of the Eucharist, but includes a long discourse in which Jesus describes himself as the bread of life (chapter 6); it omits the baptism of Jesus, but includes Jesus offering to give believers “living water” (4:14); and it reports Jesus’s driving the money changers out of the temple in chapter 2, but not immediately before the Passion narrative.

After a prologue, it includes a “book of signs” organized around Jesus’s seven miracles and then the “book of the passion” or, more accurately, the “book of glorification.” Throughout the Gospel is a series of “I am” statements, in which Jesus declares his identity: “I am the bread of life” (6:35); “I am the light of the world” (8:12); “I am the Good Shepherd” (10:11); “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (14:6). All the “I am” statements recall the name of the God of Israel, which means, “I am.”

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**Jesus’s controversies with his opponents are especially intense in the Gospel of John.**

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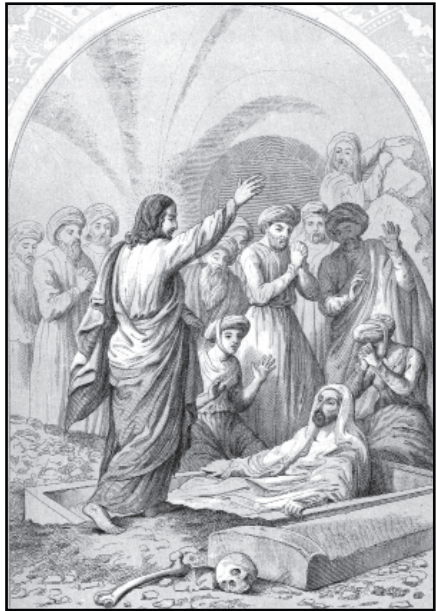
The Prologue contains a famous description of Jesus as the Word made flesh. As the Word (*Logos* or Reason), Jesus existed before the creation and hence before his own humanity. In a crucial passage for the doctrine of the Trinity, John says, “The Word was God.” In a crucial passage

for the doctrine of the Incarnation, John says, “And the Word became flesh.” In a crucial passage for Christian soteriology (the doctrine of salvation), John says, “To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the authority to become children of God.” The Prologue is an example of John’s high Christology, his insistence on the exalted nature of Jesus from the beginning. To receive Jesus, in the Gospel of John, is to believe that he came from heaven and was sent by the Father into the world as Light and Life.

The miraculous signs Jesus performs have a meaning pointing to who he is. He feeds a huge crowd with a few loaves of bread and fish, and then describes himself as the bread of life. He gives sight to a man born blind, then condemns the Pharisees for their blindness.

The “book of signs” culminates with Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. When Jesus gets news of Lazarus’s illness, he delays coming, knowing he will die. Lazarus’s sister Martha goes out to meet him, and he tells her “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” Instead of Peter, it is Martha who confesses, “You are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus weeps—probably not for Lazarus’s death, which he knows he will undo, but for the unbelief of people like Mary, Martha’s sister. As John tells it, it is this miracle, rather than the cleansing of the temple, that precipitates the plot to kill Jesus.

Jesus’s controversies with his opponents are especially intense in the Gospel of John. His opponents are often called “the Jews,” but this is more accurately



**Art depicting Jesus as he raises Lazarus from his tomb.**



translated “the Judeans.” “He came to his own, but his own received him not,” John says, which seems to be a warning not just to Jews who did not receive Jesus but to Christians who are tempted to deny him. ■

### Suggested Reading

Gospel of John.

Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*.

Watt, *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters*.

### Questions to Consider

1. How different does the portrait of Jesus in this Gospel seem from the portraits in the Synoptic Gospels—and how similar?
2. What does this Gospel tell us about the hopes of those who believe it?

# Varieties of Early Christianity

## Lecture 6

As we move beyond the New Testament, we end up taking a step out of a Jewish world into an almost entirely Gentile world. All of the New Testament writings that we know of ... indicate that they're all Jewish, just like nearly all of the main characters are Jewish. But all of the early Christian writings beyond the New Testament that we have are Gentile writings.

In the sometimes bewilderingly large variety of early Christian theologies, a central issue was always the relation of Christian belief to its Jewish roots. Jewish Christians soon became a marginal group, leaving no extant writings after the New Testament. They continued to live as Jews observing the Law of Moses until the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Originally, they were called Nazarenes and were based in Jerusalem. They were rejected by mainstream Judaism and increasingly disapproved of by Gentile Christians. Jewish Christians believed in Jesus as Son of God and did not accept the emerging rabbinic interpretation of Judaism. They also refused to live like Gentiles. In addition, they accepted Paul and hence the validity of Gentile Christianity—for Gentiles. They were labeled heretics in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, when they were dying out, but not before.

The Ebionites believed Jesus was a righteous man, but not divine and not the Son of God. They evidently arose by splitting from the Nazarenes and are the classic example of a low Christology, denying the divine origin of Jesus as Son of God. The Ebionites also rejected the writings of Paul, whom they regarded as a renegade against the Law of Moses.

Among Gentile Christians, the most important alternatives to what later became orthodoxy is a large variety of teachings usually brought under the broad label of Gnosticism, which comes from the Greek term *gnosis*, meaning knowledge. For Gnostics, salvation means knowledge of who you are and where you come from. The physical world, including earth and heaven, planets and stars, is an evil prison for our spirits, which come from outside this world, beyond space and time. The angels in the heavens are

often called rulers or archons; they are evil and try to block the soul's escape from this world after death. The soul or spirit is divine, belonging to the other world, which is why it wants to escape this world and all bodily things, where it is not really at home.

Gnosticism's disdain for the physical world is linked to a profound rejection of Judaism. The God of the Jews is the creator God, maker and ruler of this physical world, which means he is at best ignorant, and probably evil. He forbids humans to eat from the Tree of Knowledge (*gnosis*) because he wants them to stay ignorant and under his power. He is also described as an arrogant archon who boasts of being the only God, ignorant of the divine realm above him.

The Gnostics' view of Christ fits with their other-worldly view of divinity. The divine world or Pleroma consists of spiritual principles called "aeons." According to some Gnostics, the physical world originates from a disruption in the Pleroma when the lowest of the aeons, Sophia or Wisdom, gets in a passion. Christ is an aeon sent into this world to bring saving knowledge of the world above, the Pleroma. Because matter is evil, he is never really

embodied: Either he dwells in the man Jesus only for a time or his body is an illusion, a mere appearance (which is the view now called Docetism). The God of the Jews is not Jesus's Father but his enemy.

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**Early orthodoxy was characterized by belief in the goodness of the Creator, the God of the Jews.**

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The "lost Gospels" in the news lately are mainly Gnostic. The most important were found in a cache of buried books in Nag Hammadi, Egypt. The Nag Hammadi library

is very important for our understanding of ancient Gnosticism but, with one possible exception, is not an important source for the life of the historical Jesus. The possible exception, the Gospel of Thomas, is a "sayings Gospel." The sayings are all attributed to Jesus, though many are actually much later. The later sayings are in a broad sense Gnostic, in that salvation consists of the soul's awakening to the knowledge that it does not belong to this world. Among the earlier sayings, most are similar to those found in the New Testament, and some may be closer to what Jesus actually said—though

scholars are divided on this point. Some may be *agrapha*, that is, sayings of Jesus not found in the New Testament.

One of the most important opponents of mainstream Christianity was Marcion. For Marcion, an avid reader of Paul, the key to salvation is not knowledge but faith. He taught there are two Gods, the Jewish God who creates the world and the alien and unknown God, the good God, who out of sheer grace redeems people from it. In a version of Docetism, Marcion says Christ is the Son of the good God, sent into the world fully grown with an angelic body. The good God was utterly unknown before Christ, which means the Jewish prophets did not serve him, nor did they prophesy Christ's coming. To support his views, Marcion accepts as scripture only an abridged version of the Gospel of Luke and the letters of Paul.

Early orthodoxy was characterized by belief in the goodness of the Creator, the God of the Jews, who is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” as a recurrent New Testament phrase puts it. The God of the Jews is good, and therefore the physical world he created is good. The Jewish scriptures are accepted as the ancient witness to this good Creator and his Son Jesus. ■

### Suggested Reading

“The Gospel of Thomas” in Layton, *The Gnostic scriptures*.

Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*.

Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*.

Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*.

### Questions to Consider

1. Do you find Gnostic spirituality attractive? Why or why not?
2. How insistently—or not—should Christianity hang on to its Jewish roots?

# The Emergence of Christian Doctrine

## Lecture 7

**This concern about teaching the right thing about Christian “doctrine,” as it’s called, ends up becoming a central concern of Christian theology, indeed, really the central concern of Christian theology in a way that doesn’t really happen with other religions.**

The very idea of “doctrine,” with its implication that there is a difference between sound doctrine and heresy, is a characteristically Christian notion. Paganism, with its roots in myth and its tolerance for many alternative forms of ritual, had little need of doctrine at all. Judaism focused its intellectual energies on questions of how to live more than what to believe. In the pagan world, the competing schools of philosophy came closest to having an official doctrine, but they were not lifelong communities defining their members’ identities.

Christians invented the idea of religious doctrine, because their religion was fundamentally a “faith,” which is to say a belief which had to be taught. For Christianity everything depended on believing the truth about Christ, which therefore had to be rightly taught. “Doctrine” comes from the Latin word *doctrina*, meaning “teaching.” The crucial criterion of sound doctrine was “orthodoxy,” which meant both “right belief” and “right worship.” Orthodox doctrine became the “official” teaching of the church, meaning that it was the responsibility or “office” (in Latin, *officium*) of the church’s leaders to teach it.

The concept of heresy follows as the negative side of the concept of orthodox doctrine. “Heresy” originally meant “sect,” a subgroup within the larger church (the “Great Church,” as it was called), which differed from the church’s official teaching. Orthodoxy was closely associated with “catholicity” (meaning “universality”), as the Great Church sought to formulate doctrines Christians everywhere held or should hold in common. Vincent of Lerins, in the famous “Vincentian Canon,” articulated a widespread view of the ancient church when he proposed that the criterion for sound doctrine is that it is what is taught “everywhere, always, and by

all.” It became a fundamental obligation of the bishops, as leaders of the Great Church, to exclude heretics and their teaching.

The complex legacy of apostolic teaching accepted by the church, including the startling claims about Jesus made by the Gospel of John, needed to be sorted out and understood, which took centuries. It also resulted in excluding some forms of teaching, such as Gnosticism, as heresy. A key consequence of this need to reason carefully about its doctrines is that, early in its history, Christianity came to have a deep commitment to the harmony of faith and reason.

The social structure of the Great Church was particularly well adapted to resist new doctrines. The church in each town remained in communion with churches in other towns, on the understanding that all the churches in the Great Church taught the same things about Christ. To be “in communion” meant to share the sacraments, that is, admitting visitors from other churches to the Eucharist and accepting the validity of their baptism. Thus the fundamental punishment for heretics was excommunication, exclusion from the communion of the church. The effect of this social organization was fundamentally to conserve old teachings and resist innovations.

The local churches understood themselves to be handing down the teaching of the apostles who founded them; the name for this “handing down” is “tradition.” “Apostolic tradition” thus became the fundamental norm of doctrine.

The New Testament was accepted as the written form of apostolic teaching. For the earliest Christians, “scripture” meant the sacred writings of Israel, what Christians now call the Old Testament. The list of approved writings is called the “canon,” and the decision about which books to include in the canon was one of the most fundamental theological decisions of the Great Church. The New Testament was the collection of Christian writings approved to be read aloud in church. All books included in the New

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**The social structure of the Great Church was particularly well adapted to resist new doctrines.**

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Testament canon were understood to have been written by an apostle or to have apostolic authority.

The crucial responsibility for Christian doctrine belonged to the office of bishop. The most important leaders at the very beginning of Christianity were itinerants: Jesus, the apostles, and the prophets. Local leaders were bishops, presbyters, and deacons, all of whom were about equal in status, essentially meaning that each church had several bishops. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, only one bishop presided over each church. Since the bishops were responsible for correspondence with other churches, the network of bishops became a secondary social location for Christian teaching and especially for deciding which teachings were “heresies.”

The Great Church rejected attempts to establish alternative sources of authoritative teaching in addition to the apostolic teaching handed down by the succession of bishops. The most important attempt to establish a new source of authority was Montanism, named after Montanus, a Christian leader in Asia Minor. He advocated a New Prophecy and called himself the Paraclete (that is, the Holy Spirit). In rejecting Montanism, the Great Church made a crucial decision about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit: The era of prophecy and new revelations of the Spirit was past.

The essential early Christian doctrines are found in brief summaries. The boundaries of sound Christian teaching were often expressed in “rules of faith,” which later developed into trinitarian creeds. Statements of the rule of faith found in early Christian writers are typically trinitarian, mentioning God the Father, Jesus the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit. A basic narrative is given of Jesus’s life, including usually birth, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and return. Interestingly, the orthodox theological writers up to about A.D. 500 have come to be called “church fathers.” ■

### Suggested Reading

Chadwick, *The Early Church*, chaps. 2–4.

Martyr, *Apology* in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1.

Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, chap. 2.

## Questions to Consider

1. Is it legitimate for the church to have such a notion as “sound doctrine,” which excludes heretics?
2. Given the church’s purpose of teaching Christ, does its governing structure and its resistance to innovation make sense?



# Christian Reading

## Lecture 8

**The promises that the God of Israel makes to his people become promises to Christians, even if they're Gentiles through faith in Christ. But that means that these Gentile Christians have got to figure out how to read these Jewish scriptures.**

Convictions about the relation of Christian faith to the scriptures of Israel are fundamental to early Christian reading, its practices, and problems. Rejecting the Gnostic belief that the God of the Jews was evil or ignorant, the Great Church had committed itself to shaping its worship and teaching in accord with the scriptures of Israel. The scriptures can be divided into books of law and books of prophets. Gentile Christians were much more at home with the prophetic writings. But how are Gentile Christians to understand the Law of Moses, which they are committed to read as their own scriptures but not to put fully into practice? Joined with some philosophical convictions that the church's theologians came to adopt, these problems led them to reading that was often more spiritual than literal. As Paul says, "The letter kills. The Spirit gives life."

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**Typology means figurative reading, which sees one person or event as prefiguring another.**

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From the beginning, Christians read the scriptures of Israel as prophetic witness to Jesus Christ. An example is Psalm 22, which begins, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Perhaps the crucial disagreement was the Christian conviction of a Messiah that suffers. Early Christians argued with Jews about whether Scriptural passages such as these were actually predictions of Jesus's suffering. More fundamentally, the scriptures were read as explaining Jesus's identity. Psalm 110 says "the LORD says to my Lord" (that is, Christ) is to sit at his right hand. Daniel 7:13 describes the Son of Man (that is, Christ) as coming on the clouds of heaven.

A central form of Christian understanding of scripture from the beginning is typology, which comes from the Greek word *typos* or type, often translated

into Latin as *figura* or figure. Typology means figurative reading, which sees one person or event as prefiguring another. An Old Testament type was matched with a New Testament “anti-type” or counter-figure as, for instance, when Moses prefigures Jesus as prophet, or David prefigures Jesus as Messiah.

Typology is an inevitable feature of Christian reading of the Old Testament. If Jesus is the Christ, he is the fulfillment of the Messianic promises made to David, and David and all the good kings of Israel are types of Christ. If Jesus is the Christ, he is the greatest of the prophets, and all the prophets of Israel are types of Christ. If Jesus is the Christ, then his Body, the Church, is a renewed Israel. If Jesus’s death has power to save, it is because it was a sacrifice for sin, and his blood made atonement, fulfilling the meaning of the sacrifices of the Law of Moses. If Jesus’s death has power to save, it is because he is the true Lamb of Passover.

Some typologies are less inevitable but are still a deep part of the New Testament. Christ’s body becomes the true temple, the holy place of divine presence (John 2:21). Christ’s flesh is the manna of everlasting life, bread from heaven (John 6:30-58). When he feeds the multitude, he is the Good Shepherd of Psalm 23. When Moses gets water from a rock, “that rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4). Other typologies developed after the New Testament. The passage through the Red Sea is a type or figure of baptism. Interestingly, Noah’s ark prefigures the wood of the cross.

Typology has a complex relation to the literal sense of scripture; it is not words so much as persons and events that have a figurative meaning. Typology is a form of reading used not only by the New Testament writers, but also within the Old Testament itself, as when Jacob prefigures the people of Israel.

Scholars often make a distinction between allegory and typology. Allegorical reading originates among pagan philosophers. Making Apollo an allegory symbolic of the sun was one way to do away with embarrassing anthropomorphisms in pagan myths. Allegory was practiced on a vast scale by Philo of Alexandria, a Jewish philosopher who used it to interpret the scriptures in philosophical terms. A mark of pure allegory is that it is

“vertical,” concerned with the relation of the soul to higher things, as opposed to the “horizontal” or historical connections with which typology is concerned. Early Christian use of allegory was sometimes extravagant, but seldom pure: The figure of Christ keeps intruding. This “impure” allegory often mixes with typology, as can be seen in Origen’s writings.

Allegory was useful as a way of interpreting difficult passages or laws which Christians did not observe. For instance, why do animals fit for food need to be cloven-footed and chew the cud? The wars and massacres of ancient Israel were taken to be spiritual warfare against demons or one’s own sins and vices. The wrath of God did not mean that he got upset but that he punished sin. Most notoriously, Origen developed the “criterion of absurdity”: Where the literal sense of the scriptures is impossible, immoral, or absurd, a spiritual reading is required. ■

### Suggested Reading

Martyr, “Dialog with Trypho” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1.

O’Keefe and Reno, *Sanctified Vision*.

Origen, “On First Principles: Book 4” in *Origen*, edited by Greer.

———, “Prologue to the Commentary on Song of Songs” in *Origen*, edited by Greer.

### Questions to Consider

1. Why did early Christians not regard a purely literal reading of scripture as adequate?
2. Why did early Christians think that allegory was a legitimate form of reading?

# The Uses of Philosophy

## Lecture 9

**Gentile Christians in the early Church are hanging on to their Jewish roots. But they're also profoundly attracted to higher spirituality, to a spiritual rather than literal reading of the scriptures. The fundamental place that this attraction of spirituality comes from, it turns out, is philosophy.**

**A**ncient philosophy was a form of spirituality that was often attractive to early Christian intellectuals. As the highpoint of ancient education, philosophy offered an understanding of human life and the world that no intellectual could simply reject or ignore—like science today. The main themes of ancient philosophy were wisdom and happiness. For ancient philosophers the term “happiness” designated the ultimate goal of human life; it meant something like “true success in life—whatever that is.” The fundamental debate in ancient philosophy was about what happiness really is. Most ancient philosophers rejected the notion that happiness was a feeling, which is the hedonist position of the Epicureans. The most widely-accepted view of happiness among ancient philosophers, shared by Stoics, Platonists, and Aristotelians was that it consisted in a life of wisdom. Christians gave biblical answers to philosophical questions. What is happiness? Everlasting life. What is wisdom? The Wisdom of God is Jesus Christ, God’s Word.

The Stoics were the most influential moral philosophers of the ancient world. They articulated in uncompromising form the ancient moralistic conviction that our passions are what lead us astray from virtue and wisdom. Ancient moralism saw passion, not selfishness, as the primary obstacle to virtue. Passion was a form of passivity, even pathology, that made us like beasts. A wise man is free from passions, and therefore endures suffering “stoically.”

However, Stoics were materialists, thinking that both God and the soul were made of heavenly fire. Materialism means thinking that things are made up of some kind of stuff—the material out of which they are made. The basic material of the world were the four elements: earth, water, air, and fire—

all physical things. The heavens are made of fire or perhaps a fiery breath, which is the stuff of which God and the soul are made. A nonmaterialist conception of God and the soul requires us to conceive of God and the soul not made up of stuff, and that's not easy to do.

Platonism offered a metaphysics which could conceive of a nonmaterial kind of being for both God and the soul. In addition to bodily things known by the senses (what we would now call “physical things”), there are intelligible and unchanging things. Intelligible things are unchanging

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**Christians gave biblical answers  
to philosophical questions.**

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divine Forms, essences, or truths, including mathematics but also the principles of virtue and ethics. Bodily or sensible things are formed as imperfect images or reflections of these unchanging

Forms. The Forms are literally unimaginable, because they are not sensible but intelligible, known only by the intellect. What makes the soul different from the body is its intellect, the capacity for an intellectual vision that sees the Forms.

The body is not only different from the soul but inferior to it. Unlike other ancient philosophies, Platonism conceived of the soul as nonphysical, an entirely different kind of being from the body. The soul is not really at home in the body, but is imprisoned there until it is freed in death; it came into the prison of the body by falling from its heavenly vision of divine things. Although most souls end up being reincarnated again after death, really pure souls escape the body forever and return to heaven. Nonetheless, the visible world itself is good, a moving image of divine, eternal beauty.

The divine is eternal, beyond passion and change. The concept of an eternity that is not merely everlasting but unchanging and outside the world of time change is Platonist. For Platonism, God is an eternal impersonal Mind contemplating eternal truths within itself. As the timeless source of all being, God does not change and therefore does not have passions or emotions.

Platonist concepts of God and the soul have been deeply influential but also problematic in Christian theology. After some initial hesitation,

Christian theology almost unanimously accepted the Platonist concept of the immortality of the soul. Many early Christian theologians rejected the idea that the soul was by nature immortal, since this suggested the soul did not need to receive everlasting life as a gift from God. Once immortality of the soul was accepted, the Platonist picture of a disembodied soul going to heaven became widespread in Christianity.

The related concept of the Fall of souls into bodies was eventually rejected. The great 3<sup>rd</sup>-century theologian Origen proposed, as a speculative hypothesis, that souls fell into bodies because of their sin or imperfection. These Origenist teachings were eventually condemned by the church, though many current theologians now defend Origen.

The concept of God as timelessly eternal and therefore immutable and impassible, though no longer very popular, was universally accepted by orthodox Christian theologians by the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Biblical portrayals of God as angry or moved by compassion were read spiritually as describing the just and merciful actions of God. The deep problem raised by the doctrine of impassibility was how God can be incarnate, suffer, and die. ■

### Suggested Reading

Augustine, *City of God*, bks. 8, 11, and 12.

Origen, “On First Principles: Book 4” in *Origen*, edited by Greer.

Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*.

### Questions to Consider

1. Setting aside modern prejudices, might there be reason to be suspicious of the passions?
2. Setting aside modern prejudices, might there be reason to believe that God is beyond passion and change?

# The Doctrine of the Trinity

## Lecture 10

**We are starting in this lecture on a series of three lectures on great classic Christian doctrines: the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine of Grace.**

**T**he doctrine of the Trinity is the distinctively Christian conception of God. It is not about how God is three and one, but about how the one God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Trinity and Incarnation are the two fundamental doctrines of Christian theology. Both arise because of the uniquely Christian insistence on the divine identity of Christ. Hence the doctrine of the Trinity does not often use the human name “Jesus” but rather speaks of his divine identity using the terms “Word” and “Son of God.” Unlike the doctrine of Incarnation, the doctrine of the Trinity focuses strictly on the divinity of Christ, not his humanity.

As Augustine showed, the fundamental logic of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity can be stated fairly simply, in seven statements. The first three statements about the Trinity are “the Father is God,” “the Son is God,” and “the Holy Spirit is God.” Three more statements differentiating the Trinity are “the Father is not the Son,” “the Son is not the Holy Spirit,” and “the Holy Spirit is not the Father.” Then to cap it off, the seventh statement says, “There is only one God.”

Gentile Christian theologians found it most congenial to account for Christ’s divinity in terms of the Word (*Logos*), the Reason or Wisdom or Mind of God, which caused problems. Early Christian “*Logos* theologians” could say the *Logos* was “another God.” In pagan neoPlatonism, the *Logos* or divine Mind is a kind of intermediary between the Father, the Source of all being, and the visible world. As intermediary, the *Logos* is higher than the created world yet lower than the Father.

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**Trinity and Incarnation are the two fundamental doctrines of Christian theology.**

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Orthodox, that is, Nicene, trinitarian theology arose in the course of the Arian controversy in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Arian controversy began with Arius, a presbyter in the church of Alexandria, who taught a radical form of subordinationism, in which the Word or *Logos* is one of God's creations—that is, a creature, not the Creator. The implication which horrified nearly everyone was that “there was once when he was not.”

The first ecumenical (worldwide) council of the church was convened in Nicaea in 325 to condemn the teaching of Arius. In a new strategy for formulating Christian doctrine, the council adapted a modified baptismal creed as a test of orthodoxy. To make sure Arius and his followers couldn't subscribe to this creed, they added a phrase saying the Son is *homoousios*, having “the same essence” as the Father. Rather than being created from nothing, the *Logos* comes “from the essence of the Father.” Although the exact meaning of this key phrase is often disputed, it clearly has the implication that the Son is God in exactly the same sense that the Father is God. Although Arius was soon widely rejected, many mainstream theologians found it difficult to accept the creed of Nicaea and its *homoousios* clause.

Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, was the most prominent defender of Nicene theology in the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. His key point was that the Son is not created but eternally begotten from the Father; his key argument is that the Father is eternally a Father, never without a Son.

As the 4<sup>th</sup>-century controversy unfolded, the concept of the divine essence or *ousia* was further developed. Because it is equally shared by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it comes to be called the divine essence rather than the Father's essence. The Father is the Source or First Principle of the Son, to whom he gives being by giving them the whole of the divine essence. The divine essence is not divided among the three, for it is not a material or stuff out of which they are made. Rather, it is characterized by its attributes: divinity, eternity, omnipotence, goodness, etc., all of which belong equally and wholly to Father, Son, and Spirit.

The controversy concluded with the second ecumenical council in 381 at Constantinople. The council approved an expanded and edited version of the Creed of Nicaea, which is now recited around the world and called the



“Nicene Creed.” The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit developed on the basis of this Nicene theology. Later it was made explicit that the Holy Spirit, too, was of the same essence as the Father. The Holy Spirit, however, is not begotten but proceeds from the Father.

Nicene theology had to face difficult conceptual questions about the threeness of the Trinity. Why not say there are three Gods? The short answer, of course, is that Christianity is committed to Jewish monotheism. It’s not quite enough to say they share the same essence and attributes, because three human beings share the same (human) essence. Gregory of Nyssa’s answer is that the three have one and the same will and action.

If they are not three Gods, then they are three what? They are not three parts of God—the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity emphatically denies that God has parts. The Greek-speaking church called them three “hypostases,” which means complete individual beings. The West, that is, the western part of the Roman Empire, used the Latin concept of three persons. The West understood “person” to mean complete individual being (that is, hypostasis) of rational nature. Thus arose the standard conceptual language for the doctrine of the Trinity: three persons and one essence or, in the Greek, three hypostases and one *ousia*.

What makes the three different from one another? The Father begets the Son, not vice versa. In general, their diverse mode of origination differentiates



**This woodcut depicts the Trinity, which is one of three patristic doctrines.**

the three persons. Following Augustine, the West will say that the three are differentiated by their relations. ■

### Suggested Reading

“The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed” in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 28–33; also in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, 57–61.

Dünzl, *A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church*.

Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, chap. 4.

### Questions to Consider

1. Do you agree that the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity was really necessary to make sense of the extraordinary claims Christians made about Christ?
2. The Nicene doctrine of the Trinity was intended as a form of monotheism. Is it successful on that score?

# The Doctrine of the Incarnation

## Lecture 11

**Incarnation and reincarnation are two entirely different things. Incarnation is also not the same thing as embodiment. All of us human beings are embodied, but only one human being is the Incarnation of God.**

**I**ncarnation in the Christian doctrine concerns who Jesus Christ really is. The doctrine is about Jesus and no one else: It has nothing to do with the concept of reincarnation, which comes from a whole different religion, and it is not the same thing as embodiment, which happens to all humans. For Christian theology, there is only one Incarnation, and that is Jesus Christ.

Trinity and Incarnation are the fundamental doctrines of orthodox Christianity. The Eastern church calls these two doctrines “theology” and “economy” (*theologia* and *oikonomia*), the doctrine of who God is and the doctrine of his plan or dispensation of salvation. In the West, the doctrine of the Incarnation is the centerpiece of the subdivision of Christian theology called “Christology,” which concerns the person and work of Christ.

Two key points about the Incarnation were resolved within Nicene orthodoxy in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In becoming incarnate, the divine word of God did not cease to be fully God. As Gregory of Naziansen put it, “remaining what he was, he assumed what he was not.” The implication is that the Word retains all the divine attributes of eternity, impassibility, and immortality, even while he takes up human attributes of suffering and mortality. “Assumed” or “took up” becomes a key verb for the divine act of Incarnation.

For Gregory, Christ was fully human, assuming a human soul as well as a human body. The view, rejected by the orthodox, that Christ did not have a human (rational) soul is called “Apollinarianism,” after the Alexandrian theologian who espoused it. For Gregory, when the Word becomes flesh, this does not mean he merely assumed a human body, as if the Word took the place of the human soul.

The key points of the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation were set forth by Bishop Cyril of Alexandria in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Following the narrative arc of the Nicene Creed, Cyril points out that the one who is “of the same essence with the Father” is the same one who is also “born of the Virgin Mary and made human.” This means the same one has two births, of two different kinds: He is begotten from the Father in his divinity and he is born of Mary in his humanity. Because Mary gives birth to the same one who is “God from God,” she is rightly called *theotokos*, “God-bearer” or “mother of God.”

Cyril introduced important technical concepts into Christology. The Incarnation is a hypostatic union, because it unites the divine and the human in one hypostasis or person. Because of this union there is a sharing of attributes, *communicatio idiomatum*, which means the divine Word has human attributes and the man Jesus has divine attributes. On the one hand, for example, the divine Word is crucified. On the other hand, for example, Christ’s body is life-giving flesh.

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**The Council of Chalcedon in 451 affirmed that in Christ there are two distinct natures, divine and human.**

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Cyril’s Christology was developed in opposition to Nestorius, archbishop of Constantinople. Nestorius and his teachings were condemned as a heretical in the third ecumenical council at Ephesus in 431. Henceforth “Nestorianism” became the label for Christologies that divided the humanity of Christ from his divinity, as if Christ were not one person but a combination of two separately-acting principles or persons.

The Council of Chalcedon in 451 affirmed that in Christ there are two distinct natures, divine and human. To emphasize the unity of Christ, Cyril spoke of his being “one incarnate nature of the Word.” He also spoke of “one nature after the union” and a “union of two natures.” Christ is “out of two natures” not “in two natures” for there’s only one Christ, and the two natures are not separate in him. He was willing to speak of a union “in two natures” so long as it was clear that the two natures, divine and human, were inseparable and did not act apart from one another.

Chalcedon, by contrast, adopted a “two natures” formulation. Because the same one is “complete in divinity and in humanity, truly God and truly man,” he is “understood in two natures.” The Chalcedonian formula adds, “without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.”

Chalcedonian vocabulary links the two doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity. After Chalcedon, it becomes commonplace to speak of Christ as “two natures in one person,” which provides a conceptual link with the doctrine of the Trinity, where there is “one nature in three persons.” “Nature” and “essence” (*ousia*) thus become equivalent terms in the doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation.

Major schisms resulted in the East after Chalcedon. Partisans of Cyril’s “one nature” formulation, called “Monophysites” (from the Greek term for “one nature”) did not accept Chalcedon and eventually broke off from the mainstream Eastern Orthodox church of Byzantium. Both Monophysite and Nestorian churches were eventually excluded from Eastern Orthodoxy.

Two other councils also dealt with Christology in the early Christian church. The Second Council of Constantinople (the fifth ecumenical council) in 553 endorsed the *theopaschite* formula, “that one of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh.” According to the doctrine of divine impassibility, universally accepted by the orthodox, the divine nature cannot suffer. But by the same logic which affirms that Mary gives birth to God in his humanity, it must be said that it is God who dies on the cross and suffers, not in his divine nature but in his humanity. Hence the orthodox tradition affirms that God suffers, but not that the Father suffers; for the Father is not human. In short, the tradition affirms Deipassionism but not Patripassionism.

The Third Council of Constantinople (the sixth ecumenical council) in 681 teaches that Christ has two wills, divine and human. For if he is fully human, he must have a human will. But by the same token, if he is fully God, then his will must be the divine will. This point is illustrated in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he submits his human will to his divine will by praying, “Not my will, but Thine be done.” ■

## Suggested Reading

“The Definition of Chalcedon” in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 34–36; also in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, 62–65.

“The Second and Third Councils of Constantinople” in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 45–53.

Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, chaps. 11 and 12.

McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*.

Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, chap. 5.

## Questions to Consider

1. Does the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation appear to you as a faithful development of the early Christian view of Jesus?
2. Is it clear what orthodox Christian doctrine means when it affirms that God died on a cross?

# The Doctrine of Grace

## Lecture 12

Now we come to a doctrine that's really about who we are as human beings. The overarching label for this is "soteriology," a technical term meaning the doctrine of salvation. The key concept we'll be discussing in this lecture is the concept of "grace," a New Testament term that has developed in all sorts of rich and powerful and fascinating ways in the history of Christian theology.

The patristic doctrine of grace was shaped by a contrast between nature and grace. Its prime concern was how believers in Christ became children of God: Only Christ is Son of God by nature, but believers become children of God by grace. A fundamental biblical metaphor for this was adoption: Whereas Christ is born Son of God, believers are adopted children of God. Adoption by grace was not just a change of status but a change in human nature, since it involved the gift of everlasting life, which is not natural to us. Since everlasting life means immortality, and an immortal is a god, it is not so surprising that this change came to be described as a kind of deification. Everlasting life therefore meant a "participation in the divine nature" (1 Peter 1:4). Hence the patristic formula: God became human so that humans could become divine. In Trinitarian terms, it arose from union with Christ, who is God.

Augustine shifted the focus of the nature/grace distinction from overcoming death to overcoming sin. He rejected Pelagianism because it meant that believers had no need of a transformative divine grace to be saved. Augustine found in Pelagius's writings the idea that human nature was capable of living without sin, so long as it was properly taught. The necessity of grace was Augustine's key claim: We cannot overcome sin without the help of an inner gift of divine grace which not only forgives past sin but gives our souls the power to love God and neighbor wholeheartedly.

Augustine's most widely-accepted argument for the necessity of grace is based on the practice of prayer. The basic premise is that Christians pray for God to help change their will and give them a deeper love for God and

neighbor. This form of argument has been labeled *lex orandi, lex credendi* (roughly, “the rule for how you pray is the rule for what you believe”).

Augustine’s doctrine of “original sin” derives from a second argument he made for the necessity of grace, based on the widespread practice of infant baptism. He argued that since baptism bestows forgiveness of sins, infants who are baptized must be guilty of some kind of sin, or they would not need to be baptized. Since infants have not committed any “actual sins” (a phrase which becomes a technical term), they must be guilty of Adam’s “original sin.” Augustine’s doctrine of “original sin” means that every human being is born not just with a corrupted and sinful nature, but guilty of “original sin” and therefore deserving to be damned.

A third argument Augustine makes for the necessity of grace is that Law without grace cannot help us but only terrify us. Telling us what to do doesn’t help us do it, if what we are to do is not some outward act but an inward love of the heart. The grace we need is an inner gift of delight in God, “the love of God poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us” (Romans 5:5). Hence, Augustine argues in his treatise *On the Spirit and the Letter*, the help we need is not the outward instruction of the letter but the inward grace of the Spirit.

Augustine’s doctrine of grace led to deep issues that are still a matter of dispute in the Western Christian tradition. He insisted with Paul that we are justified by faith, but does not teach the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone. For Augustine, our journey to God, our salvation really is like a journey along a road. When we’re converted to the faith, that’s like getting on the right road. What moves us along the road is love for God. But Christian faith is just the beginning of the journey, and is not sufficient to bring us home.

Augustine insists on the necessity of grace if we are to do any good work, but does not teach the Protestant doctrine that we are saved by grace alone, because when our wills co-operate with grace our works of love have merit. By grace we come to love God, though we never do so perfectly in this life. Because believers pray for grace and forgiveness, their sins are not imputed to them. Gifts of grace, called “co-operative grace” work together with our



good will to produce meritorious works of love. Although all our good works are outgrowths of grace, our salvation requires merit as well as grace. This is possible because the initial gift of grace, called “operative grace,” works a change in our hearts, turning our wills toward the good.

Augustine taught that grace and free will were compatible, but not everyone agrees that his doctrine of grace really is compatible with an adequate concept of free will. He insists that this is not coercion, for it does not mean overcoming the unwilling but inwardly causing the unwilling to become willing. Hence on Augustine’s view, God can cause us to will freely in a different way than we had before. This view of free will is deemed inadequate by those who think a truly free will is one that is ultimately in its own control.

Augustine’s notorious doctrine of predestination grows out of his doctrine of grace. Since the initial gift of grace does not depend in any way on our good will or merits, it is up to God who receives it. It is therefore God’s choice that

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**Grace causes the will to fall in love with what makes us truly, eternally happy—our one true love.**

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ultimately differentiates between the saved and the damned; this idea is known as the doctrine of “election.” Augustine argues that this divine choice or “election” treats people unequally but not unjustly, because no one gets worse than they deserve (since all are born deserving damnation), and some get undeserved mercy. This divine choice is not made in response to unfolding events but is, like all God’s choices, an eternal and unchanging plan that he carries

out when the time comes. The name for this unchanging plan of God concerning how he will distribute the gifts of grace is predestination. Why God chooses to save one person rather than another is, by Augustine’s own account, an unsearchable and frightening mystery.

Augustine’s view of grace is supported by his view of evil as a kind of nonbeing; evil is a form of privation like darkness, lack, absence, or disorder. He figures that since God created all things, whatever exists is good. Since nothing God creates is evil, evil must not be a created thing, and therefore not a thing at all, but a lack of something. This does not mean evil is unreal,

but that it has the reality of a privation, something lacking where it should be present, like a shadow or a hole or something twisted, broken, or disordered.

Grace causes the will to fall in love with what makes us truly, eternally happy—our one true love. In healing the disorder of the will, grace restores true freedom of the will, which had been undermined by sin. Given his view of the nature of the will, evil, and grace, it makes perfect sense for Augustine to assume that grace and free will are always compatible with each other. ■

### Suggested Reading

Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter*, found in *Answer to the Pelagians I*.

Cary, *Inner Grace*.

Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, chaps. 13 and 14.

Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, chap. 6.

### Questions to Consider

1. What is most attractive about Augustine's doctrine of grace?
2. What is least attractive about Augustine's doctrine of grace?

# The Incomprehensible and the Supernatural

## Lecture 13

**We're going to start looking at medieval developments of concepts, ideas, and doctrines that have their roots all the way back in the New Testament that were developed by the church fathers, but then are developed further and take on new forms and new problems and issues and interests in the medieval period.**

**T**he orthodox Christian theological tradition became committed to the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God as a consequence of the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity. For Nicene theologians, the eternal begetting of the Son by the Father is ineffable and incomprehensible, not to be understood in terms of anything in creation. This developed into a strong doctrine of the incomprehensibility of the Trinity itself, which had important theological consequences. These consequences played out differently in the East than in the West. The Eastern churches, including the Eastern Orthodox, are theological descendents of the Greek-speaking churches of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire, which became the Byzantine Empire. The Western churches, both Catholic and Protestant, are theological descendents of the Latin-speaking church of the western half of the Roman Empire. Theologically, the most important difference between the two is the massive influence of Augustine in the West, which had no parallel in the East.

To insist on the incomprehensibility of God had definite consequences in the Platonist philosophical environment of ancient Christianity. Plotinus, the pagan neo-Platonist, made a sharp distinction between divine incomprehensibility and intelligibility. He spoke of a hierarchy of three divine hypostases: One, Mind, and Soul. Soul means the divine Soul of all things, which is lower than the other two because it is connected to bodies. The Mind is lower than the One, because Mind contains many Ideas, which makes mind both manifold and intelligible, something “visible” to the mind’s eye. The divine Mind is “eternally generated” from the One. The One is not intelligible but incomprehensible, and not manifold but simple. “Simple” means not having parts or multiplicity of any kind, not composite or made up of anything. Incomprehensible means beyond intelligibility,

impossible for the mind's eye to see—the way that the sun is too bright to look at. Intelligible means visible to the mind's eye the way a mathematical truth is when you say, “Aha! Now I see it!”

Against this philosophical background, Nicene theology insisted that the whole Trinity is incomprehensible. Nicene trinitarianism was hard for Platonistically-minded Christians to accept because it rejected a hierarchy of divine hypostases. However, Nicene theologians found the concept of divine simplicity useful in explaining why the three hypostases of the Trinity were necessarily one god, one eternity, one omnipotence, etc. Likewise, they found the concept of divine incomprehensibility useful, applying it especially to the eternal begetting of the Son. Since the Father is incomprehensible and the Son is his equal, the Son must be equally incomprehensible, rather than intelligible as in the Plotinian “trinity.” The upshot is that the whole Trinity is incomprehensible, simple and one.

The great theologian of divine incomprehensibility is the late 5<sup>th</sup>-century Eastern Orthodox theologian known today as Pseudo-Dionysius, or Denys. A Christian neo-Platonist, Dionysius clearly identified the Trinity as the incomprehensible divine One rather than the divine Mind. The Trinity is simple, having no parts, containing no ideas or other beings. The incomprehensible Trinity is a divine darkness, not because it is obscure in itself but because, like the dazzling sun, it is too bright to look at.

Dionysius contributes to the Eastern Orthodox tradition of apophatic theology, which concerns how God cannot be spoken of. Called in the West the *via negativa* (way of negation), apophatic theology (from the Greek term for “negation” or “denial”) means speaking of God in his transcendence by saying what he is not. To say God is incomprehensible is to say he is not intelligible. To say he is eternal is to say he is not in time. To say he is omnipotent is to say his power is not limited, etc.

Nonetheless, there are indispensable affirmations that must be made about God. Since no language is adequate to describe the incomprehensible, God is beyond negation as well as affirmation. To speak well of God, both affirmation and negation are necessary as well as inadequate. Hence Dionysius also writes a treatise *On the Divine Names*, explaining the affirmative language

used of God, such as Supreme Good, Being, Life, Wisdom, Power, Justice, etc. Using language that goes back to Plato, Dionysius says that God is not only beyond intelligibility but beyond being, literally “above essence” (*hyper-ousios*) or “super-essential.” Particularly influential is his description of God as “the Good that diffuses itself.”

In contrast to Dionysius, Augustine, the great Christian neoPlatonist of the West, conceived God as intelligible. For Augustine, the human mind is like an eye made to see the light of divine Truth. God is the Truth that contains all that is immutably true, the Mind containing Plato’s Ideas. Therefore every time the intellect sees the truth, it catches a partial and transitory glimpse of God. God is to be understood by the intellect, just as bodies are to be seen by the eyes. To use later terminology, for Augustine, it is natural for the human mind to see God.

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**The concept of the supernatural arose when Western theologians in the Middle Ages had to reconcile Augustine and Dionysius.**

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When Augustine says God is incomprehensible, he means something much less than Dionysius. Like Dionysius, Augustine frequently uses the metaphor of dazzled eyes to describe how God surpasses our understanding. But for Augustine, this dazzlement is due not to the incapacity of our nature to understand the incomprehensible

God, but to the sinfulness of our hearts which corrupts our minds. It is as if our eyes are unhealthy and half blind. Grace, for Augustine, serves to heal, purify, and strengthen our minds so that we may see God. The sense in which God remains incomprehensible even to healthy eyes is parallel to the sense in which bodies cannot be seen from all sides at once.

The concept of the supernatural arose when Western theologians in the Middle Ages had to reconcile Augustine and Dionysius. Their problem was to explain how there can be a beatific vision of an incomprehensible God. For Augustine, the ultimate goal of life is the fulfillment of the mind’s desire to see God, finding rest in God and “joy in the Truth.” Dionysius’s doctrine of incomprehensibility, on the other hand, means that the essence of God is beyond the capacity of any created being to see or understand.

The solution proposed by Thomas Aquinas is the concept of supernatural grace. He teaches that it is beyond the natural capacity of any created being to understand God with the intellect. Yet it is not beyond the capacity of a mind elevated by supernatural grace. Hence there is a type of grace which does not just heal and help human nature but elevates it, raising it up to a level where it may see God. This elevating grace is “super-natural” in the sense that it raises human (and angelic) natures above (Latin *super*) their natural capacities, but it is also a created grace. Thus even sinless natures, such as the angels, cannot come to their ultimate happiness without grace. This concept of the supernatural develops, in Aquinas especially, into a distinctively Roman Catholic notion of grace and its relation to human nature. ■



**Portrait of St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of all medieval theologians.**

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### Suggested Reading

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. 1, Question 12, in *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas* (edited by Pegis), as well as the complete edition of *Summa Theologica*.

Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self*, chap. 4.

Dionysius, *Mystical Theology* in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*.

Plotinus, “The Three Initial Hypostases” in *The Enneads*.

### Questions to Consider

1. Does Christian theology benefit by having some neo-Platonism in its background?
2. Must God be incomprehensible? Why or why not?

# Eastern Orthodox Theology

## Lecture 14

**The Eastern Middle Ages can also be called the Byzantine theology or the Byzantine Empire. It's the theology that grew up around Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire throughout all the way up to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This became the basis of the Eastern Orthodox traditions, Greek Orthodoxy, Russian Orthodoxy, and so on.**

**B**y the 8<sup>th</sup> century, venerating icons was a long-established custom in the Eastern (Byzantine) church, but needed to be defended against powerful criticisms. The seventh ecumenical council, the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, defended the use of icons in Christian devotion. The Ten Commandments forbid the making of graven images for use in worship. Muslims were powerfully present on the border of the empire, contending that veneration of icons amounted to idolatry. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, a movement of iconoclasm (i.e., hostility to icons) won the favor of the Byzantine emperor, who convened a council that condemned the use of icons. The terms in which the iconoclastic council condemned icons made Christology a central issue.

The Second Council of Nicaea responded by denying that venerating icons was worshiping them. Icons are not objects of worship (*latreia*, as in idol-latry) but veneration (*dulia*). Hence the pro-icon theologians were called iconodules. The veneration given to icons passes on to the person they picture.

Venerating icons has become central to Eastern Orthodox piety and theology. “The Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy” celebrates the restoration of icons. The Roman Catholic church accepts the teaching of the seventh ecumenical council but does not build as much of its devotional theology around icons. Most Protestant groups do not accept the authority of this council or the piety it represents, which requires not only the veneration of icons but devotion to the saints.

A key component in the mature Eastern Orthodox theology of icons is an understanding of the Transfiguration of Christ, most fully developed by Gregory Palamas in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The key concept in this understanding is the light of Transfiguration. The high point at the center of the Synoptic Gospels is the Transfiguration of Christ, when a glorious light shines from his body. (See Lecture Four.) Palamas argues that this light is not simply a created symbol of something divine, but the uncreated light of divine glory itself. Hence in the Transfiguration a divine light shines forth from picturable human flesh, and is perceived both sensibly and intellectually.

The light of Transfiguration, also known as the light of Tabor, transforms, beatifies, and deifies those who see it. It is thus the means of true beatific vision and ultimate union with God. It is a light experienced in this life by the saints as they are inwardly transformed by the perception of Christ incarnate. Since the glory of this light spills over from their souls and also transforms their bodies, to behold a saint is to see the deifying effects of the Transfiguration.

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**The light of Transfiguration, also known as the light of Tabor, transforms, beatifies, and deifies those who see it.**

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The light of Tabor is both visible and more than visible. It is not a purely intellectual light, as in the Roman Catholic view of beatific vision. It is literally seen by the eyes, but only when they are purified by the Holy Spirit. In addition, it is more than light, for it affects ears and heart and is perceived in prayer.

In connection with the light of Tabor, Palamas develops a distinction between the essence and energies of God that is characteristic of Eastern Orthodox theology. The energies of the Trinity are the uncreated glory of God, which can, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, be made perceptible to human beings. The energies are literally the “workings” or “operations” of God, often identified with his glory. Furthermore, they are the medium by which the creature participates in the life of the triune Creator. They are distinct but inseparable from the one essence (*ousia*) of God, which is utterly incomprehensible, not something creatures can participate in.



The Eastern Orthodox concept of uncreated energies provides a very different explanation of beatific vision from the Roman Catholic concept of supernatural grace. Once again, the problem is how there can be a beatific vision of an incomprehensible God. (See Lecture Thirteen.) For Catholics what is seen in the beatific vision is of the essence of God—which the Orthodox teach is forever impossible for any creature to see. What makes beatific vision possible according to the Eastern Orthodox is that human beings can participate in the energies of God, unlike the essence of God. Since this is a vision of the light of Tabor, it always involves Christ incarnate. ■

### Suggested Reading

Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*.

Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*.

Palamas, *The Triads*.

Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, chap. 3.

### Questions to Consider

1. According to Eastern Orthodox theology, how does veneration of icons bring one closer to God?
2. How is the Eastern Orthodox view of the ultimate vision of God different from the Roman Catholic view?

# Atonement and the Procession of the Spirit

## Lecture 15

Western Christianity—which becomes the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions—and Eastern Christianity—which is most powerfully represented by the Eastern Orthodox tradition—begin to diverge in the early Middle Ages, and they reach a real dividing point in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in 1054.

The schism between Eastern Orthodoxy and the Western church took place in 1054 because of the doctrine of double procession. The Western version of the Nicene Creed came to say the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father “and the Son.” This Western doctrine that the Spirit proceeds from the Father “and the Son” is called “double procession.” *Filioque* is Latin for “and the Son” and was gradually and almost inadvertently added to the creed in the West, not by decision of a council. One major Eastern objection to the *filioque* is simply procedural: Nothing can be added to the creed without the decision of an ecumenical council.

A generous Eastern Orthodox view can accept *filioque* but only in a sense. Both East and West can affirm the formula that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, and both affirm that the Father is the principle, the source, and origin of the whole deity. The East objects that the double procession undermines the monarchy of the Father, the doctrine that the Father is the sole source of the divinity.

The double procession is an Augustinian doctrine that the Western church officially defended. Augustine argued that because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, he proceeds from the Father and the Son together. The only thing the Father does not give to the Son is being the Father. But the Father gives the Son the capacity to be a source of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the West insists that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son from one principle, not two. The West will affirm the Son is a source or principle within the Trinity, but the East disagrees. They say there is only one source in the Trinity, that is, the Father. In favor of the Western

view, Anselm argues that without the double procession, there is no way to differentiate the begetting of the Son from the proceeding of the Spirit.

Consistent with the doctrine of double procession is Augustine's teaching that the Holy Spirit is the love shared by the Father and the Son. As the Spirit of the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is what the Father and the Son have most deeply in common. Since love is the power of union for Augustine, the Holy Spirit is the divine Love, which is the bond of union in the Trinity. Thus the love of God, which is shed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5), comes from the Love of God which is the Holy Spirit.

The identification of the Holy Spirit with love becomes part of a typically Western strategy of finding an analogy of the Trinity in the human soul. For Augustine the clearest analogy to the Trinity in created things is the human

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**Consistent with the doctrine of double procession is Augustine's teaching that the Holy Spirit is the love shared by the Father and the Son.**

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mind properly remembering, understanding, and loving itself. Psychological analogies of the Trinity, or what Augustine calls "vestiges" (*vestigia*) or "traces" of the Trinity in the soul, thus become an important part of Western thinking on the doctrine of the Trinity.

Anselm made a major contribution to the Western understanding of the doctrine of atonement with his theory that Christ's death made satisfaction for human sin. The doctrine of atonement has come to mean accounts or theories of how Christ's death on the cross brought about forgiveness of sins. In the Old Testament "atonement" was a word used to describe cleansing from sin through the blood of sacrifices. The concept of atoning sacrifice is one of the most prominent ways Christian theology uses to describe the saving power of Christ's death, but not the only way. Others include the notion of ransom or payment to redeem captives.

Anselm's focus is on the demands of justice that go along with mercy and forgiveness. He assumes the classical conception of justice as rendering each his due, that is, paying what one owes. The key concept Anselm introduces is "satisfaction," which means paying what is owed to someone who has

been harmed, offended, or dishonored. Although God cannot be harmed in himself, he can be dishonored in his creatures. Because God is better than the whole world or an infinity of worlds, the debt incurred by sin or disobedience to God is infinite. To leave the debt unpaid, Anselm argues, is not mercy but injustice. If someone cannot make satisfaction for his offense, the only just alternative is punishment.

In Anselm's account, God became human because this was the only way to "make satisfaction" for sin. Only humans owe the debt, so God becomes human to repay the debt. As a human being, Christ owes the debt; as God, he pays the debt. Rather than looking at Christ's death as an innocent person being unjustly punished, Anselm takes the view that Christ is merciful by paying the debt for our sins. ■

### Suggested Reading

Anselm, *Why God Became Man* in *The Major Works*.

Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, chap. 3.

Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, chap. 4.

### Questions to Consider

1. Why does it matter what the source or principle of the Trinity is?
2. Is it a good thing that there is more than one theory of the atonement in Christian theology?

# Scholastic Theology

## Lecture 16

Paris was the place to be in the 13<sup>th</sup> century where the greatest minds congregated in the University of Paris, including one of the greatest minds who ever lived, Thomas Aquinas, the great Roman Catholic theologian, the great scholastic medieval theologian. Scholastic theologian is a title for people like Thomas who were university professors, and universities were a relatively new development in Western culture.

What was most unprecedented in Western medieval theology was its scholasticism. Scholasticism, meaning the theology of the schools, was theology taught not by bishops or monks but by university professors, like Thomas Aquinas. Medieval scholastic theology wedded Christian faith and critical reasoning in a deep new way. The logic of Aristotle was rediscovered and further developed beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The goal of Aristotelian logic was to produce a science set out in deductive proofs. The favored manner of teaching and writing in scholasticism was by way of logical disputation. Apparent contradictions between various authorities within the Christian tradition were identified and, if possible, reconciled. The “authorities” for the medieval theologians, meant authoritative books, most importantly the Bible, but also the church fathers and Aristotle, whom Aquinas called “the Philosopher.”

In one of the major achievements of scholasticism, Aquinas develops an account of how we may say things about an incomprehensible God based on the concept of analogy. The problem for Aquinas is how we may reason about a simple God. The simplicity of God means that every attribute of God (Goodness, Wisdom, Justice, etc.) is identical with God, and thus with every other attribute. Metaphors such as “God is a rock” are legitimate because they are used in scripture, but they do not support logical deductions. The difference between metaphor and analogy is the difference between “God is a rock” and “God is Good”—from the latter we make deductions like “God is Just.”

The key notion behind analogical speech about God is that the creation is like God. For Aquinas, God is not at all like the creation, but every created thing is to some degree like God. All things are like God because God always creates things that are like himself, having goodness, truth, and being.

The analogy of being illustrates the underlying metaphysics of this way of speaking of God. When we say “God has being” and “this tree has being” we are talking about two different kinds of being. God *has* being because God *is* being. In contrast to God, who is his own being, the tree has being only by participating in God’s being. This means that God is not one being among other beings.

One of the most important legacies of scholasticism is Aquinas’s doctrine of created grace. Supernatural grace is created grace, a form in the soul. Developing Augustine’s concept of the Holy Spirit as the Love of God, Peter Lombard had proposed that the love of God in our souls is actually the Holy Spirit. This was a radical doctrine of uncreated grace, for it meant that the love of God in us is not a created thing but the uncreated God himself. Aquinas rejects Lombard’s view and teaches that the supernatural love of God in our hearts is a created form that gives shape to the activities of the soul.

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**Like virtues and skills in Aristotle, created grace is in Aquinas’s view a habit and quality of the soul.**

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Aquinas’s doctrine of grace makes use of Aristotle’s concept of form. Form, in Aquinas’s Aristotelian philosophy, is what gives being and definition to a thing. A bowl is a bowl, for instance, not because of what it is made of but because of its form or shape. For an Aristotelian, a virtue is a form in the soul, because it gives shape and definition to the soul’s activities. In a rather similar way, skills are forms in the soul that give shape and definition to bodily movements, like the well-formed movements of a pianist’s hands while playing. The moral virtues are like being skilled at living a good human life. Created grace is a form in the soul that is the basis of supernatural virtues. Like virtues and skills in Aristotle, created grace is in Aquinas’s view a habit and quality of the soul.

Grace is thus the basis for a distinct set of supernatural or theological virtues. Whereas the moral virtues are based on reason in the soul, the supernatural virtues are based on sanctifying grace, which is a created supernatural form in the soul. One does not have to be a Christian to have the three supernatural theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. Faith means specifically faith in Christ. Hope means specifically hope for eternal life in Christ. Charity means loving God with your whole heart and your neighbor as yourself. In addition to making supernatural virtues possible, sanctifying grace strengthens the moral virtues, such as prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. Sanctifying grace in itself is *gratia gratum faciens*, a grace that makes a person acceptable to God.

Created supernatural grace is important at three stages of human existence. In the beginning, as “original righteousness,” it was the supernatural gift of righteousness that maintained the soul of Adam and Eve in sinless innocence before it was lost in the Fall. In the course of the Christian life, this grace is the basis of the three theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity. Ultimately, as the “light of glory,” it is the supernatural elevation of human nature that makes the beatific vision possible. ■

### Suggested Reading

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, Question 13 (on analogy), found in Pegis’s *Introduction to Thomas Aquinas* as well as the complete edition of *Summa Theologica*.

———, *Summa Theologica* I–II (“First Part of the Second Part”), Question 110 (on grace as habit) found only in the complete edition of *Summa Theologica*.

Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, chaps. 3, 4, 13, and 14.

Pieper, *Guide to Thomas Aquinas*.

## Questions to Consider

1. Is all speech about God non-literal—either analogical or metaphorical?
2. Why does Roman Catholic theology want to think of grace as a quality of the soul?



# The Sacraments

## Lecture 17

**Much of what I'm going to say in this lecture on the seven sacraments will apply to Eastern Orthodoxy as well as Roman Catholicism, because it's important to know the Roman Catholic church acknowledges the validity of Eastern Orthodox sacraments, and they agree that there are seven.**

**I**n the medieval understanding, sacraments were sacred rites through which God confers grace on believers. There were seven sacraments, which were defined as outward signs that conferred the inner grace they signified. Sacraments were understood to be instituted by Christ himself.

Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration or rebirth. Like other sacraments, its outward form consists of a sign and words. The words are: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The sign is immersion in water. In many churches, sprinkling is used as an alternative to immersion, especially for infants.

Signifying regeneration or rebirth, the sacrament of Baptism means the same thing as being saved. If you asked people of Catholic and Eastern Orthodox faiths if they've been born again, they'll say, sure, I've been baptized. Catholics agree with Protestants that salvation requires rebirth, a passing from death in Adam to new life in Christ.



**John the Baptist baptizing Jesus in Jordan.**

Theologies of baptismal regeneration typically lead to a doctrine of mortal sin. Since anyone who is baptized may later turn against God, one

consequence of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is that rebirth is not a guarantee of ultimate salvation. What makes a sin mortal is precisely that it takes away the new life gained in baptism. To die in a state of mortal sin is to be damned. It is not easy to distinguish mortal sins from venial sins. Unlike mortal sins, venial sins do not remove sanctifying grace from the soul. Mortal sin is fundamentally sin against charity, a turning of the will against love for God and neighbor.

Penance or “Confession” is the sacrament through which sins are forgiven. Penance consists of four parts. Confession: Sinners or penitents confess their sins to a priest. Contrition: Sinners sincerely hate their sins and have a firm intention not to sin again. Absolution: The priest announces forgiveness of sins using the words, “I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Satisfaction: Sinners make up for their sins, sometimes by saying “penance,” that is, a certain number of prayers.

The priest in the sacrament, called a “confessor,” serves as a moral guide and spiritual director for the penitent. In the early church the penitential disciplines, which might include years of exclusion from the Eucharist, dealt with notorious sins such as idolatry, murder, and adultery which separated the sinner from the life of the church. The Lateran Council (A.D. 1215) required all Christians to confess their sins at least once a year and to receive the Eucharist at Easter. Beginning in the Middle Ages, the sacrament of Penance became private, a context of moral guidance and spiritual direction for individual Christians. Much of what the West understands by “conscience” developed in these secret conversations between penitent and confessor exploring the sinful depths of the human heart.

The key theological question about the Eucharist concerns the presence of Christ’s body and blood. The Eucharist is a sacred meal modeled on Jesus’s Last Supper. Its sign includes bread and wine. The words of institution are Jesus’s words at his Last Supper: “This is my body” and “This is my blood.” The eucharistic liturgy begins with a call to the congregation to lift up their

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**Sacraments were defined as outward signs that conferred the inner grace they signified.**

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hearts and give thanks (*eucharistein* in Greek). Early in the eucharistic liturgy is the *sanctus*, the prayer beginning “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,” through which the congregation joins the angels in their perpetual worship of God.

In the medieval understanding, the bread and wine are changed into Christ’s body and blood. The West understands this to happen at the words of institution; the East at the *epiclesis*. The early medieval way of putting this was simply to say that the bread and wine turn into or are changed into Christ’s body and blood. The Lateran Council (A.D. 1215) calls this change a “transubstantiation,” which is to say a change of substance. After the change, the substance of bread and wine no longer remains, but the substance of Christ’s body and blood is present under the appearance of bread and wine. The Eucharist, or Communion, is the external sign that conveys the grace of salvation by conveying to us Christ’s body and blood.

Confirmation is a laying on of hands to confirm (that is, strengthen) the baptized. Therefore, the sign in this sacrament includes laying on of hands and anointing with consecrated oil (chrism). There are wide varieties in how this is practiced in various churches. Originally, this laying on of hands immediately followed Baptism. In the Western churches, it was postponed and reserved for the bishop, becoming a rite of passage into adulthood.

The sacrament once known as “Extreme Unction” is now called “Anointing of the Sick.” In the Middle Ages it was performed only for those thought to be dying; hence the label “Extreme Unction,” which means literally “final anointing.” But in Mark 6:13, the 12 apostles go out at Jesus’s command to cast out demons and anoint the “sick,” not necessarily the dying.

Marriage is instituted by God both in human nature and as a sacrament among the baptized. It aims at achieving three goods or purposes. The procreative good is the begetting and raising of children and educating them for the worship of God. The good of fidelity or “unitive good” involves not only marital faithfulness but the mutual service and community of husband and wife. The good of the sacrament is an image of the indissoluble union of Christ and his bride, the Church, which is why the church does not allow divorce.

Holy Orders or ordination, in the medieval and Roman Catholic understanding, confers a special power and character on those who receive it. It is one of three sacraments (the others being Baptism and Confirmation) which imprint an indelible mark or “character” on the soul. Only men who have received this character can consecrate the Eucharist and bestow sacramental absolution. ■

### Suggested Reading

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pt. 2.

Council of Trent, Decree on the Sacraments, in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, 118–198; an abridged version is in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 425–439.

Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, chap. 17.

### Questions to Consider

1. Why do Catholics—unlike many Protestants—find the sacraments to be such an important part of the Christian life?
2. What is the point of the doctrine of transubstantiation?

# Souls after Death

## Lecture 18

**The Christian hope was not the hope of going to heaven with Jesus, but the hope of Christ coming from heaven to earth to establish the Kingdom of God on earth and restore all things and redeem the world and raise everyone from the dead. The hope was resurrection of the dead. That meant an undoing of death so that people who are corpses become living human beings again.**

**T**he theological concept of souls going to heaven developed to explain what happens in the interval between death and resurrection. The Christian hope of bodily resurrection leaves a gap or interim between when we die and when we are raised from the dead. In the New Testament, the dead are said to be “asleep,” as if resurrection is something like waking up. Believers who die are “with the Lord,” which must mean somehow with the exalted Lord Jesus at God’s right hand.

Four interconnected philosophical concepts about the soul came to be used as a framework for explaining the state of the dead before the resurrection. One is the concept that a human being consists of body and soul; another is the concept that death is the separation of soul and body. Furthermore, there is the concept that the soul is by nature immortal, and there is the concept that good souls ultimately go to heaven.

The crucial question was whether souls could be fully blessed before the resurrection. The one time the New Testament pictures souls in heaven, they are waiting for judgment day—they are not quite happy. Augustine hesitates to say disembodied souls are blessed by the full vision of God, because that would seem to make resurrection of the body superfluous. The issue was not fully settled in the West until 1336, when Pope Benedict XII declared that holy souls enjoy the beatific vision before the resurrection.

Jesus’s own interim between death and resurrection was elaborated in the doctrine of the harrowing of hell. There is a distinctively Christian understanding of what it means to say God died—not the Father or the Holy

Spirit, but the Son died. For three days the eternal Son of God, who is God, is united to a dead man. Hence it is true to say that for three days God was a dead man. Since death means separation of soul and body, the immortal Son of God was united both to Jesus's corpse in the tomb and to his separated soul in the place of the dead.

"The harrowing of hell" means Jesus's soul descended to the underworld to rescue all who believed in him. Christian tradition understood "the bosom of Abraham" to be a place in the underworld for those who believed in Christ before his resurrection. This place of blessedness, called "the limbo of the fathers" was not heaven and did not include the beatific vision. According to Ephesians, Jesus descended into this hell to "bring captivity captive," which is to say, he brought the souls there into heaven. Thus arose the traditional picture of Christ opening the gates of heaven when he ascended; for no one entered heaven until after he won redemption on the cross.

The concept of resurrected bodies was elaborated to harmonize with the belief that their ultimate destiny was heaven. A key text was Jesus saying that after the resurrection no one gets married, for they are like the angels in heaven. They are like the angels because, having eternal life, they cannot die anymore. Jesus says they become like the angels in heaven, neither marrying nor given in marriage. Angels are a different kind of creature from humans, having no mothers or fathers, no birth, and no experience of death.

Medieval theologians in the West associated four qualities with glorified bodies after the resurrection. As Paul said, they possess impassibility, which is to say, they are no longer capable of suffering any kind of harm. They possess clarity, which is to say they radiate a glorious light. They also possess subtlety, which means they can penetrate another body like fire or air. Finally, they possess agility, which means they can move to whatever place they wish to be, nearly instantaneously.

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**The concept of resurrected bodies was elaborated to harmonize with the belief that their ultimate destiny was heaven.**

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The concept of purgatory arose from practices of prayer for the dead. In an influential passage Augustine prays that his readers will join him in praying for his dead mother—which means her soul must be neither in heaven nor hell, but a state in which it can be helped.

Purgatory is a place of temporal punishment, in contrast to the eternal punishment in hell. It has the character of purgation or purification, cleansing the soul from sinful habits and desires to make it worthy of God. In the most important interpretations of purgatory, it is a good place, where souls embrace their painful purification to cleanse their souls.

In the late Middle Ages, the doctrine of Purgatory invited abuses. Purgatory was painted as hellish, inhabited by devils as torturers. Fear of purgatory was used as a way of raising money by selling masses and “indulgences,” sort of like time off from purgatory. Abusing the doctrine of purgatory eventually triggered the Reformation. ■

### Suggested Reading

Augustine, *Confessions*, bk. 9 (concludes with Augustine asking his readers to pray for his mother’s soul).

Catherine of Genoa, *Purgation and Purgatory, The Spiritual Dialogues*.

Dante, *The Divine Comedy*.

### Questions to Consider

1. How closely does the picture of the afterlife in this lecture resemble what you think of as the traditional view of life after death?
2. Is the concept of purgatory, as a place of purgation for imperfect souls advancing toward heaven, an attractive one to you?

# Luther and Protestant Theology

## Lecture 19

[Martin Luther] doesn't mean to begin a Reformation; at least, he doesn't mean to cause a split in the church. He does mean to improve the church like any other good Christian, but he starts a new Christian movement that he hadn't intended.

The transition from medieval theology to Protestantism is marked most importantly by a single famous figure, Martin Luther (1483–1546). Luther was a monk upholding the authority of the pope. He did not set out to create a split in the church. He criticized the sale of indulgences because they detracted from true inward penance of the heart. In 1517, he put his 95 Theses on a church door. These criticisms were meant as an invitation for disputation. Luther's theology matured in the next several years, at the same time as his growing conflict with the pope.

The most distinctive theme in Luther's theology is the contrast between two forms of the word of God: Law and Gospel. The Law is God telling us what we are to do, whereas the Gospel is God telling us what Christ does for us. The Law of God comes in two forms or uses. The first use of the Law, called the "civil" use, is concerned with outward deeds, prohibiting murder, theft, etc.



Portrait of Martin Luther, who criticized indulgence in his 95 Theses.

The second use of the Law is called the "evangelical" use, because it leads to the Gospel (in Greek, *evangelion*), by accusing and terrifying sinners, and showing them their helplessness and inability to save themselves. The Gospel is first of all a story about Christ. "Gospel" or *evangelion* means



literally “good news.” The good news is the story of Christ, the eternal Son of God, who became incarnate for the love of us sinners, dying on the cross, and being raised from the dead. Christian faith means not only believing this story, but believing that Christ did this “for us” (*pro nobis*), which also means *pro me*, or “for me.”

The Gospel is also a promise in which Christ is given to us. Faith, for Luther and all Protestantism after him, is always faith in Christ’s promise. By believing this promise, a sinner is united to Christ and receives all that

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**The most distinctive theme in Luther’s theology is the contrast between two forms of the word of God: Law and Gospel.**

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is his, including his righteousness, holiness, and eternal life. Luther compares this to a marriage, in which we receive Christ (as the bridegroom) and all his riches, while he takes us to himself together with all our sins and debts, making them his own and destroying them on the cross.

Luther’s epochal doctrine of justification by faith alone stems from his conviction that only faith in the Gospel can do us any good spiritually. Justification (from the Latin *justitia*, often translated “righteousness”) is about how we become righteous or just in God’s sight. Luther teaches that we are justified by faith alone (in Latin, *sola fide*), apart from works of the Law. According to Luther, sinners cannot receive Christ by doing good works but only by believing the Gospel.

Luther’s doctrine of justification has radical implications that Luther fully accepted. He insists on cutting this connection by excluding reason and free will from any role in salvation. Our own righteousness is so far from contributing to our salvation that our good works are always in themselves mortal sins. In a famous and controversial formulation, Luther says, “We are at the same time righteous and sinners” (*simul justus et peccator*), because we are righteous by faith in Christ but sinners by our good works.

Luther’s doctrine of justification excludes good works from salvation but not from the Christian life. Good works, precisely because it is our own rather than Christ’s, makes no contribution whatsoever to our salvation. The value

of good works lies in the contribution it makes to our external welfare and the good of our neighbors.

Luther's concept of Gospel is based on Catholic sacramental theology. His early theological writing was focused on the effort to merit a state of grace by penitential works. He had been taught that a kind of preliminary "merit of congruity" is required before grace. This merit is acquired by penitential works: confession, contrition, and satisfaction. For Luther, the merit of our good works is always undermined by the fact that we do them not out of pure love for God but out of the selfish desire to be saved, for the motive of our heart is always "curved in on itself" (*incurvatus in se*). The deep problem was uncertainty about whether or not good works were useless. A truly sincere contrition, therefore, requires self-hatred and the desire to be damned. He called this justification by faith alone, because it meant attaining righteousness by believing God's accusation.

The first time Luther identifies a gracious word of God to cling to—what he later calls "Gospel"—is in the word of absolution in the sacrament of Penance. The word of absolution is to be believed as Christ's own word. More than a year after posting the 95 Theses, Luther finds a word of Christ's grace—the Gospel—in Baptism and the Eucharist as well as the sacrament of Penance. He would say that the Gospel itself is a kind of sacrament, because its words and stories bring about what they signify.

Justification by faith alone extends a version of medieval Catholic pastoral care to the whole of life. Many people found it terrifying to die when they did not know if they were in a state of grace or deserved damnation. A good priest would often hold up a crucifix before the face of the dying and urge them to trust in Christ rather than worry about their inadequate moral life. Luther called this kind of terror *Anfechtung*, German for "assault," because it was a temptation of the devil which he frequently experienced himself. ■

## Suggested Reading

Bainton, *Here I Stand*.

Luther, “Preface to the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans” and *On the Freedom of a Christian*.

## Questions to Consider

1. Why was the Gospel such good news for Luther?
2. In what way is Luther’s concept of Gospel both Catholic and Protestant?

# Calvin and Reformed Theology

## Lecture 20

**Reformed and Reformation don't mean the same thing ... . The Reformed are one part of the Reformation, not the whole Reformation. They tend to be a little further way from Catholicism than Lutheranism is. There's a kind of spectrum here; Lutheranism is closer to Catholicism largely because Lutheranism has a more Catholic notion of the sacraments.**

**T**he Reformed tradition constitutes just one branch of the Reformation, which is different from the Lutheran Reformation. The Reformed were more thorough in breaking with Catholic piety and sacramental practices than the Lutherans. The designation "Reformed" comes from the phrase, "the church reformed according to the word of God." The Reformed wing of the Reformation originated in Switzerland, beginning with Zwingli in Zurich, and continuing with its most important figure, John Calvin, in Geneva. The Reformed tradition in England includes Puritans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists.

Reformed and Lutheran theology agree on three characteristically Protestant *sola* statements against Roman Catholic theology: *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, and *sola scriptura*. *Sola fide* ("faith alone") means we are justified by faith alone, apart from works of the Law. Catholics also teach justification by faith, but that don't add "alone." Good works are also required for salvation, because we are justified by "faith working by love" (Gal. 5:6). The "alone" here excludes good works, particularly works of love, which should be done but make no contribution to justification. Protestants agree that faith works through love, but make this part of sanctification, not justification. They say it contributes nothing to ultimate salvation. For Protestants, faith necessarily results in good works, but good works do not contribute anything to salvation.

*Sola gratia* ("grace alone") means we can never do anything to earn or deserve salvation. The word "alone" here excludes merit. Even after grace and faith, our works earn no merit before God. By contrast, for Catholics,

our good works, which are the result of grace, do indeed have merit in God's sight. Whereas Protestants refuse to believe in any merits of their own, Catholics insist especially on the merits of the saints.

*Sola scriptura* ("scripture alone") means that nothing is required for salvation that is not in the Bible. Here the "alone" excludes the power of the church to make new doctrines and impose burdens on people's consciences that are not imposed in scripture. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the doctrine of private interpretation did not mean an individual could adequately interpret the Bible apart from the church. "Scripture alone" did not mean you could just forget about the church, the tradition, or other Christians. Nor does it imply that the church can read the Bible adequately without being informed by the Christian tradition. It sets limits on what the church's teaching authority is, which must not go beyond what is taught (explicitly or by clear logical implication) in scripture.

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**Calvin is famous for his doctrine of predestination, but his differences from Luther and even from Roman Catholic theologians on this point are subtle.**

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Calvin is famous for his doctrine of predestination, but his differences from Luther and even from Roman Catholic theologians on this point are subtle. Calvin makes much of the doctrine of adoption, the teaching that believers are adopted by grace as children of God. Our adoption as sons and daughters of God gives us confidence to approach God as our gracious Father. Behind adoption is election: God eternally chooses who shall be his children.

The idea that we should know we are elect is Calvin's radical innovation in the doctrine of predestination. Faith alone cannot save us unless we persevere in faith to the end of our lives. Calvin agrees with Augustine that perseverance, like the initial gift of faith, is due to God's grace. But when Augustine argues that people cannot know in advance that they will receive this gift, Calvin disagrees. Instead, Calvin teaches that we can and should be certain of our election, which means we can be assured of our ultimate salvation—so believers can indeed know in advance that they will persevere in faith. Thus the teaching that we can be eternally saved already in this life

leads to what is radically new in Calvin's doctrine of predestination: the notion that we can know we are elect, predestined for salvation.

"How do you know you are elect?" becomes a crucial pastoral question in Reformed theology. For Calvin the certainty of election is based on the inward and effectual call, which is the work of God's grace—what later Protestants call "conversion." The effectual call in conversion gives us a true, saving faith, one that perseveres to the end, rather than a temporary faith. This generates the distinctively Calvinist anxiety: How do I know for sure that I have true, saving faith? It also explains why the concept of a once-in-a-lifetime conversion becomes a central theme in much of Protestant theology: If you know you have been truly converted, you can know you are predestined for salvation. One main route to "assurance of salvation," as it is called in Reformed theology, is the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. The other main route is more external: The fruits of the Spirit, that is, the good works which follow from true faith is evidence that we are true believers.

When Catholics, Lutherans, and the Reformed get anxious, they get anxious about different things. Catholics get anxious about whether they are in a state of mortal sin, so they go to confession. Calvinists get anxious about whether they have true faith, so they seek internal or external evidence that their faith is real. Luther has the anxiety he calls *Anfechtung*, whose deepest form is the worry that the hidden God of predestination might be different from the revealed God of the promise, so he keeps returning to the promise of baptism. ■

### Suggested Reading

Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 3, chaps. 2 (on faith) and 21–24 (on predestination).

Cary, "Sola Fide: Luther and Calvin."

McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*.

## Questions to Consider

1. Do the three Protestant *solas* seem to you a gain or a loss by comparison to Catholicism?
2. Is it good to have the kind of certainty Calvin's doctrine of predestination is aimed at providing?

# Protestants on Predestination

## Lecture 21

**The doctrine of predestination has a definite function in Reform theology, tied to the doctrine of salvation. It's not just about a bunch of people who sort of know everything in advance. But what they do want to know in advance is that they will be saved for eternity.**

**B**eginning with Calvin, the Reformed tradition develops a distinctive doctrine of predestination based on Augustine. For Augustinian Catholics, predestination means God makes the difference between the saved and the damned by choosing to save some. Predestination always means predestined grace, by which God from eternity foresees and chooses to save some undeserving sinners rather than others. Damnation is not the result of divine predestination but of human sin, which God foresees and permits to happen.

Calvin takes the step of saying that God predestines some for damnation, which is the doctrine of double predestination. By foreseeing an evil and permitting it, God ordains that it shall happen. When his predestined mercy “passes over” sinners, it’s because he rejects them for all eternity. This rejection is known as “reprobation.”

In Calvinism, double predestination became the basis of a theology of eternal divine decrees. Calvin, unlike Augustine, spoke of predestination as not just an eternal plan of God but a sovereign decree. The theology of divine decrees incorporated double predestination into the larger framework of God’s sovereignty or “providential” control over all events of history. The infralapsarians taught that God made the decree of predestination in view of the decree of Adam’s Fall into sin. The supralapsarians taught that God decreed Adam’s Fall as a means of carrying out the decree of predestination.

The Synod of Dordt (1618–1619), held in Holland, gave classic expression to orthodox Calvinism. Dordt rejected the Arminian view, which makes the decision about who gets saved ultimately up to the individual human being. Arminianism is named after Jacob Arminius, a Dutch Reformed pastor and



university professor who died 10 years before the Synod of Dordt. According to the Arminians, salvation in Christ is offered to all, and it is up to each one of us to accept it. For the Calvinists, we make no contribution to our own salvation because even our faith is God's gift, which we receive because God chooses to give it.

The teachings of Dordt are aptly summarized as "five-point Calvinism," which is defined using the acronym TULIP. "T" is for total depravity: No part of human nature is free from corruption due to sin. Total depravity does not mean human beings are pure evil. Like all Augustinians, Calvinist theologians teach that there is no such thing as pure evil, for all created things are good, and evil can only be a form of nonbeing, an absence, loss, privation, or corruption in what is good.

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**The doctrine of divine election (from the Latin word for "choice") is about God's eternal choice as to whom he will save.**

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Total depravity means that after the Fall there is no part of human nature that is not corrupted by sin.

"U" is for unconditional election. The doctrine of divine election (from the Latin word for "choice") is about God's eternal choice as to whom he will save.

Unconditional election, taught by Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin, is the doctrine that God's choice determines who will have faith. Election is unconditional in that nothing in us, neither merit nor faith, is a condition or cause of God's election.

"L" is for limited atonement. This is more accurately called "particular redemption." The doctrine is about the scope of God's intention in the death of Christ: Did he intend to redeem everyone? The Calvinists, reasoning that God could not fail to achieve his intention, concluded that he did not intend to redeem all. The implication that Christ did not die for everybody makes this the most controversial doctrine taught at Dordt.

"I" is for irresistible grace. This means that God's gift of grace is always effective: If it is given, it is received. For Calvinists, grace is the cause of our choosing to accept Christ in faith and be saved.

“P” is for perseverance of the saints. This is the radically new doctrine of Calvin, that all who truly have faith will persevere in faith to the end. It implies, contrary to Augustine and the whole previous Christian tradition, that all who lose or abandon their faith never really had Christian faith to begin with.

The Calvinist doctrine of perseverance had effects on all later Protestant doctrines of justification, generating a distinctively Protestant focus on conversion. This explains why Protestants treat justification as happening only once in a lifetime, when we are converted to faith: For after that point, we are sure to be saved eternally.

Some Calvinists accept all the teachings of Dordt except limited atonement. They often call themselves “moderate” Calvinists, and have also been called “four-point Calvinists.” Their position is also called “hypothetical universalism” (after its key concept) or Amyraldianism (after Amyraldus, one of its most prominent advocates). In this view, Christ dies to save all people (“universalism”), but on condition that they believe (“hypothetical”). And only those predestined for salvation come to have faith (unconditional election). The 17<sup>th</sup>-century theologian Richard Baxter was the most prominent advocate of this view among the Puritans.

The Lutherans ended up agreeing with the Arminians on most points. Following Luther, they wholeheartedly agreed with the Calvinists on total depravity. Departing from Luther, they taught a version of conditional election and resistible grace: God predestines for salvation those whom he foresees will not resist grace to the end. The Lutheran tradition ended up agreeing with Calvinists about the concept of conversion. The motive for this departure from Luther is to close the gap between what Luther called the revealed God (of the Gospel) and the hidden God (of predestination). What remains hidden is whether we will persevere to the end, which God knows, and we do not. ■

## Suggested Reading

Canons of the Synod of Dordt, in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, 581–597.

Formula of Concord, articles 2 (on free will) and 11 (on predestination), in Schaff, vol. 3, 106–114 and 165–173.

Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, chaps. 7, 8, and 23.

Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*.

## Questions to Consider

1. Does the theology of divine decrees seem like a natural development of Calvin's thought?
2. Is it possible to accept a fully Calvinist doctrine of election without accepting Dordt's teaching that Christ did not die for everybody?

# Protestant Disagreements

## Lecture 22

We are tracing, still, the development of the Reformed theological tradition, and to bring it into focus we'll keep on contrasting it with the Lutheran tradition. The contrast is helpful because the two are very, very close in so many ways.

The most contentious issue between the Lutherans and the Reformed concerned the presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist. Luther rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, but affirmed the real presence of Christ in the sacrament. He thought it would be a superfluous and unnecessary miracle for the substance of the bread to be removed from the eucharistic host. On the other hand, he thought it was absolutely essential that Christ's human flesh was literally present in the bread. He fiercely rejected the Reformed view advocated by Zwingli that the Supper is a way of remembering Christ's body and blood literally. Luther's typical formula is that Christ's body is "in, with, and under" the bread.

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**Luther's typical formula is that Christ's body is "in, with, and under" the bread.**

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Calvin presented a middle view, trying to reconcile the Lutheran and Reformed doctrines. Calvin agrees with Zwingli that Christ's body is not locally present or "enclosed within the bread," for he is literally present in heaven. Yet Calvin thinks that those who receive the sacrament in faith do truly partake of Christ's body in the Eucharist. In another characteristic formulation, Calvin says that through the bread and wine, God truly exhibits, offers, and presents Christ's body to be grasped by faith. Liturgies influenced by Calvin thus typically say things like: As truly as you eat this bread and drink this cup, so truly you partake of Christ's body in faith. Calvin also uses the ancient liturgical formula "Lift up your hearts" to say that by the power of the Spirit our hearts are lifted up to Christ in heaven.

The crucial difference is noted by Calvin himself: Contrary to the Lutherans, Calvin teaches that the unworthy or unbelieving partake of bread but not of

Christ's body. They both agree that unbelievers partaking of the sacrament receive only the sacramental sign, not the thing it signifies. The crucial principle here goes back to Augustine: Unbelief separates the sacramental sign from the thing it signifies. Thus Calvin's view depends on his teaching that Christ's body is the thing signified in the sacrament. Luther, however, shares the medieval view that Christ's body is both sign and thing signified in the sacrament. For Luther, the sign includes Christ's body and blood as well as the bread and the wine.

There is thus a spectrum from high to low views of the Eucharist: from Roman Catholic to Lutheran to Calvinist to Zwinglian. Lutheran piety is more sacramental and external than Reformed piety and closer to the Catholic view. The difference can be illustrated by the contrast between Luther's view that faith "gropes for God in bread" and Calvin's admonition not to "cling too tightly to the mere external sign."

Calvin's theology was a major impetus in the development of the Protestant forensic doctrine of justification. Forensic justification means that God declares sinners righteous when they believe, because the merits of Christ are imputed to them. For all Protestant theologians, the foundation of all the benefits received by faith is union with Christ. In receiving Christ, the believer receives also his righteousness, as Luther taught in *On the Freedom of a Christian*. The forensic doctrine of justification adds that the righteousness received by believers consists in the merits of Christ, which are imputed to them. The only human being whose life has merit is Christ. "Forensic" is the basic metaphor for a verdict in court, such as the declaration of guilt or innocence. It comes from the Latin word *forum*, originally the location of the law courts in Rome.



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**John Calvin's efforts to make peace between the Lutherans and the Reformed don't succeed, but they do bring them closer.**

A crucial feature of the forensic doctrine of justification is that the righteousness of Christ by which we are justified consists in his human merits. The merit of Christ takes two forms. First, by Christ's passive obedience, which means his suffering and death, he earns forgiveness for our sins. Second, by Christ's active obedience, which means his righteous deeds and life, he earns merits which are imputed to us, so that we are not merely forgiven but counted as positively righteous. Catholics object to a doctrine of justification which leaves us inwardly unchanged, and insist that by grace we can merit eternal life.

Some scholars have recently argued that Luther's doctrine of justification is not purely forensic. Typically the righteousness of which Luther speaks in the doctrine of justification is not the human merits of Christ but the righteousness of God, which belongs to Christ because Christ is God. In a famous sermon, Luther distinguishes between two kinds of righteousness: alien and proper, which is Latin for "another's" and one's "own." The alien righteousness is the righteousness of God, which Luther says is infused in us, becoming ours because Christ is ours by faith. In a favorite metaphor, alien righteousness means we are transformed into a good tree that can bear fruit, that is, a good person who can do good works—the latter being our "proper" righteousness. Because our proper righteousness is always in and of itself mortal sin, God graciously does not impute our sin to us, for Christ's sake. Hence Luther's doctrine of justification does have a forensic element, but this is secondary to the real change in our hearts caused by the alien righteousness which is infused when we are united with Christ by faith.

Lutheran theology was consolidated on the basis of the Formula of Concord (1580), which resolved a number of disputes among Lutheran theologians in the generation after Luther's death (1546). Like the Reformed, the Lutherans developed a forensic doctrine of justification. Like Calvin, their forensic doctrine is developed in rejecting the teaching of Lutheran theologian Andreas Osiander. Osiander, picking up on Luther's insistence on the righteousness of God, taught that justification consists in our union with the essential righteousness of the divinity.

Like the Reformed, the Lutherans develop a theology of conversion, which is in some tension with their theology of baptismal regeneration. For the Reformed, conversion, which is the moment in which the call of God is

effectual for the first time in one's life, is the moment when one acquires saving faith and becomes truly a Christian. For the Lutherans, baptism (usually as an infant) is the moment in which a person is born again as a Christian. The Formula of Concord uses the concept of conversion to mark the point in a person's life after which free will can begin to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. In effect, the Lutherans join the Reformed in thinking of justification as a once-in-a-lifetime event, in contrast to Luther's view that it happens every time we repent.

Like the Reformed, the Lutherans develop a theology of the "third use of the Law." In addition to the civil and evangelical uses of the Law (see Lecture Nineteen), Calvin identified a third use of the Law, which is to instruct Christians in the life of obedience. The danger of the third use of the Law is that it can become a staple of Christian preaching, a form of moralism which misses Luther's point that the Gospel of Christ, not the Law of works, is what inwardly transforms people. ■

### Suggested Reading

Formula of Concord, articles 3 (on justification), 6 (third use of the Law), and 7 (the Lord's Supper), in Schaff, vol. 3, 114–121, 130–135, and 135–146.

Braaten and Jenson, *Union with Christ*.

Calvin, *Institutes*, vol. 3, chaps. 11–13 (on justification), and vol. 4, chap. 17 (on the Lord's Supper).

Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, chaps. 20 (on the effectual call and conversion) and 21 (on justification).

Luther, Sermon on "Two Kinds of Righteousness."

### Questions to Consider

1. Why does it matter to these theologians how Christ is present (or not) in the Supper?
2. What is at stake in disagreements about whether justification is wholly forensic?

# Anabaptists and the Radical Reformation

## Lecture 23

We've been looking at two major Protestant traditions, the Lutheran tradition and the Reform tradition. Now we're going to turn to a third tradition, a third branch of Reformation or Protestant theology that is usually labeled the Anabaptist Tradition. It is sometimes also called the left wing or radical Reformation.

The Anabaptists are a group of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Protestants who took the radical step of rejecting infant baptism. The label "Anabaptists," meaning "re-baptizers," was originally given to them by their opponents, because they baptized people who had received baptism as infants in other churches. Since the Anabaptists did not recognize infant baptism as valid, they did not think they were re-baptizing but rather giving people a genuine Christian baptism for the first time.

The Anabaptists had several related reasons for rejecting infant baptism. They did not find it in scripture. They did not think it should be given to those who had no faith of their own. They did not believe it was a means of grace or regeneration.

The first Anabaptists saw rejection of infant baptism as the next step to take in the reform initiated by Zwingli in Zurich. For Zwingli no external thing or sign has spiritual power. For Zwingli infant baptism is a covenant sign like circumcision in the Old Testament.

The Anabaptists can be thought of as taking a step further away from Catholicism, beyond the Reformed. They are a low church, averse to the sacramental theology and liturgical practice of the high churches, which are again closer to Catholicism. On a left-right spectrum, they are the left-wing of the Reformation, with Lutherans (closest to Catholics) on the right wing, and the Reformed in the center.

The Anabaptist movement began in Zwingli's Zurich in the 1520s but also took root in Holland in the 1530s and in Germany. The Dutch Anabaptists, led



by Menno Simons, are the origin of the Mennonites, the largest contemporary Anabaptist group, as well as their offshoot, the Amish. The German branch of the Anabaptists came to be known as Moravian Anabaptists.

Rejecting infant baptism has radical implications for one's view of church, society, and Christian identity. Baptism is an initiation rite which marks the social boundaries of the church, the difference between those who belong inside the Body of Christ and those who do not. To reject the baptism of another church is to say it is not really Christian or a church.

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**The Anabaptists can be thought of as taking a step further away from Catholicism, beyond the Reformed.**

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Anabaptist teaching, in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century context, implied that no one outside their group was really Christian. The Swiss Anabaptists thus regarded all groups and institutions outside their community as “the world.” They regarded not only the Catholic church but the Zwinglian churches and the Swiss town governments as un-Christian. Other churches regarded this as heresy, and governments treated it as sedition, that is, a crime worthy of death. Anabaptists were persecuted by both Catholics and Protestants through most of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Anabaptists were hated in large measure because they were a threat to Christendom. “Christendom,” characteristic of the medieval and early modern period, means a society in which the body politic is understood to be a Christian body. Christendom requires Christian rulers, known as “the sword” of Christendom, who are concerned for the welfare of the church and are willing to enforce this concern. Anabaptist pacifism implies that the responsibilities of the ruler, including warfare and enforcement of religion, are not really Christian.

The Anabaptists took a different route from the magisterial Reformation, that is, the Lutheran and Reformed, who were eager to enlist the support of Christian rulers or magistrates. Unlike the Lutherans and the Reformed, the Anabaptists never enlisted the support of the state or tried to become a state church. Instead, they began a series of private meetings in Zurich,

purposefully to stay away from the city church. Faith, for the Anabaptists, meant the change of heart that led to obedient participation in the life of the community. Ministers were elected by the community and, after the first generation, seldom had the privilege of a university education.

Church discipline among the Anabaptists centered on excommunication or the ban, which among the Mennonites included shunning. The ban, or excommunication, was central to the Swiss Anabaptist view of the church. The Mennonites developed a practice of shunning the excommunicated member. Debates about the procedures and extent of shunning are the most divisive issues facing early Mennonite communities.

The left wing or radical Reformation includes many strands of theology other than Anabaptism. A Rationalist strand, appealing to scripture against the church fathers and the creeds, rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. Michael Servetus, an anti-trinitarian theologian, was condemned throughout Europe and finally burned at the stake in Calvin's Geneva. Socinianism, another anti-trinitarian theology, flourished in Poland and eventually contributed to 18<sup>th</sup>-century deism and Unitarianism.

A spiritualist strand appealed to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit in a great variety of ways. Sebastian Franck taught that the true church is inner and spiritual, having no institutions or ceremonies, and avoiding all division over doctrine. Thomas Müntzer was an apocalyptic prophet who led an army in the peasant war of 1525, claiming to take orders from the voice of the Spirit.

A violent apocalyptic strand once captured the imagination of Dutch Anabaptists in the city of Münster. In an armed uprising, the Anabaptists took over the city of Münster. They were besieged by both Catholics and Protestants, defeated, and slaughtered. Menno Simons began his work among the remnant of Dutch Anabaptists after the fall of Münster. ■

## Suggested Reading

“The Dordrecht Confession” in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 292–308.

“The Schleithem Confession” in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 282–292.

Klaassen, *Anabaptism in Outline*.

Williams, *The Radical Reformation*.

## Questions to Consider

1. Why did so many people want to kill Anabaptists?
2. Should baptism matter that much?

# Anglicans and Puritans

## Lecture 24

**Anglican theology is the theology of the *Anglicana Ecclesia* in Latin, the Church of England, to translate into English. Anglican is now a much broader term; it is not just the Church of England.**

**A**nglican is from a Latin word meaning “English,” and refers to the Church of England. The Anglican communion is a worldwide fellowship of national churches in communion with the established Church of England. The Anglican communion is led but not governed by the archbishop of Canterbury in England. Its main American branch is the Episcopal Church.

Anglican theology, that is, the teachings of the Church of England, is often described as a *via media*, a “middle way” between Catholicism and Protestantism. Its most important document, the *Book of Common Prayer*, contains a liturgy with many Catholic elements. The prayer book treats baptism (including infant baptism, which is the norm) as regenerating. The eucharistic liturgy is ambiguous on the issue of the real presence of Christ’s body and blood, so that both Lutherans and Calvinists have found it acceptable. This deliberate ambiguity is characteristically Anglican, allowing people with quite different theologies to participate in the same church.

Its doctrinal formula, the *39 Articles*, leans in a more Reformed direction. The eating of Christ’s flesh in the Eucharist is entirely spiritual, suggesting no real presence of Christ’s body in the bread. Predestination is affirmed in a way that suggests, but does not positively state, unconditional election. The articles include a strong doctrine of prevenient grace, but no affirmation that it is ever irresistible.

The ambiguity of these documents was of great importance because of the establishment of the Church of England. “Established” church is a technical term, meaning a state church supported and to some extent supervised and enforced by the government. The Church of England was required by Parliament in the Act of Uniformity (1559) to conduct services according

to the *Book of Common Prayer*. Under Elizabeth and for much of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was illegal not to go to church; this legal requirement was instituted to enforce “conformity.” The king or queen was declared by Parliament “the supreme governor” of the Church of England. Anglican theologians who emphasize this government supervision of the church are called “Erastians.” In 1628, the king forbade public debate on the interpretation of the 39 *Articles*, thus allowing Arminians and others to sign them under their own preferred interpretation.

The Puritans were Reformed theologians who wanted to further reform the Church of England according to the word of God, purifying it of residual Roman Catholic or “popish” customs. The Puritans’ argument initially focused on ceremonial practices of the Church of England required by

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**The Puritans, who were among the most learned theologians of England, objected to worldly and ill-educated parish priests.**

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the government. Puritanism began with the Vestiarian controversy in the 1560s, when some of Elizabeth’s clergy objected to the use of traditional Catholic vestments. Other customs to which Puritans objected included making the sign of the cross, kneeling to receive communion, and observing holy days other than the Sabbath. The crucial theological issue was whether the church

had the right to make rules and customs that were not required in scripture. Richard Hooker, the most important theologian of the Anglican tradition, wrote *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* defending the church’s right to decide for itself concerning *adiaphora*, that is, matters not required by faith. Puritan ministers who would not observe the regulations of the Church of England were called non-conformists.

Puritans also argued against the worldliness of the clergy. The Puritans, who were among the most learned theologians of England, objected to worldly and ill-educated parish priests. Their concern for church discipline (for example, the duty of a minister to exclude drunkards and adulterers from communion) led to their reputation as kill-joys.

The great document of English Puritanism is the “Westminster Confession” (1647), composed by an assembly of Puritan theologians at the request of Parliament during the English Civil War. The “Westminster Confession” is a classic statement of the covenant theology that had developed in the Reformed tradition. A key teaching of covenant theology, going back to Calvin, is that the Old Testament and the New Testament are two administrations of one and the same covenant of grace in Jesus Christ. The only other covenant between God and humanity was the “covenant of works,” which Adam violated. Covenant theology is sometimes also called “federal theology,” from a Latin word meaning “covenant.” Later Reformed theologians developed the concept of an eternal covenant of redemption between God the Father and God the Son.

Major disagreements arose in 17<sup>th</sup>-century England over church governance or polity. The Church of England had an episcopate, and thus an episcopal polity. The episcopate is a governing structure of bishops. The English word “bishop” comes ultimately from the Greek word *episcopos*, meaning literally “overseer” or “supervisor,” the word from which we also get “episcopate.”

The Presbyterians were Puritans who were convinced that the church should be governed by synods or councils of ministers holding the New Testament office of elder or presbyter. “Presbyter” comes from the New Testament Greek term *presbuteros*, which means “elder.” The Presbyterians believed in the equality of all ministers, and hence rejected a hierarchy of ministers.

Some Puritans, called “Independents,” argued for a congregationalist polity, in which each local congregation was self-governing. Unlike Presbyterians, Congregationalists rejected the “parish principle,” according to which individuals are born and baptized into the local parish church, which belongs to a national church. From this radical congregationalism emerged the Baptists. ■

## Suggested Reading

39 Articles in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 266–281; also in Schaff, vol. 3, 486–516, and included in the *Book of Common Prayer* as well.

*Book of Common Prayer* (1928).

“Westminster Confession” in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 192–230; also in Schaff, vol. 3, 598–673.

Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism*.

Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, 234–244 (Documents of the Elizabethan Settlement).

## Questions to Consider

1. Why is it that Episcopal forms of church government (as in Catholic and Orthodox churches, as well as Anglicanism) favor a high view of the sacrament?
2. Was it ever a good idea to have an established church?

# Baptists and Quakers

## Lecture 25

We begin Part III of the course as we continue our treatment of Protestant theology, but we take it beyond the 16<sup>th</sup> century, beyond the origination of Protestant theology in the Reformation, and we'll trace the Protestant theological tradition through modernity in our next set of lectures.

**T**he Baptists originated in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century in England as Puritan Separatists who rejected infant baptism. They are not the same as the Anabaptists, though the two have much in common. Both Anabaptists and Baptists reject infant baptism, insisting that only believers can properly be baptized. Both arose initially from Reformed theology, the Anabaptists in Switzerland and the Baptists in England. Both draw what they regard as the logical inference from the Reformed rejection of baptismal regeneration: If we are not born again through baptism, then there is no reason for infants to be baptized. More fundamentally, they see no basis for infant baptism in scripture. Both came to insist that baptism requires full immersion in water, not just sprinkling. Both reject the underlying Catholic notion of sacraments as a means or instruments of grace. Both are at the end of the Protestant spectrum farthest from Catholicism, the left wing end of the spectrum. Both were persecuted. In fact, the Baptist church was illegal when it first arose. The earliest Baptist congregations had contacts with Anabaptists in the Netherlands.

What distinguishes Baptists is their Puritan Separatist (or Congregationalist) origins. Whereas Anabaptists rejected Christendom, Baptists rejected the national church. In early Baptist theology, as in the Puritan Separatists, the church is a local congregation of covenanted believers. This means the church is a voluntary society, not based on geographical parishes but on a regenerate church membership. In their struggle to win freedom from government persecution, the Baptists became leaders in the fight for religious liberty for all, both in England and America.

There is great variety in Baptist theology, but also certain characteristically Baptist topics of debate. It is often hard to generalize about the large variety



of Baptist beliefs and teaching. One can identify four constants: rejection of infant baptism, commitment to congregational autonomy, regenerate church membership, and the Bible as sole authority. Because congregations are not under any overarching authority, doctrinal uniformity is something Baptists may argue for but not enforce.

Baptists often disagree about whether to be more or less Calvinist. The earliest division among Baptist groups, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was between General Baptists and Particular Baptists about whether to accept Dordt's doctrine of "particular redemption" (that is, limited atonement). The "hyper-Calvinists" were 18<sup>th</sup>-century Particular Baptists who argued that offers of grace should not be preached because Christ did not die for those whom God has predestined for damnation. The earliest Baptist missionaries had to overcome the hyper-Calvinist view that the reprobate, being unable to believe Christ, have no responsibility to repent, believe, or accomplish any spiritual good. Most Baptists take a strongly Zwinglian view of the Lord's Supper as merely a symbol or memorial, though some take a view closer to Calvin's. Most Baptists describe Baptism and the Lord's Supper not as sacraments (which suggests they are a means of grace), but as ordinances commanded by Christ. Some Baptists practice foot washing as a third ordinance because it's in the Bible (John 13:15).

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**Like other persecuted groups, the Quakers were firm advocates of religious liberty for all.**

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The Landmarkist movement, arising among Southern Baptists in the 1850s, was a radical affirmation of Baptist Separatism; they were highly resistant to the idea of missionary societies. They took the motto, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Prov. 22:28). They refused to recognize non-Baptist churches, ministers, or ordinances. They refused to recognize alien immersion, that is, adult baptism by immersion not performed within a Baptist congregation. They insisted on "close communion," that is, they excluded non-Baptists, and even Baptists from other congregations, from the Lord's Supper. They taught that there was an unbroken but hidden continuity of Baptist churches going back to the New Testament church.

Another strand of Baptist theology affirmed individualism and immediacy. Baptists were committed to immediacy, which means the rejection of any institutional mediation, authority, or external means of grace other than the Bible. “Scripture alone” for 19<sup>th</sup>-century Baptists typically meant the right of private interpretation, ungoverned by church or tradition. A key example is E. Y. Mullins’s principle of soul competency. Baptist individualism was reinforced by the American commitment to democracy. With their opposition to state churches and insistence on religious liberty for all, Baptists were ideally suited to take advantage of the new situation of American denominationalism.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) arose in late 17<sup>th</sup>-century England with a message of radical immediacy. The central Quaker conviction, articulated by George Fox and others, was that the same Holy Spirit which inspired the scriptures also speaks today within the heart. Quaker meetings have no liturgy or ministers but only members of the congregation speaking as the Spirit moves them. For Quakers, the inner light of divine revelation is available to all, and does not require scripture. Most other Christians reject this belief, that is, the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, and label those who accept it as Enthusiasts. Quakers were from the beginning radical egalitarians and pacifists. Like other persecuted groups, the Quakers were firm advocates of religious liberty for all. ■

### Suggested Reading

Barclay, *Theses Theologicae* (a Quaker confession) in Leith, *Creeeds of the Churches*, 323–333; also in Schaff, vol. 3, 789–798.

Buschcart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions*, chap. 6 (on the Baptist tradition).

Fox, *The Journal*.

Tull, *Shapers of Baptist Thought*.

### Questions to Consider

1. Is the Baptists’ radical congregationalism a strength or a weakness?
2. Is the Quaker’s radical doctrine of the Spirit a strength or a weakness?

# Pietists and the Turn to Experience

## Lecture 26

**Modernity is an interesting idea, after all; it is worth thinking about what modernity means. Modernity is in part a product of the Protestant Reformation, which broke up the unity of medieval Catholicism and gave us these competing churches. That tended to foster a kind of secularism, especially as national churches became less and less acceptable.**

**M**odernity arises in part from the Protestant Reformation but also shapes Protestant theology. The magisterial Reformers aimed to establish state-supported churches, but the variety of churches that arose due to the Reformation undermined the authority of state churches with demands for religious liberty. As Western society and politics became more secularized, modernity became an environment more suitable for low churches than high churches, favoring theologies of the Spirit and experience over theologies of word and sacrament. The turn toward experience and certainty becomes a characteristic quest of modernity.

The Puritan quest for assurance of salvation assumed that faith and certainty could be separate. For Luther and Calvin, faith is always a form of certainty, because it is based on the certainty of God's word being true. In agonies of conscience, only the promise of God is sufficiently certain to calm the soul's fears. Faith must be certain because it is sin and unbelief that doubts God will keep his promise. This demand for certainty was meant to be a comfort. You are not allowed to doubt that God loves you, that Christ is your savior, that the Holy Spirit is given to you, etc.

For the Puritans, assurance of faith requires not only believing in God's word but also reflective faith (that is, believing that you believe). Because only those with true saving faith are saved, assurance of salvation requires knowing that you have such faith in your heart. Hence assurance of salvation is based not just on God's word but on the inner evidence of grace in the heart and the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. Thus the requirement of reflective faith is the key assumption behind the Protestant turn to experience.

Because of the requirement of reflective faith, Puritan faith is not necessarily a form of certainty, but must strive to acquire certainty and assurance. The “Westminster Confession” says believers may have a long, hard struggle before they attain assurance of salvation. This helps explain the Puritans’ immense ethical seriousness and their insistence on righteousness. To indulge in sin is to remove the evidence of the grace in your heart, and thus undermines your assurance that you are saved.

With Pietism, the turn to experience enters the Lutheran tradition in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Germany. The beginning of Pietism is typically traced to Jacob Philip Spener’s *Pia Desideria* (“Pious Desires” for a new reformation of the Protestant church) in 1675. Spener’s proposals were mainly about increased learning of scripture by the laity, including in small groups outside the church service, later criticized as conventicles. Spener’s book is serious about the life of piety but says little

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**Pietism is in large part a reaction against the aridity of Protestant scholasticism.**

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about emotion. Spener is a leading German Lutheran pastor concerned with the pastoral failures of Protestant scholasticism. Spener draws on themes from Johann Arndt’s powerful devotional work, *True Christianity* (1606).

Protestant scholasticism is the theology that grew out of systematic attempts to prove the truth and certainty of Protestant doctrine. Protestant scholasticism is a university-based discipline—in 17<sup>th</sup>-century terms, a science—designed to give a system of proofs of Protestant doctrine. Scholastic sermons were not proclamations of the Gospel meant to change people’s lives, but proofs of Protestant doctrine.

Pietism is in large part a reaction against the aridity of Protestant scholasticism. One of Spener’s key complaints was that Lutheran ministers were mostly careerists, training at German universities to get a prestigious pastorate, not by building up the flock in faith but by skill in scholastic reasoning. One of his key affirmations was that the true theology required not so much argumentation as piety. Later this was described as the contrast between head-knowledge and the religion of the heart.

This split becomes most evident in the work of Spener's protégé, August Hermann Francke, who had found Protestant scholasticism leading him toward atheism. Francke narrates his own conversion experience, which freed him not only from fear of hell but from atheism—a new problem for Christian theologians beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In a striking divergence from Luther, Francke contends that it is not enough to say, "I am baptized. I am a Christian." Instead, he advocates turning into one's heart to find piety.

Different from Francke's classic Pietism is the Moravian theology developed by Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760). Zinzendorf was both a Lutheran minister and a German count, who offered asylum on his estate at Herrnhut to Moravian Protestants fleeing persecution in their own land. Under Zinzendorf's leadership as bishop, the Moravians came to be known for their emotional heart religion. The emotional focus, however, was not the experience of conversion but the wounds of Christ. Thus unlike other forms of Pietism, Moravian heart religion was not a turn to inner experience but a turn to the flesh of Christ. Perhaps the most characteristic piece of Moravian theology was a liturgy of devotion to the wounds of Christ on the cross. Especially characteristic is devotion to the "side-hole," where Jesus was pierced near the heart. ■



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**Portrait of German Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, who offered refuge to Moravian Protestants.**

### Suggested Reading

Arndt, *True Christianity*.

Erb, *The Pietists*.

## Questions to Consider

1. What kind of certainty is appropriate to go along with faith?
2. Do you think Francke is right in saying that “I have been baptized” is not a good answer to the question, “Are you really a Christian?”

# From Puritans to Revivalists

## Lecture 27

**Revivalism ... is both a Christian practice and a tradition of Christian theology. Interestingly enough, this tradition of Christian theology arose in the Reformed tradition. It is a response to problems that arise among Reformed theologians and Reformed churches, and especially in America among the Puritan churches.**

**T**he original context of American Revivalism was a problem the Puritans had about church membership. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, New England Puritans (Congregationalists) began requiring a profession of faith as a condition of membership in the church. In contrast to early 17<sup>th</sup>-century English Congregationalists, this was not simply a confession of the Christian faith, that is, demonstrating knowledge of basic Christian doctrine. Rather, it was an account of the experience of the grace of Christ having worked in your life to produce conversion and true saving faith.

This requirement of profession inevitably caused problems when the baptized children of church members did not have a conversion experience. Church members had the right to get their infant children baptized. Baptism, however, did not secure church membership. When they grew up, these children had to be able to narrate a conversion experience before they could join the church. The Puritans attempted to solve this problem by introducing the Halfway covenant in 1662, which allowed baptized non-members to have their children baptized. This solved the problem of dwindling church membership as well as a political problem because the Congregational church had become the established church in Connecticut and Massachusetts, where only church members had full citizenship. Solomon Stoddard, a Massachusetts minister, took the further step of allowing halfway members to partake of communion as a converting ordinance. Samuel Hopkins argued to the contrary, that when the unregenerate use the means of grace, such as sacraments, scripture, and prayer, they misuse and profane them, and thus become all the more abominable in God's sight.

Jonathan Edwards, who was Stoddard's grandson, rejected the Halfway covenant and sparked a revival instead. Revival, in this original sense, meant a period of months in which there was a special outpouring of grace resulting in many conversions. Revival, for Edwards, was God's solution to the problem that conversion cannot be accomplished by human effort but solely by the grace of God. Wesley and others involved in the Great Awakening of 1740–1742 in New England read Edwards's book about the revival in his church in 1734–1735.



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**Portrait of preacher John Wesley, the greatest Arminian theologian of all time.**

Jonathan Edwards articulated a Calvinist theology of conversion and revival. The high Calvinism of Puritans like Edwards left unregenerate sinners no recourse but to wait for God to convert them. Hence Puritan preachers did not have the option of preaching what Luther called the Gospel, the promise of grace to sinners.

The conversions in Edwards's church followed an experiential pattern that reflected Edwards's theology. The pattern begins with conviction or awakening, that is, a sense of anxiety and guilt produced by the preaching of the Law, which shows unregenerate sinners that they deserve damnation. The key turning point is when the sinners give up struggling against the Law and admit, in the depths of their heart, that God is right to condemn them. This admission is precisely the beginning of an unselfish faith which honors the truth and righteousness of God. Edwards's famous and terrifying sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," is designed to facilitate such awakening.

Edwards had a profound influence on later New England theology, especially in his concept of the human will. Edwards argued against Arminian notions



of the will's freedom to determine itself. Edwards's treatise *On the Freedom of the Will* argued for determinism, contending that the will cannot determine itself and that the fallen will is unable to obey or believe in Christ. Drawing on themes from 18<sup>th</sup>-century determinism, Edwards argued that the will is always determined by its strongest motive.

He makes a subtle but influential distinction between our natural ability to obey God and our moral inability. Natural ability means that nothing physical, inside us or outside us, prevents us from obeying God. Our natural ability means (contrary to hyper-Calvinism) that sinners can be held responsible for their refusal to be converted. Moral inability means that we are always unwilling to obey, and cannot choose to become willing, solely because we are unwilling to make such a choice.

Later Edwardseans, when promoting revival, often emphasized the concept of natural ability. Because the only thing preventing the conversion of sinners is their own unwillingness, they can be held responsible for their refusal to be converted (in contrast to hyper-Calvinism). An Edwardsean Revivalist could thus demand immediate repentance from sinners, even though they were morally incapable of it.

**Methodists became the fastest-growing denomination in early 19<sup>th</sup> century America, in part because of their success as Revivalists.**

The prominent American Revivalist theologian Charles Finney rejected the concept of moral inability but retained the concept of natural ability. Like Edwards, Finney says the only thing preventing our

conversion is our unwillingness—but he does not call this an inability. Finney's new measures in Revivalism provided an alternative to waiting for God to convert people. The new measures were not means of grace used by sinners but techniques of Revivalism used by ministers. They involved a deliberate stirring up of emotional excitement, active participation by laity (including women), and praying for individuals by name, sitting on the "anxious bench." He calls himself a "soul winner," taking as his motto, "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

Methodist Revivalism competed with Edwardsean Revivalism. Based on the Arminian theology of John Wesley, it could simply exhort people to believe. Theologically, a major appeal of Methodist theology was its Arminian Revivalism. Methodist preachers had no Calvinist hesitation about making promises of grace to all and urging everyone to choose to accept them. Although they denied that anyone has the ability to believe Christ and obey him without grace, they taught that grace was equally available to everyone. The Methodist doctrine of prevenient grace (very different from Calvinist and Augustinian versions of this doctrine) meant that all who heard the Gospel were able, by grace, to choose faith in Christ and salvation. Hence the key Arminian conviction that it is ultimately up to us whether we are saved by our choice to accept Christ in faith.

John Wesley began the Methodist revival in England in the 1740s, about the same time as the Great Awakening in New England. Methodists became the fastest-growing denomination in early 19<sup>th</sup> century America, in part because of their success as Revivalists. Because of the success of the Methodists, Wesley is the most influential Arminian theologian ever.

Methodist Revivalism primarily addressed the problem of nominal Christianity. Wesley tightly linked the concepts of justification and sanctification. Long before Finney, Wesley taught that by the grace of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of believers, Christian perfection was possible. ■

### Suggested Reading

Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*.

———, *Freedom of the Will*.

———, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”

———, *A Treatise concerning Religious Affections*.

Finney, *Lectures on Revival*.

Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation.”

## Questions to Consider

1. Is it a surprise to learn that there are both Calvinist and Arminian forms of Revivalism?
2. Why should it matter so much that conversion is by grace?

# Perfection, Holiness, and Pentecostalism

## Lecture 28

**In this lecture, we continue tracing the history of Protestant theology in its career through modernity. We continue looking at variations of the theme of the turn to experience, and especially the turn to experience in the Revivalist tradition that becomes so important in England and especially in America.**

**T**he most distinctive feature of Wesley's theology is his insistence on the possibility of sanctification and the obligation to pursue it. The Methodist call to faith was inseparable from a call to holiness of life or sanctification. For Wesley, Christian perfection meant the completion of sanctification in a heart entirely given to holy love. Hence for Wesley, to be perfect means simply to love with one's whole heart. It does not mean perfect wisdom and good judgment, or freedom from ever being mistaken or at fault.

The possibility of Christian perfection is incompatible with the Lutheran conviction that Christians are always at the same time righteous and sinners. A disagreement Wesley had with Zinzendorf reveals the deep difference between his doctrine of sanctification and the Lutheran conviction that Christians always remain sinners. Wesley insists that the grace of the Holy Spirit works a real holiness in the hearts of believers. Zinzendorf, echoing Luther, insists that believers find holiness only in Christ, never in themselves. The Reformed agree with Luther that sanctification in this life is never perfect, but typically agree with Wesley that we can see an increase of holiness (progressive sanctification) in our own lives.

The Holiness tradition arose within Methodism when Phoebe Palmer sought what she called the "shorter way" to entire sanctification. Palmer taught at camp meetings and revivals, but also at the famous "Tuesday Night Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness" in her home in New York City for nearly 40 years beginning in 1836.

The shorter way involved an inner act of faith in which Palmer placed all on the altar and believed that she received the blessing of holiness she desired. Palmer lays all on the altar in an inner act of entire consecration, surrendering her whole life to God. Convinced that God has accepted this sacrifice, she realized this must mean she is now entirely his, which is to say entirely sanctified. Rather than seeking evidence of holiness in her experience, she simply believed that God had granted her the promised blessing of

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holiness. Hence in the Holiness tradition, sanctification comes about in fundamentally the same way as justification: by faith alone, not works. The basis of sanctification is thus not an outward activity of obedience but an inward surrender, consecration or offering up of the heart.

are actually temptations, not from the Spirit. The practice of listening for the “Spirit’s leadings” has since become very widespread throughout evangelical Protestantism.

Palmer had a very influential way of listening to what she called the “Spirit’s leadings” in her heart. The practice requires discernment, since some suggestions

Holiness teachings were influential outside Methodism, affecting groups that did not accept perfectionism, such as the Keswick movement. For the Keswick teachers, sin remains in us, but believers can claim victory over it—not by active effort but by yielding to God’s will and “be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Hence a typical Keswick slogan is “Let go and let God.” Fully yielded Christians can expect to be guided by the Holy Spirit so as to find God’s will for their lives.

Pentecostalism grew out of Holiness traditions where the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” was the crucial term for the second blessing of entire sanctification. The baptism of the Spirit is contrasted with baptism by water. The key biblical passages used to support the idea of the baptism of the Holy Spirit are the same ones used to support the practice of confirmation in

more sacramental churches. In the Holiness tradition, this baptism was not necessarily linked to physical experience.

Speaking in tongues or glossolalia is identified by the Pentecostals with manifestations of the Holy Spirit described in the book of Acts and the letters of Paul. Pentecostalism is named after the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the Spirit descended in tongues of fire and believers began to speak in other tongues, proclaiming the Gospel in many languages. The phenomenon narrated in Acts 2 has been called *xenolalia*, the speaking of actual human languages one has not learned. Glossolalia is a form of ecstatic utterance involving syllables, phrases, and linguistic rhythms but no obvious meaning. Following Paul, tongues can be interpreted by another member of the congregation. Pentecostals regard the renewal of the gifts of tongues in our day as an outpouring of the Spirit and a restoration of the apostolic faith in preparation for the imminent return of Christ. Pentecostalism has become the fastest-growing form of Christianity in many parts of the world, especially in Latin America and Africa. ■

### Suggested Reading

Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival*.

Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, chaps. 8 and 11 (on Keswick teaching).

Palmer, *Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings*.

Wesley, “Conversation with Zinzendorf.”

———, “Thoughts on Christian Perfection.”

### Questions to Consider

1. Do you find yourself siding more with Zinzendorf or Wesley on the possibility of Christian perfection?
2. Do you find Palmer’s shorter way to sanctification attractive?

# Deism and Liberal Protestantism

## Lecture 29

**We'll start in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the most interesting new development in 18<sup>th</sup>-century religion, which is Deism. But, let's say a little bit about the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the era of what is called "the Enlightenment"—hostile to religion in many ways, but you can understand why.**

**T**he 18<sup>th</sup> century was a period of ongoing intellectual crisis for Christianity. Religious wars in the 17<sup>th</sup> century made religious zeal look fanatical and dangerous. State churches, their paid ministers, and enforcement of the authority of dogma were seen as the source of intolerance and religious warfare. The conflicting diversity of religions made Christian doctrine seem far less certain than the rising modern sciences. Theology, which had been the most prestigious of the university disciplines, came to seem increasingly arcane, consisting of obscure dogmas and incomprehensible mysteries without rational basis. Modern physics since Newton presented a view of nature which seemed to leave no room for divine intervention (that is, "the supernatural").

Various movements within the broad intellectual trend called "the Enlightenment" were critical of orthodox Christianity. For the first time, atheism and the explicit rejection of religion became a cultural force Christian theologians had to reckon with. Anti-trinitarianism and other forms of Unitarianism spread, the leading edge of a widespread rejection of orthodox Christian dogma. Enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire adapted Protestant criticisms of Papist superstition and priest craft into criticisms of Christianity itself. Whereas the established churches were oppressive, the more experiential forms of Christianity indebted to Pietism and Revivalism were regarded as fanatical and enthusiastic. The authority of religious tradition, including both theology and scripture, came to be regarded with deep suspicion as a form of irrationality and oppression.

Enlightenment thinkers used the distinction between natural and revealed religion to understand the diversity of religions, especially Christianity. "Revealed religion" meant any religion based on a purported revelation from

God, such as Judaism based on the Torah and Talmud, Christianity based on the Bible, and Islam based on the Koran. “Natural religion” meant religious beliefs that were based on reason, which is universal and common to all humanity.

The Deists regarded reason, and therefore natural religion, as the norm by which to judge revealed religions, including Christianity. Natural religion included belief in God, morality, and reward or punishment in an afterlife. Natural religion has no place for the supernatural, miracles or divine intervention in nature. Natural religion had no place for mystery, incomprehensible dogma that goes beyond natural reason (the kind of reason one finds in natural science). Natural religion has no need of priests and their dogmatic authority. Natural religion has no need for rituals and sacraments which are the object of superstitious awe and worship.

Early Deists regarded Christianity as a republication of the universal truths of natural religion, with a few inessential historical additions which could be discarded. Later Deists often regarded revealed religion, and Christianity in particular, as a corruption of natural religion. Typically, however, even the later Deists admire Jesus, presenting him as a teacher of natural religion whose message was distorted by the apostles.

Liberal Protestantism, in its classic 19<sup>th</sup>-century German form, proposed to save Christian faith by finding its basis in Christian experience rather than dogma. The Liberal turn to experience begins with the Romantic movement in Germany. Friedrich Schleiermacher, the founder of Liberal theology was, in his youth a friend of founders of German Romanticism, whom he addresses in his *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*. His key appeal to them is that piety is a feeling that comes before dogma, ritual, and morality. It is a preconceptual or immediate sense of the infinite behind the finite. Words, doctrines, rituals, morality, and other external manifestations of religion are outward expressions of this prior, inner experience.

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Schleiermacher came to his Romanticism after losing his faith in Moravian Pietism. He grew up at a Moravian boarding school, where he had a conversion experience and cultivated a heartfelt, Christ-centered piety. But despite their best efforts, the Moravians failed to protect him from modern ideas, as his father had hoped. At age 21 he writes to his father, saying he can no longer believe the doctrines of incarnation and vicarious atonement.

Schleiermacher's systematic theology is a science of Christian piety. In 1811 Schleiermacher helped found the University of Berlin, where he became professor of theology. Christ was central to Schleiermacher because Christ has perfect God-consciousness. His foundational concept is the feeling of absolute dependence, which is the consciousness of God contained in our own self-consciousness. Since our God-consciousness is imperfect, hindered by excessive consciousness of finite things (for example, lust and greed), we suffer from sin-consciousness. Redemption in Christ means that we receive from the church, through preaching, an impression of Christ's perfect God-consciousness, which works inwardly to overcome our sin-consciousness. Schleiermacher thus initiates a tradition of Christocentric Liberal theology, in which the personality of Jesus is fundamental, and the quest for the historical Jesus is inevitable.

Liberal theology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century spent a great deal of time thinking about the historical Jesus. The crucial difference between 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century biblical criticism is the acute historical consciousness of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Like the Deists, historical critics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century felt that much of the biblical tradition of Jesus was added by the church and, therefore, not historically accurate. This means that much of the Bible can be left behind, relegated to the past.

At the same time, Liberal theology needed a Jesus who could be the basis of modern religion. The result, Albert Schweitzer famously argued at the end of the century, was that Jesus was a "Jesus of their own making." The problem, of course, is that Jesus in many ways was incompatible with the German Christian ideal. ■

## Suggested Reading

Clement, ed. *Friedrich Schleiermacher*.

Jefferson, *The Jefferson Bible*.

Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, chap. 2 (on Deism).

Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*.

## Questions to Consider

1. Do you think there is a common core to all religions?
2. Do you think it makes sense to base a religion on experience?

# Neo-Orthodoxy—From Kierkegaard to Barth

## Lecture 30

As we continue to trace the history of Protestant theology through modernity, we come now to a 20<sup>th</sup>-century theological movement that has been labeled neo-Orthodoxy. The key figure in neo-Orthodoxy with whom we'll spend a fair amount of time is the great 20<sup>th</sup>-century theologian Karl Barth—probably, indeed almost certainly—the most important 20<sup>th</sup>-century Protestant theologian.

**N**eo-Orthodoxy is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century theological trend derived ultimately from Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Christian philosopher and Danish Lutheran theologian. He is the founder of Existentialism because of his emphasis on human existence as a task (quite different from the existence of trees and rocks and chairs). Kierkegaard thinks of human existence as a task, and the key task is to become a Christian. He reacts against the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century philosophies and theologies that see the progress of human consciousness as proof of the superiority of Christianity. Historical progress and proof do not solve the problem of how I, the existing individual, am to become a Christian by the passionate inward decision of faith. This inward movement toward faith must work through guilt, anxiety, and even despair. For theologians after Kierkegaard, “existential” is a label for a passionate individual decision of faith, in the face of anxiety and doubt, which no amount of theology or proof can make for me.

Neo-Orthodox theologians replaced the Liberal focus on consciousness with an Existentialist focus on existence. Karl Barth initiated the trend with a “dialectical theology” based on the logical discourse of “yes” and “no.” For Barth, knowledge of God is an “impossible possibility,” a revelation human beings are incapable of, made possible only by “a perception . . . which proceeds from God outwards.” Rudolf Bultmann, a famed New Testament scholar, speaks of demythologizing the worldview of the Bible and draws on Existentialism

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**Neo-Orthodox theologians replaced the Liberal focus on consciousness with an Existentialist focus on existence.**

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to provide adequate concepts for the authentic self-understanding that results from the decision of faith. Paul Tillich speaks of a method of correlation in which Christian symbols about God meet existential needs.

Barth broke with other dialectical theologians by rejecting any foundation for theology that arises from theories of human nature or existence rather than from the revelation of God in Christ. Emil Brunner argued that the word of God cannot meet human beings unless there is a point of contact remaining even in sinful human nature. In the title of a famous essay, Barth answered, “No!” For Barth, the event of revelation, which creates faith out of nothing in human nature, is a miracle of grace by the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. Barth thus rejects any natural theology (based on natural knowledge of God apart from revelation) and any foundation for theology in philosophies of human nature.

Barth’s break with other neo-Orthodox theologians involved a return to a Christ-centered orthodoxy. Barth’s Christocentrism affects not just his doctrine of humanity but his doctrine of God. The event of revelation is not just an event in human life but an act of God. It is a trinitarian act of self-revelation, which is the root of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is the outward expression of God’s inner self-knowledge, which he causes us to share. The fundamental act of divine revelation is the election of Jesus Christ. In choosing the man Jesus, God decides who God is as well as how he reveals himself to his creation.

Election is not a hidden decree about who gets saved and who doesn’t, but good news about the eternal being of Jesus Christ, who is God for us. Barth adopts the supralapsarian view that the decree of election is logically prior to the decree of creation. In Barth’s terms, creation is for the sake of covenant, and the covenant is defined by the election of Christ. Election is thus the eternal beginning of all the ways and works of God in Jesus Christ, in which God eternally chooses to be for humanity.

The content of election is that Christ will be who the Gospel says he is. Barth affirms “double predestination,” in the sense that Christ is chosen as both beloved and rejected by God on the cross. In this dialectical choice of double predestination, the no always serves the yes. God’s no to Christ on the cross

is the humiliation of God for us; his yes to Christ in the resurrection is the exaltation of humanity for our sake. The humiliation of God overturns the sin of pride; the exaltation of man overturns the sin of sloth.

Barth's doctrine of election seems to imply universal salvation. In Christ, God chooses not just who God shall be but who humanity shall be. It seems to follow that all humanity is saved in Christ, who elected to give his life for all. Barth does not draw this conclusion, which is up to the judgment of God, and some critics have found Barth to be evasive on this point. For Barth, the doctrine of election is good news because Jesus Christ is the chosen one, in whom all humanity is saved. Likewise, in the Bible the election of Israel as the chosen people is for the blessing of all nations. The structure of the biblical concept is not that some are chosen instead of others, but that some are chosen for the sake of others.

Barth's actualism (his focus on revelation as an event or act of God) seems to be an example of what he rightly rejected: a philosophical foundation that determines what may be said in theology. Barth's actualism does not look at all necessary to those outside the tradition of German theology, which lives in Kant's shadow. For Kantian philosophy, and therefore for German Liberal and Existentialist theology, the structure of the self determines the structure of the known world. Barth's actualism is a way of escaping this otherwise inevitable turn to the self in German thought. For those not dwelling in the shadow of German philosophy, actualism is not needed in order to escape this turn to the self. ■

### Suggested Reading

Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*.

Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology*.

Miller and Grenz, *Fortress Introduction to Contemporary Theologies*.

Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*.

## Questions to Consider

1. The neo-Orthodox used Existentialism to address the deep-rooted anxieties of modern people. Do you think it still speaks to us where we are today?
2. Do you think Barth is right that Christian theology must find its foundation in Christ rather than in theories of human nature, existence, or experience?

# Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism

## Lecture 31

**What I want to do now is backtrack a little bit and trace developments in English-speaking Protestantism up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This will be probably more familiar to most of the audience, but it will also be more treacherous because we're going to have to use terms like "evangelical" and "fundamentalist," and those are terms that carry a great deal of baggage.**

**E**vangelical is a term with a complex history and many meanings. It comes from the word for "Gospel" in New Testament Greek. In most of Europe, it is synonymous with Protestant. In England, it designates various low-church conservative Protestant movements, both inside and outside the Church of England. In America, it has been used to designate the Revivalist tradition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as the conservative Protestants who broke off from Fundamentalism beginning in the 1950s to re-enter American cultural and intellectual life. Because of this history, most Fundamentalists don't mind being called evangelicals, but many evangelicals do not like being called "Fundamentalists."

Fundamentalism first became an identifiable movement in the course of the Fundamentalist-modernist controversy in the United States. Fundamentalists got their name from a series of books called *The Fundamentals*, published in 1910–1915. A variety of authors, including scholars and professors as well as pastors and evangelists, contributed articles to the 12 volumes. The name referred to fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith which evangelicals thought Liberal theologians were abandoning. The authors represented a variety of conservative Protestant views, including biological evolution. The authors affirmed scientific and historical methods of studying the Bible, but rejected German "historical criticism" as unscientific because it was prejudiced against miracles and the supernatural.

An identifiable Fundamentalist movement arose over the course of the Fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the 1920s. In 1922, Liberal Baptist Harry Emerson Fosdick set the initial terms of the debate with a

sermon called “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” The key disagreement is a disagreement about how serious the disagreement is—whether it really is about something fundamental. Princeton seminary professor J. Gresham Machen presented the Fundamentalist side of the debate in his book *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923). Fundamentalism suffered a severe reversal at the Scopes “Monkey Trial” in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925, especially due to H. L. Mencken’s characterization of them. After this point, Fundamentalism became increasingly a separatist movement, alienated from the mainline Protestant denominations in which it originated.

When Fundamentalists began deliberately re-entering the American mainstream in the 1950s, they were labeled “neo-evangelicals” and eventually just “evangelicals.” The core of what is now called “evangelical Christianity” in the United States consists of spiritual descendents of these returning Fundamentalists. The label “evangelical” came to be applied to groups that were never Fundamentalists but who were also opposed to the Liberal theology of the mainline.

The disagreement between evangelical and mainline Protestants is still often very similar to the disagreement between Fosdick and Machen. The virgin birth was often used as a test issue for commitment to the supernatural, as Fosdick noticed. Liberal theology still tends to shy away from miracles and the supernatural, preferring to see God at work in the history and the life of the church. Behind this issue was a concern for the deity of Christ, as Machen insisted. Liberals since Schleiermacher have typically affirm the deity of Christ but reinterpreted it in ways that conform to modern language and assumptions. Fundamentalists and evangelicals charge that Liberals are deceptively using the same terms with different language.

A characteristic though not universal element in Fundamentalist theology is premillennial Dispensationalism. What all Fundamentalists had in common was roots in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Revivalist evangelicalism. At the level of personal piety, Holiness and Keswick themes play a prominent role in Fundamentalist theology.

At the level of society and culture, Dispensationalism is the most distinctively Fundamentalist approach to reading the Bible. Dispensationalism begins



with the theology of John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Britain. Dispensationalist reading of scripture was taught in well-attended Bible Prophecy conferences beginning in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dispensationalism is notably philo-semitic, teaching that

the Jewish people are distinct from the church, that God's covenant with them is still valid, and they have a promised destiny of their own which includes a restoration of their earthly kingdom.

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**When Fundamentalists began deliberately re-entering the American mainstream in the 1950s, they were labeled “neo-evangelicals” and eventually just “evangelicals.”**

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What is most distinctive about Dispensationalist reading of scripture is its view that the interpretation of prophecy should be a science based

on biblical data. The Dispensationalists are famous for their literalism, but they do not take the imagery of the book of Revelation literally. Rather, they take the numbers in prophetic books of the Bible as precise indications of the date of future events. Thus biblical interpretation follows the commonsense model of science: First gather the facts or data, then work out the best theory to fit them.

Dispensationalism is most noted for its premillennialism, an eschatology of the imminent return of Christ prior to a millennium of Christian rule on earth. The millennium is a golden age coming at the end of history, mentioned in Revelation 20:4. The predominant view among Dispensationalists is that the rapture, when Christians will be taken secretly to heaven, will occur before the tribulation, to spare them. During the tribulation many Jews, living in their homeland, will be converted to Christ and then persecuted. The tribulation will be ended by the return of Christ and the beginning of the millennium on earth. In the premillennialist view, Christ will come before the millennium, putting an end to a period of tribulation described in the book of Revelation. ■

## Suggested Reading

Fosdick, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?"

Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*.

Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*.

Scofield, C. I. ed., *Scofield Reference Bible*.

## Questions to Consider

1. What would be a fair way to state the concerns of the Fundamentalists?
2. What do you think is the most important failing of Fundamentalism?

# Protestantism after Modernity

## Lecture 32

**We need to trace a trajectory for Protestant theology after modernity. Of course, I am thinking of the intellectual movement, the intellectuals in the West who tend to think that we are now post-modern, that we are living in an era after modernity. That is an interesting question to raise. Are we living in an era after modernity?**

**M**odernity has an intimate relationship with Protestantism. Protestantism helps beget modernity in part by dividing Christendom against itself. Christendom is a society and politics that sees itself as Christian, with specifically Christian responsibilities. In a divided Christendom, it is hard for members of society to discern their Christian responsibilities. Modernity is secular in part because the Christian religion was no longer effective as the ground of unity in much of the West after the Reformation. Christendom secularizes itself as Christians find increasingly weighty reasons not to want an established church, thus generating an increasingly secular politics.

In the Enlightenment, Deists advocate natural religion, which is in effect a secularized version of Christianity. The early Deists' idea that natural religion was the true and original Christianity is historically preposterous. But equally preposterous is the idea that it represents natural and universal reason, when it is obviously a set of Western ideas derived from Christianity—as any non-Westerner can easily see. The Deists thus make the typically modern mistake of regarding distinctively Western Christian ideas as natural truths of reason. The mistake is easy to make, because what modern secularism secularizes is always some aspect of Christendom, which means what is left after the secularization is some residue of Christianity. A fully postmodern society will be fully post-Christian, no longer mistaking residues of Western Christian thought for universal truths of reason.

The Liberal turn to experience in 19<sup>th</sup>-century theology relies on assumptions about religious consciousness that are residual products of the Christian tradition. Schleiermacher treats God-consciousness as a fundamental feature

of human experience when it is in fact a specifically Western interpretation of experience based on the Christian piety inculcated in his religious upbringing. Hence the crucial irony is that the Liberal turn to experience depends on experiences inculcated by dogmas it does not accept. The Liberal strategy for saving Christian belief from modern critique is thus dependent on the residual elements of Christian tradition that remain in modernity.

The Revivalist evangelical traditions also rely on an appeal to experience that is dependent on the persistence of cultural Christendom in modernity. Revivals are phenomena of modern Christendom in that they have always been directed at people whose religion was Christianity but who did not have saving faith. The emphasis on the “Spirit’s leadings” in contemporary evangelicalism is vulnerable to the same dynamic as Liberal theology: The experience is Christian only to the extent that it depends on scriptural doctrine that is no longer being taught in the churches.

Modern traditions treat the authority of traditions as irrational, and then postmodernism points out that modernity itself is a tradition. Modern traditions contrast reason with authority and tradition. Tradition means knowledge and skill handed down from generation

to generation, for example, language, culture, art, science, and religion. Authority means the expertise of a teacher whom young learners must first believe before understanding, while in the process of acquiring the skills and knowledge that make them members of the tradition. Modernity, as represented especially by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Enlightenment, conceived itself as coming of age, no longer under the tutelage of authority and tradition. Applying this philosophy to modernity itself generates a crisis, for modernity is a tradition that regards tradition as irrational.

The recognition that modernity is a tradition, which is at the heart of postmodernism, leaves two options, which can be called left wing and right wing. Left wing postmodernism assumes modernity is right—that tradition is inherently irrational—which means modern claims to universal reason

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**Modern traditions treat the authority of traditions as irrational, and then postmodernism points out that modernity itself is a tradition.**

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and truth are in fact irrational, a disguise for Western power. Right wing postmodernism assumes modernity is wrong and traditions can be self-critical, the proper and necessary context for rationality.

Protestantism tends to be distinctly modern in its view of tradition as irrational. This causes problems in its approach to biblical interpretation. The Reformed tradition is a particularly important example of this, because Calvin's great success as an exegete resulted in his interpretation of scripture becoming transparent, as if it were hardly an interpretation at all. A transparent interpretation is one that appears to owe nothing to anything but the text itself, in particular, to owe nothing to a tradition of interpretation. Hence when interpretations become transparent, an interpretive tradition has succeeded in making itself invisible by making its interpretation seem obvious.

Protestant traditions of biblical interpretation depend on a certain kind of obviousness called the perspicuity of scripture, which the tradition itself generates. The perspicuity of scripture is a Protestant doctrine that teaches that the truths necessary to salvation are taught plainly enough in scripture for anyone to understand. Although some passages of scripture are admittedly obscure, Christian doctrine is based on these plain or perspicuous passages, or proof texts. The problem with the doctrine of perspicuity is that, while truth is not relative, obviousness is. What is obvious to some people is not obvious to others, primarily due to differences in skill and expertise, which are products of education in a tradition. The perspicuity of scripture, on which Protestant exegesis relies, is thus dependent on the theological sensitivity of its readers, which is in turn a product of the teaching of the Christian tradition.

An orthodox Christian reading of scripture that survives after modernity will need to believe in its own tradition. It will need to recognize that it is a tradition, which means giving up the outdated modern quest for scientific certainty. Trusting in the apostolic tradition of the New Testament, it will need to reject the notion that there is a deep difference between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. In scriptural interpretation, it will need to reject the project of getting from what it meant (as determined by historical science) to what it means (for the tradition of faith today). It will need to start

with what scripture already means in the ongoing practices of prayer, liturgy, and service, which the Christian tradition has maintained since antiquity. This will require Protestants to take the ancient and contemporary Catholic tradition seriously as a witness to the meaning of the word of Christ. These are all questions on the agenda for ecumenical theologians in the mainline churches and for evangelical theology as it becomes increasingly the mainstream of Protestant theology in the United States. ■

### Suggested Reading

Caputo, *Philosophy and Theology*.

MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*

Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism*.

### Questions to Consider

1. Do you think traditions are opposed to critical, rational thought? Or are they the basis of critical, rational thought?
2. Should Christianity be modern, or can it be postmodern—or something else?

# Catholic Theologies of Grace

## Lecture 33

**In this lecture we ... go back all the way to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the century of the Protestant Reformation, and pick up the story of modern Catholicism—not the Reformation, but the Catholic “Counter-Reformation” as it’s sometimes called. But, that’s not a great term because Catholics have their own theology; it’s not simply a response to Protestantism.**

**T**he first great doctrinal response to Protestantism by Roman Catholicism comes in the Council of Trent, which met (with interruptions) from 1545 to 1563. In its doctrine of justification, the council teaches that the righteousness of God is infused by grace and inherent in us, not merely imputed to us. The Thomistic concept of grace as a habit or quality of the soul is in the background but not explicitly mentioned. Justification is the transition from being in Adam to being in Christ—from a state of sin to a state of grace. It occurs with the cooperation of our free will, prepared by the prevenient help of grace (not by grace alone). It results in the righteousness of God becoming inherent in us in the form of the infused gifts of faith, hope, and charity (not faith alone).

This inherent righteousness, infused by the Holy Spirit, is the basis for merit. Christ’s merits are the meritorious cause of justification, but not the essence of our righteousness. In Protestant terms, Trent makes sanctification part of justification, while Protestant theology insists on keeping them distinct. Moreover, unlike imputed righteousness, this inherent righteousness grows as we do good works and grow in love. By means of this righteousness, in cooperation with the grace of God, we hope that God will reward our good works with the gift of eternal life.

Trent conceives of faith quite differently from Protestantism. True Christian faith may exist without charity, and thus without grace or righteousness, which means it is possible for believers to be damned. Faith does not require or even allow for the certainty that one’s sins are forgiven and that one is in a state of grace or justification. Faith does not include the certainty that

we will persevere to the end and be saved, or the certainty that we are elect and predestined for salvation. Faith may include the certainty that Christian doctrine and God's word are true, but lack of certainty in these other areas does not amount to doubting the word or promises of God.

After the Council of Trent, Catholicism began the process of sorting out its own doctrine of grace on its own terms, apart from Protestantism. The teachings of Michael Baius, Catholic professor at Louvain, were condemned in 1567 because they rejected the concept of the supernatural and resulted in a nearly Lutheran doctrine of sin and grace. For Aquinas, the original righteousness lost by original sin was a supernatural gift, so that losing it did not destroy the integrity of human nature. For Baius, original righteousness belonged to human nature, so that the loss of it meant human nature lost something essential, and was no longer capable of anything morally good. Baius's teaching on the incapacity of human nature echoes themes from Luther, for example, that our free will avails only to sin and no sin is really venial.

Teachings attributed to Cornelius Jansen, bishop of Ypres, in his book on Augustine, were condemned because they resulted in a nearly Calvinist view of sin and grace. One of the propositions, like Baius and Luther, taught that we can be responsible for sin even if we sin from necessity. Another proposition comes very close to the Calvinist doctrine of irresistible grace. In another proposition, God is said sometimes to command the impossible—a notion already condemned by Trent. One proposition affirms something very much like Dordt's doctrine of limited atonement.

The *Congregatio de Auxiliis* debates between Dominicans (Thomists) and the Jesuits (Molinists) concerned the help of grace and the role of the will. The Jesuits were strong advocates of free will, but the Dominicans had a more pessimistic, Augustinian attitude towards the power of the will. The Jesuits, like the Arminians, believed the choice to be saved is ultimately up to us. Like the Dominicans, Jesuits believed that God's grace is infallibly efficacious, but can be resisted by the will. Their chief theologian in the debate, Luis de

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**The Jesuits, like the Arminians, believed the choice to be saved is ultimately up to us.**

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Molina, argued that grace is only effective after the human will consents to it. People can therefore succeed in resisting grace, but God does not offer grace to those who would successfully resist it. This means God has a special middle knowledge or contrafactual knowledge of what would happen but doesn't: He knows who would resist grace if he offered it to them.

The Dominicans were loyal to the theology of Thomas Aquinas, who was a Dominican, and whose theology on this point followed Augustine's later notion of operative grace and predestination. Grace that moves the will this way is not irresistible (as Calvinists say) but is efficacious in itself, that is, not dependent on the will to become effective. The Dominicans, like the Calvinists, believed that it was ultimately up to God who was saved or not. Grace that is efficacious in itself infallibly moves the will to act, but does not take away or overcome its power to resist. Grace is effective in moving the will before the will consents, so that it is grace which brings about the consent. This act of grace moving the will before it consents is called "physical premotion." As a result, for the Dominicans the decisive factor in who gets saved is not the human will but divine grace.

After nearly 10 years of debate and two popes, the decision was made not to decide between the two sides. The upshot was that both sides represented theological opinions that were legitimate for Catholics to hold. Both sides were forbidden to call the other side heretical, and further debate was forbidden. ■

### Suggested Reading

"Grace," "Baius," "Jansenism," and "Congregatio de Auxiliis" in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

Council of Trent, Decree on Justification, in Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 408–424; also in Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, 89–118.

## Questions to Consider

1. Do Baius and Jansen sound too much like Protestants to be good Catholics?
2. Intuitively, do you find one side or other of the *Congregatio de Auxiliis* controversy to be just obviously wrong?

# Catholic Mystical Theology

## Lecture 34

We follow up now with a further lecture on Catholic theology in the modern period picking up on the doctrine of grace, which we discussed in our previous lecture. We're now going to look at the upper reaches, as it were, of the experience of supernatural grace in Catholic theology.

Catholic mystical theology is concerned with the higher stages of the supernatural life. It should not be confused with much later academic theories of mysticism, which are not specifically Christian or theological. It is called mystical theology, not mysticism, because it belongs to a tradition of reflection derived from the *Mystical Theology* by Pseudo-Dionysius (Saint Denys, as he was known in the West). He calls this treatise *Mystical Theology* because it concerns what is unknown and essentially hidden from us. Catholic mystical theology, therefore, concerns states of the soul in which it is supernaturally elevated beyond its own powers or faculties.

The most important representatives of Catholic mystical theology are the Spanish mystics of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint John of the Cross. Teresa provides the classic form and vocabulary for mystical theology. In Teresa's mystical theology, the consciousness of God comes to us by grace, not through our own effort. For Teresa, the inward finding of God is not an act of understanding or intellectual vision but a prayer of love.

Teresa combines mystical theology with an Augustinian inward turn. Like Augustine, she describes the soul as an inner space, an interior castle, a sort of inner building of the soul, which one must enter to find God. For both Augustine and Teresa, the essence of prayer is desire for God.

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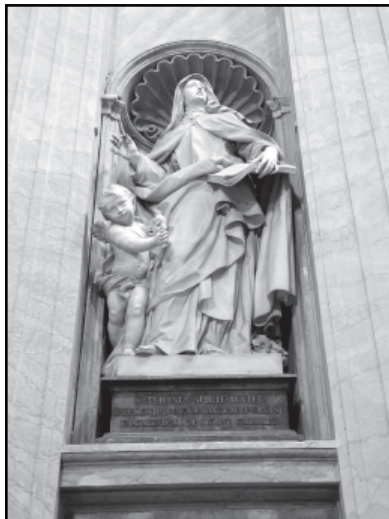
The lower stages of the spiritual life consist of mental prayer. The soul begins with meditation, which involves the work of the intellect and its many thoughts. Through recollection, withdrawing its faculties within itself, the soul comes to the prayer of quiet, the first stage of supernatural or infused contemplation. The soul proceeds through a sleep of the faculties to a suspended state of the faculties as it enters the prayer of union.

Beyond these levels of prayer, Teresa describes extraordinary raptures or ecstasies. A key feature of these experiences is that they center around Christ in his humanity. In her most famous experience, called the “transverberation,” an angel pierces her heart with a golden spear that sets her afire with love for God.

The most famous concept of John of the Cross is the dark night of the soul. Like Teresa, John finds God in the inmost being of the soul. The dark night is the soul’s loss of all that is not God, which is necessary for it to find God.

The highest level of mystical theology is the spiritual marriage, for both Teresa and John. It is a permanent union in love, the closest thing to beatific vision that is possible in this life. The union is of two who remain distinct, not an absorption like a drop into the ocean. As with Teresa, the soul’s ultimate finding of God is a spiritual marriage, which John depicts as a mutual self-giving.

Both in Spain and in France mystics went further than the church could approve. Quietism, condemned in 1687, made the passivity of infused contemplation into the whole of Christian life. Quietism contended that the perfect spiritual life involved eliminating all activity of the soul. Once the



**This statue of Saint Teresa is inside St. Peter’s Basilica.**

pure passivity of inner contemplation was achieved, lower forms of prayer and meditation, as well as the pursuit of virtue, were useless. Quietism picked up on Spanish themes, especially the concept of *dejamiento*, abandonment, or letting go, which may have entered the Keswick movement from Madame Guyon, a semi-Quietist writer admired by Wesley and other evangelicals.

Semi-Quietism is the label given to the Francois Fénelon's theology of pure love, condemned by Rome. Fénelon picked up the notion of not willing salvation from the writing of Saint Francis de Sales. Francis's focus is on love rather than intellect. He develops an Augustinian psychology of love as the desire for union with God. He raises new and un-Augustinian questions, however, when he suggests that the higher forms of love involve a holy indifference to anything but God's will.

“Pure love,” for Fénelon, meant loving God without the selfish desire to find happiness in God. To condemn the aspiration for such pure love is to insist, with Augustine and Aquinas, that the desire to find happiness in God as one's ultimate goal is not only necessary but morally right and essential. The appeal of pure love theology is a symptom of a key challenge posed to Catholic theology by modernity, with its denial of inherent teleology in nature—so that pursuing the goal of ultimate fulfillment, which is the essence of medieval Christian ethics, comes to seem selfish. ■

### Suggested Reading

de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*.

John of the Cross, *The Spiritual Canticle*.

Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*.

———, *The Life of Teresa of Jesus*.

## Questions to Consider

1. Do you think mystical theology is a valuable form of religion? Why or why not?
2. Do you agree that there is something wrong with the idea that pure love of God involves no self-interest at all?

# From Vatican I to Vatican II

## Lecture 35

**The First Vatican Council is famous as the council which defined the pope as infallible. The Second Vatican Council is famous as the council in which the church opened itself in a new to the modern world.**

**T**he doctrine of papal infallibility, as defined by the First Vatican Council (1870), grew out of a new exercise of the pope's responsibility to determine Catholic teaching. In the papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854, Pope Pius IX defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The doctrine teaches that from the very beginning of her existence Mary was free from the guilt of original sin. The view of Thomas Aquinas, that she was cleansed in the womb after being conceived in sin like the rest of us, was thereby rejected.

The Immaculate Conception was not a new doctrine but it was newly defined as doctrine. The pope has no authority to make new doctrines. In fact Pius insisted that there is no such thing as new doctrines of the Catholic church. To define a doctrine is to declare that it is henceforth a doctrine to be held by all the faithful. What is new about *Ineffabilis Deus* is that a doctrine was defined by the pope rather than by an ecumenical council. Pius's pronouncement includes an account of how he consulted other bishops and consulting the faithful, and defined the doctrine in response to their joyous request that he do so.

In the decrees of Vatican I, regarded by the Roman church as an ecumenical council, the pope defined the doctrine of papal infallibility, affirming that the pope may define doctrine without the consent of an ecumenical council. Vatican I teaches that Christ gave to the apostle Peter and his successors primacy of jurisdiction over the whole church as well as full power to define doctrine even without the consent of a council. The pope has authority to define dogma when he teaches *ex cathedra*, that is, sitting in Peter's chair (*cathedra*) and, when he does so, he is infallible. The pope, as bishop of Rome, is the successor of the apostle Peter, who was the first bishop of

Rome, so that the Roman See is ever afterward the Apostolic See, the See of Peter.

After Vatican I, the prerogative of infallibility has been exercised only once, in the definition of the doctrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The doctrine teaches that Mary was taken up, both body and soul, into heaven. This means that either she did not die or (the majority view, shared by the Eastern Orthodox) she died and then was the first person after Jesus to be resurrected bodily to eternal life. This doctrine supports the important Catholic piety of devotion to Mary as the queen of heaven. While the Eastern Orthodox agree with the doctrine, they believe only ecumenical councils have the right to define doctrine. Protestants believe that no one can legitimately be required to believe the two Mariological doctrines defined by the pope, because they are not found in scripture. The definition of the Assumption of Mary was thus a low point in ecumenical relations, shortly before the important new move toward ecumenism taken by Vatican II.

With the encouragement of the pope, neo-Thomism became the dominant form of Catholic theology after Vatican I, though it came increasingly under challenge in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Neo-Thomists drew an especially sharp line between the natural order and the supernatural order. Thomas Aquinas affirmed both faith and reason, but taught that faith, being supernatural, had access to higher truths than natural reason alone. Thomas's critical use of Aristotle's philosophy (a product of natural reason) was taken as a model for the critical use of natural science in modern Christian thought. Hence for neo-Thomists, the best of human reason, modern science and philosophy could be used in Christian theories of human nature, while the supernatural order was strictly the domain of theology. In some of its forms, neo-Thomism could be criticized as "extrinsicist," because it made the supernatural order of grace extrinsic to ordinary human life.

Henri de Lubac, a patristic scholar and leading critic of neo-Thomism, found abundant teaching in the church fathers and in Thomas himself about the natural desire for God, which amounted to a natural desire for a supernatural happiness. Another papal encyclical in 1950 warned the critics of neo-Thomism that the supernatural must remain gratuitous, a gift God does not owe human nature. Hence Catholic theologians frequently



speak of “concretely graced human nature” and point out that it is of this that the church fathers typically speak. Karl Rahner, perhaps the most influential Catholic theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, speaks of a “supernatural existential,” an offer of grace that is intrinsic not to human nature but to concrete human existence. The supernatural existential makes possible a turn to experience in Rahner’s theology, making him the fountainhead of Catholic Liberal theology.

The ideas of de Lubac and Rahner were very influential in the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. Pope John XXIII, who called the council, described its task as *aggiornamento* (updating), bringing the church up to date. The central document of the council was the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (which begins with a reference to Christ as the “Light of the Nations”). Rejecting clericalism, the council defined the church as the people of God, not just the hierarchy. More deeply, the council described the church itself as a sacrament, a sign and instrument of

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communion with God and unity among human beings. The Pastoral Constitution on the church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes* (“Joy and Hope”) made the church a sharer in the hopes and fears of the modern world.

The council took a much more positive attitude than the Roman church earlier had toward the world, other churches, and other religions.

Taking a strikingly different attitude than Pius

IX a century earlier, the council affirmed the right to religious freedom, based on the dignity of the human person. The council affirmed that the Jews are not rejected by God, who does not take back the choice he has made. In a move that changed the Christian world, the council committed the Roman church to the ecumenical movement seeking to restore the unity of all the churches. The Roman church recognized other churches and ecclesial communities as genuinely Christian, describing them as “separated brethren” in real but imperfect communion with the true church, which “subsists in” the Roman Catholic church but also is present in some ways outside it. ■

## Suggested Reading

Decrees of Vatican I, in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, 234–271; *Creeds of the Churches*, in Leith, 447–457 (contains only the decree on papal infallibility.)

Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (*Lumen Gentium*).

———, *Vatican Council II*, “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World” (*Gaudium et Spes*).

Pius IX, *Syllabus of Errors*, in Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, 213–233.

Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*.

## Questions to Consider

1. When you think of Catholicism, is it the Catholicism of Pius IX or the Catholicism of Vatican II that first comes to mind?
2. How deep do you think is the difference between the two?

# Vatican II and Ecumenical Prospects

## Lecture 36

**In this final lecture, ... we will look at Christian theology after Vatican II, ... which changed not just the Roman Catholic church but the whole situation of Christian theology as Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox began a new set of ecumenical conversations with each other. We will focus precisely on the issue of how change works in the Christian theological tradition, which becomes an interesting and controversial point, especially after Vatican II.**

Vatican II changed the landscape of Christian theology for both Catholics and Protestants. Some traditionalist Catholics have parted company with the pope because they see Vatican II as attempting to change Catholic doctrine which cannot be changed. The view that prevailed at Vatican II was that of de Lubac, that the church could move forward by returning to the sources of Christian doctrine, which are broader than Vatican I and neo-Thomism. This centrist view, represented by the popes after Vatican II, holds that the council made no changes in Catholic dogma. On the progressive wing of the church, the spirit of the council was embraced as leading to much-needed changes that go beyond the changes the council actually made.

Roman Catholic theology since Vatican II often centers on arguments about how far the council's changes went and how far they should go. A typical example is how Vatican II raised the possibility of vernacular masses (not in Latin), which became the norm by the end of the decade. A problematic illustration is the question of whether the Vatican II decree on religious freedom is really a change from the teaching of Pope Pius IX. An important illustration is the debate about the ordination of women, which Pope John Paul II tried to put an end to.

The new level of official Roman Catholic involvement in ecumenism poses an important challenge to other churches. The official dialogues between Catholic and Protestant theologians led to a distinctive kind of ecumenical theology among mainline Protestants. While ecumenical theologians become

more deeply concerned with the nuances of the doctrines to which their denominations are officially committed, progressives often lead the mainline Protestant denominations far from their doctrinal roots. The result, recently, has been a rash of Protestant ecumenical theologians becoming Catholic. Recently, important dialogues have begun between evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics, a movement called “Evangelicals and Catholics Together.” Pope John Paul II asked Eastern Orthodox Christians to help him find ways of exercising papal authority that will not be divisive.

Arguments about what Vatican II really means for the boundaries of the church are to be expected if critical reasoning about the identity of a tradition is an essential part of a healthy intellectual tradition. The endemic disagreements between liberal-progressives and conservative-traditionalists are arguments about how wide the boundaries of the tradition are. Since no rule can decide in advance about all change or all boundaries, a healthy tradition (according to “right wing postmodernism”) includes an ongoing argument about where the boundaries of the tradition are and whether they should change. The name for this ongoing argument in the Christian tradition is “theology.”

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The difficulty of the question, when change is necessary and when it goes too far, suggests that Protestant and Catholic theology each have something the other needs. Episcopalian bishop John Spong advocates a “new Christianity,” which, from any orthodox or ecumenical perspective, is not Christianity at all. So it seems Protestants need something like the Catholic “magisterium,” an authoritative teaching office that can discern when changing the faith means abandoning the faith. Speaking for the progressive wing of the Catholic church, Garry Wills describes “structures of deceit” that are consequences of the church’s inability to admit it was wrong. So it seems the Catholic church could benefit from the Protestant insistence on the need for continual reformation of the church (*semper reformanda*), which includes the necessity of admitting when the church is wrong.

Some interesting and startling changes are currently afoot in the Catholic tradition. Recently, a commission set up by Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) announced that the limbo of infants is not a defined doctrine of the church. Limbo is traditionally the place on the border of hell for infants who died unbaptized, who are not punished but also cannot merit the beatific vision because they still have original sin. The commission did not abolish limbo (as some news reports said) but did note that it was never a defined doctrine of the church. Hence limbo is still a viable theological opinion, but so is the hope that unbaptized infants will come to enjoy the beatific vision.

Behind the elimination of the doctrine of limbo is the hope of universal salvation. John Paul II spoke frequently of the inclusion of all human beings in the salvific work of Christ, who is the Redeemer of all. His hope for universal salvation owed something to Protestant theologian Karl Barth, but perhaps more to Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar.

The hope of universal salvation has been raised by von Balthasar's deep re-examination of the story of Christ. Von Balthasar's theology rejects the Liberal turn to experience in favor of a turn to beauty. The most beautiful of all things is Christ crucified, dead, and raised. Von Balthasar focuses on Christ in hell on Holy Saturday, forsaken by the Father, dead among the dead. Von Balthasar's theology draws on the visionary theology of his friend, the mystic Dr. Adrienne von Speyr. Von Balthasar proposes for our meditation the thought that no hellbound sinner, turning away from God, may be more deeply forsaken by God as was Christ. This idea will be argued about at great length, but I think it is exactly the kind of argument in which the Christian tradition should be engaged. ■

### Suggested Reading

Balthasar, *Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved"?*

———, *First Look at Adrienne von Speyr*.

Noll and Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?*

Spong, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*.

Wills, *Papal Sin*.

## Questions to Consider

1. What do you think are the key challenges faced by the Roman Catholic church?
2. Does von Balthasar's proposal about universal salvation strike you as beautiful or way out in left field—or what?

## Timeline

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- c. 30..... Crucifixion of Jesus.
- 50–64..... Letters of the Apostle Paul, the earliest writings in the New Testament.
- 65..... The earliest date suggested for the composition of the book of Mark, usually regarded as the first of the Four Gospels to be written (other scholars argue for a date after the destruction of the temple).
- 70..... The Romans destroy the temple in Jerusalem at the culmination of the Great Jewish Revolt.
- 75–95..... Most scholars date the composition of the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John to these decades.
- 144..... Marcion excommunicated in Rome.
- c. 145..... Valentinus teaches in Rome, but his hopes of becoming bishop (that is, pope) go unfulfilled.
- c. 150..... Justin Martyr writes his *Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho*.
- 180–200..... Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, writes his influential multivolume treatise, *Against Heresies*.

- c. 202..... Origen begins his teaching career at age 17 by becoming head of the catechetical school in Alexandria.
- 325..... The First Council of Nicaea (the first ecumenical council) condemns the teaching of Arius and approves a creed containing the *homoousios* clause.
- 381..... The First Council of Constantinople (the second ecumenical council) approves an expanded version of the creed of Nicaea, which is today called the Nicene Creed.
- 385..... Augustine, at age 31, begins his career as a Christian writer.
- 431..... The Council of Ephesus (the third ecumenical council), led by Cyril of Alexandria, condemns Nestorius and his Christology; the council emphasizes the unity of Christ by teaching that Mary is *theotokos* (Mother of God), that the union of divine and human in Christ is hypostatic, and that Christ's body is lifegiving flesh.
- 451..... The Council of Chalcedon (the fourth ecumenical council), accepting the teaching of Pope Leo I, holds that there are in Christ two natures, divine and human, which remain distinct even in the unity of one person.



- 553..... The Second Council of Constantinople (the fifth ecumenical council) gives a Cyrillian interpretation of the teaching of Chalcedon, re-emphasizing the unity of his person.
- 681..... The Third Council of Constantinople (the sixth ecumenical council) rejects Monothelitism, the teaching that there is only one will in Christ, in favor of Dyothelitism, the teaching that he has both the divine will and a human will.
- 787..... The Second Council of Nicaea (the seventh ecumenical council) rejects iconoclasm and teaches that icons are to be venerated, though not worshiped.
- 1054..... Beginning of the official schism between the Western and Eastern churches, resulting in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.
- 1093..... Anselm becomes archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1215..... The Fourth Lateran Council defines the doctrine of transubstantiation and requires Catholics to receive communion at least once a year at Easter.
- 1256..... Thomas Aquinas begins his teaching career at the University of Paris.

- 1439..... The Council of Florence defines the medieval sacramental system and all seven sacraments.
- 1517..... Martin Luther posts the 95 Theses on the church door at Wittenberg announcing an academic disputation about the theology of indulgences; he has no idea that this would inaugurate the Reformation and lead to a split with the pope within five years.
- 1521..... At the imperial Diet of Worms, Luther refuses to retract any of his writings, thus making the split between Protestants and Catholics inevitable in Germany.
- 1522..... Ulrich Zwingli, parish priest and reformer in Zürich, begins publishing his writings and thus inaugurates the Reformed tradition of theology.
- 1525..... Anabaptists in the environs of Zürich, rejecting the practice of infant baptism, begin “rebaptizing” (as their opponents think of it) those who have received baptism as infants; Thomas Müntzer, a Lutheran pastor in Germany convinced he is inspired by the Holy Spirit (for which Luther called him a “fanatic”), becomes a leader in the great Peasant War until he is defeated, captured, and executed.

- 1527..... The Schleitheim Confession, the most important confessional document of the early Anabaptist movement, is published in Switzerland.
- 1529..... Lutheran princes lodge a formal protest against a decision by the imperial Diet of Speyer, thus giving birth to the name “Protestant.”
- 1530..... Lutheran theologians led by Philip Melancthon compose The Augsburg Confession and present it before Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg; it becomes the most important doctrinal standard of the Lutheran church.
- 1534..... In the Act of Supremacy, Parliament declares King Henry VIII to be “supreme head on earth of the Church of England,” thus breaking with the church of Rome and initiating the English Reformation.
- 1536..... Menno Simons begins ministering among the surviving Dutch Anabaptists after the Anabaptist takeover of the city of Münster is ruthlessly suppressed; he leads them in a resolutely pacifist direction so successfully that they came to be called Mennonites; John Calvin begins his work as pastor, teacher, and theologian in Geneva, becoming the most influential theologian in the Reformed tradition; the first of five editions of his *Institutes* is published.

- 1545–1563..... The Council of Trent meets—with numerous lengthy interruptions—and provides the official Roman Catholic response to Protestant theology as well as measures for the renewal of the Catholic church.
- 1549..... The first edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England is issued under the authority of King Edward VI.
- 1559..... The Act of Uniformity under Queen Elizabeth I establishes the Elizabethan Settlement, the mature form of the English Reformation.
- 1560s..... In the Vestiarian controversy, Puritan theology begins to take shape, initially as the more Reformed wing of the Church of England.
- 1563..... The *39 Articles*, the official confessional document of the Church of England, is issued under Queen Elizabeth I.
- 1567..... Rome officially condemns the teachings of Catholic theologian Michael Baius (“Baianism”).
- 1572..... With John of the Cross as her confessor and spiritual director, Theresa of Avila comes to the ultimate state of inner union with God in this life, called spiritual marriage.

- 1577..... Anabaptists are granted toleration under William I of Orange in the Netherlands.
- 1580..... The *Formula of Concord* is published in the *Book of Concord* together with other Lutheran confessional documents such as The Augsburg Confession to settle a number of disputes among Lutheran theologians about free will, justification, and other issues.
- 1598–1607..... Formal debates on the help of grace (*de Auxiliis*) are held in Rome between Molinists and Thomists; the issue is ultimately left unresolved by the pope, thus legitimizing both positions as acceptable theological opinions.
- 1609..... Formation of the first English Baptist congregation from a Puritan Separatist congregation in exile in the Netherlands.
- 1616..... Francis de Sales publishes his major work, *Treatise on the Love of God*.
- 1618–1619..... Reformed theologians at the Synod of Dordt in Holland reject Arminianism and formulate five points of Calvinism.
- 1640..... Posthumous publication of Cornelius Jansen’s book *Augustinus*, which becomes the bone of contention in the Jansenist controversy.

- 1647..... The Westminster Confession, the most important Reformed confessional document in English, especially important among Presbyterians, is accepted by authority of Parliament in the course of the English Civil War.
- 1648..... In New England, the Cambridge Platform establishes the Congregationalist form of church governance.
- 1650..... The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) begins to form around the preaching of George Fox in England.
- 1653..... Pope condemns five propositions attributed to Jansen's *Augustinus*, bringing the Jansenist controversy to a head in France.
- 1662..... In New England, the Halfway Covenant allows baptized but unconverted Christians to be members of the Congregationalist (Puritan) church.
- 1675..... Lutheran pastor Philipp Jakob Spener publishes his book *Pia Desideria* ("Pious Desires") in Germany, inaugurating the Pietist movement.
- 1687..... Rome condemns Quietism.
- 1689..... The Act of Toleration in England legalizes Protestant groups that dissent from the established Church of England.

- 1695..... The French church condemns Madame Guyon’s teachings for their Quietist tendencies.
- 1696..... John Toland publishes the first major work of deism, *Christianity not Mysteriorous*.
- 1699..... Rome condemns Fénelon’s “semi- Quietist” teaching of “pure love.”
- 1722..... Protestants fleeing persecution in Moravia begin settling in Herrnhut, Germany, at the invitation of Count von Zinzendorf, who later becomes their bishop and the leading theologian of the Moravian church.
- 1734..... A period of revival begins in Jonathan Edwards’s congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts, which he describes in his influential book *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737), one of the founding documents of *Revivalism*.
- 1739..... John Wesley begins his career as itinerant preacher of revival and leader of the Methodist movement.
- 1740..... The Great Awakening, a revival of religion whose most important theological advocate is Jonathan Edwards, begins to spread throughout New England.

- 1764..... Voltaire publishes his *Philosophical Dictionary*, a collection of deist satirical essays highly critical of Christianity.
- 1794..... Thomas Paine publishes the first part of *The Age of Reason*, the most important work of American deism.
- 1799..... Friedrich Schleiermacher takes an initial step toward the founding of liberal Protestant theology by publishing his book, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*.
- 1811..... Schleiermacher becomes the first professor of theology at the new University of Berlin, soon to become one of the most influential universities in the world.
- 1824..... Charles Finney begins applying “new measures” in revival preaching, based on a much greater emphasis on free will than in Jonathan Edwards’s Revivalist theology.
- 1832..... John Nelson Darby, a founding figure in the Plymouth Brethren, begins teaching Dispensationalist theology.
- 1836..... Methodist teacher Phoebe Palmer begins leading the Tuesday Night Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness in her home in New York City, inaugurating the Holiness tradition.



- 1854..... In *Ineffabilis Deus* (“The Ineffable God”), Pope Pius IX defines the Blessed Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception as a doctrine to be believed by all the faithful.
- 1864..... Pope Pius IX promulgates the *Syllabus of Errors*, denouncing a large number of modern beliefs.
- 1867..... The National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness begins spreading Holiness teachings.
- 1870..... Pope Pius IX, with the approval of the First Vatican Council, defines the doctrine of papal infallibility as well as the doctrine that God can be known by natural reason.
- 1875..... A meeting of Presbyterians and Anglicans in Keswick, England, begins the Keswick movement, which adapts Holiness teachings to non-perfectionist (that is, non-Methodist) traditions.
- 1879..... Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Aeterni Patris* promotes “the restoration of Christian philosophy according to the mind of Saint Thomas Aquinas,” thus giving a major boost to neo-Thomism.

- 1906..... Albert Schweitzer publishes *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, arguing that the quest was a failure because the historical Jesus was an eschatological prophet belonging to his time, not ours; The Azusa Street Revival begins in Los Angeles; it lasts several years and gives birth to Pentecostalism.
- 1910–1915..... Publication of *The Fundamentals*, a series of books from which the Fundamentalist movement later took its name.
- 1917..... Publication of the second edition of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, which becomes the most important text of the Dispensationalist movement.
- 1922..... Harry Emerson Fosdick’s sermon “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” defines the key issues on the modernist side of the Fundamentalistmodernist controversy.
- 1923..... J. Gresham Machen’s book *Christianity and Liberalism* defines the key issues on the Fundamentalist side of the Fundamentalistmodernist controversy.
- 1925..... The Scopes “Monkey Trial” results in the cultural discrediting and marginalization of Fundamentalism, and spurs antiintellectualism within the Fundamentalist movement.

- 1950..... The papal bull *Munificentissimus Deus* (The Most Munificent God) defines the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, her being taken body and soul into heaven, as doctrine to be held by all the faithful; The papal encyclical *Humani Generis* condemns theologies which deny that God could have created human nature without directing it to a supernatural happiness.
- 1962–1965..... The Second Vatican Council provides measures for the renewal of the Roman Catholic church as well as ecumenical openings toward nonRoman churches.

## Glossary

**absolution:** From a Latin verb meaning “to loose” (related to the word “dissolve”), in a broad sense this term is another word for forgiveness of sins, while in a narrow sense it means specifically the priest announcing forgiveness of sins to the penitent in the sacrament of Penance by saying, “I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

**actualism:** A technical term for the emphasis on revelation as an event, characteristic of the neoOrthodox theologians, especially Karl Barth.

**adiaphora:** A Greek term meaning “indifferent things,” *adiaphora* is a technical term in theology referring to church practices which are not necessary to obtain salvation or required by Christian faith, for example, kneeling in church, use of special vestments, and making the sign of the cross. Controversies often arose among Protestant groups (especially in state churches like the German Lutherans and the Church of England) about whether regulations requiring such practices could legitimately be made by the church or enforced by the government.

**aeons** (Sometimes spelled “aions”): Gnostics used this Greek term to refer to otherworldly spiritual principles making up the divine realm of the Pleroma.

**aggiornamento:** (See Vatican, Second Council.)

**agility:** In medieval theology, a quality of glorified human bodies after the resurrection, which means they can freely and instantaneously (or nearly so) move to whatever place the soul wishes to be. (See clarity, impassibility, and subtlety.)

**agrapha:** From the Greek word for “unwritten,” a technical term in contemporary scholarship for sayings of Jesus not written down in the New Testament but found in other writings, such as those of the church fathers.

**alien immersion:** In Landmarkism, baptism in any nonBaptist church—which, even when it is adult baptism by immersion, as required by Baptist teaching, is not a true baptism because it is alien to the true church.

**allegory:** A form of reading, first used by pagan writers, in which religious texts are understood as having hidden, usually philosophical, meaning. In early Christian theology this is often combined inextricably with typology.

**Alumbrados:** Spanish for “the illuminated ones,” a mystical movement in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain, which was rejected by Rome and may have contributed to the late 16<sup>th</sup>-century theology of Quietism. (See *dejamiento*.)

**Amish:** (See Anabaptists.)

**Amyraldianism:** Named after Moses Amyraut or Amyraldus, and also called “hypothetical universalism” or “fourpoint Calvinism” (or “moderate Calvinism” by its advocates), according to which Christ died for the redemption of every human being (thus rejecting the doctrine of limited atonement). However, this redemption is available only on condition that Christ be accepted in faith, which is done only by those to whom God chooses to give the gift of faith (thus affirming the doctrine of unconditional election). Richard Baxter was its most important advocate among the English Puritans.

**Anabaptists:** From the Greek term for “rebaptizers,” a name given them by their opponents. This Protestant movement originated mainly in German-speaking lands in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, known for rejecting infant baptism (which means they did not think people baptized as infants received true Christian baptism, and thus they did not think it was “rebaptism” when they baptized adults who had been baptized as infants). They are not to be confused with Baptists, who also rejected infant baptism but who arose in England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The best known Anabaptist groups today are the Mennonites and the Amish.

**anfechtung:** German for “assault,” the word Luther used to translate the Latin word *tentatio*, that is, “temptation.” This is the characteristically Lutheran concept of temptation, which means that the devil assaults the conscience by making you aware of your sin and weakness of faith, thus tempting you to doubt that Christ will keep his promise to you.

**Anglicanism:** From the Latin phrase *anglicana ecclesia*, meaning “English Church,” the worldwide communion of churches stemming from the established Protestant Church of England led by the archbishop of Canterbury including, for instance, the Episcopalian church in the United States.

**anhypostasis:** Literally “without hypostasis,” the orthodox applied this term to the humanity of Christ, which for all its completeness (including both a body and a rational soul) is not a person in its own right, for the person of the man Jesus Christ is the divine Word. This doctrine arose because the humanity of Christ cannot be a person in its own right without making Christ into two persons, one divine and one human, which is contrary to orthodox Christology.

**anthropology:** In theology, this refers to theories of human nature. Anthropology is what theology or philosophy has to say about the meaning of human existence. This should not be confused with the discipline of cultural anthropology as represented in the anthropology departments of American universities.

**antinomianism:** Literally “antilawism,” the teaching that the Law of God no longer matters to Christians. This is almost always an accusation made by one theologian against another, who denies the accusation. No major theologian teaches an explicit antinomianism, but some Protestant theologians are arguably in danger of falling into antinomianism when they emphasize the free grace of justification at the expense of the obligation of sanctification and holy living (a charge Calvinists have sometimes made against Lutherans, and Wesleyans have sometimes made against Calvinists).

**Apollinarianism:** The view, named after the 4<sup>th</sup> century Alexandrian theologian Apollinarius, that in the Incarnation the divine Word replaced the rational human soul, so that Jesus was the Word united with a human body, not with a whole human being. Apollinarianism is rejected as a heresy because it implies that Jesus, not having a human soul, is not fully human.

**apophatic:** From the Greek word for “denial” or “negation,” apophatic theology is the characteristically Eastern Orthodox approach of refusing to describe God directly but only to say what God is not. When such an approach is used in the West it is called the *via negativa* (Latin for “way of negation”).

**Apostle’s Creed:** This Western baptismal creed is the earliest creed known to us.

**apostolic succession:** The historical continuity of bishops being consecrated by bishops, who were themselves consecrated by bishops, etc., going back to the original twelve apostles of Christ. For Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and Anglicans, apostolic succession is a necessary feature of the episcopate, which means that no one who is consecrated outside the apostolic succession is really a bishop.

**archon:** The Greek word for “ruler” or “prince,” used by the Gnostics as a term for the enemy spirits of the visible heavens who block the soul’s escape from this world. The chief of the archons is the God of the Jews, who in his ignorance created the evil, physical world and in his arrogance thinks he is the only God.

**Arianism:** The theology attributed to 4<sup>th</sup>-century Alexandrian presbyter Arius, a radical form of subordinationism in which the preexistent word of God (prior to the Incarnation) is regarded as a creation of God the Father, so that “there was once when he was not.” The Council of Nicaea 325 condemned this view.

**Arminianism:** A Protestant theology in the Reformed tradition, derived from the work of Jacobus Arminius (d. 1609), which assigns a larger role to free will in salvation than was accepted by the Calvinists, who rejected Arminianism at the Synod of Dordt in 1619. Arminian theology became widespread though not dominant among both Anglicans and Baptists, and was wholeheartedly adopted by John Wesley and the Methodists.

**Ascension:** The doctrine that after his resurrection from the dead, Jesus ascended to heaven, to be seated in exaltation at the right hand of God the Father.

**Assumption of the Blessed Virgin:** The Roman Catholic teaching, defined infallibly as doctrine by Pope Pius XII in 1950, that at the end of her natural life the Virgin Mary was assumed, that is, taken bodily into heaven.

**atonement:** Term for expiation or reconciliation, that is, doctrines of atonement (of which there are several in the Christian tradition) which answer this question: How did Christ's suffering and death on the cross take away sins and reconcile human beings to God?

**attrition:** Fear of God and his judgment; proposed by some medieval theologians as a sufficient substitute for contrition in the sacrament of Penance.

**Augustinianism:** A theological tradition derived from the work of Augustine, which did not form a distinct school of theology like Thomism or Calvinism but rather became the mainstream of theological opinion through most of the history of Western theology, including both Catholicism and Protestantism. However, it was also controversial because of Augustine's strong view of sin (including original sin) and grace (including the doctrine of predestination). Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and John Calvin are all strongly Augustinian theologians; Arminius, Molina and Wesley are less Augustinian, especially about predestination.

**Azusa Street:** The location in Los Angeles of an ongoing revival, beginning in 1906 and lasting several years, from which arose Pentecostalism.



**baptism:** From a Greek verb meaning “to dip” or “immerse;” a ritual washing marking Christian beliefs of death of sin with Christ and rising to newness of life in him, and also their incorporation as members of the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

**Baptists:** Originating as 17<sup>th</sup> century congregations of English Puritan Separatists who rejected infant baptism, the Baptists became a family of denominations emphasizing congregational self-government and regenerate church membership.

**beatific vision:** Roman Catholic concept of seeing the essence of God with the intellect, called “beatific” because it confers beatitude or ultimate happiness, and thus constitutes the ultimate goal of human existence.

**beatitude:** From the Latin term for happiness, *beatitudo*, used especially in Roman Catholic theology to refer to the ultimate fulfillment of human beings in God, which is thus equivalent to the biblical term “eternal life.”

**bishop:** (See episcopate.)

**Book of Common Prayer:** The official prayer book of the Church of England and many of its offshoots in the Anglican communion (often called simply “the prayer book”). First published under King Edward VI in 1549, revisions were issued under Edward (1552), Elizabeth (1559), James I (1604), and Charles II (1662), and in the United States in 1789, 1892, 1928, and 1979.

**Calvinism:** Central theological trend of the Reformed tradition, defined not just by relation to the work of John Calvin but also by the Synod of Dordt and the Westminster Confession.

**canon:** From a Greek term for “rule” (in the sense of ruler or measuring rod), in early Christian theology the canon was a list of books approved for reading aloud in the church service, which thus eventually formed the content of holy scripture.

**Cappadocians:** Collective term for 4<sup>th</sup> century Greek-speaking Christian theologians from Cappadocia in ancient Asia (modern Turkey), including Basil of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, sister Macrina, and friend Gregory Nazianzen, who were important in the development of ascetic practice in the East as well as the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity. The Cappadocians came to the fore in the generation after Athanasius, and their theology had a predominant influence on the Council of Constantinople 381.

**catechesis:** (See catechumens.)

**catechumens:** In the ancient church, people undergoing catechesis (Greek for “instruction” and the root of the modern term “catechism”) in preparation for baptism. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century this was an official designation for a kind of half membership in the church, which could last for years if people wished to delay baptism, which they frequently did.

**cathedra:** A Latin term taken from a Greek word for “chair,” used in theology to refer to the seat of a bishop’s authority. (Hence a cathedral church is the home church of a bishop.) In Roman Catholic theology, the pope is infallible when he defines doctrine *ex cathedra*, which means “from the chair” of Peter, that is, by exercising his unique authority as the successor of the apostle Peter. (See pope.)

**catholic:** From a Greek word meaning “universal,” this term originally referred to beliefs and practices that were accepted by all churches worldwide and was used in effect as a synonym for “orthodox.” In this sense the Eastern Orthodox and Protestant churches join Roman Catholics in believing in one holy Catholic church.

**character:** A Latin word meaning roughly “indelible mark” (such as a tattoo). In Roman Catholic sacramental theology, this is a technical term for an indelible mark on the soul. The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders each imprint their own distinctive sacramental character on the soul.

**Charismatic movement:** Once known as “neoPentecostalism,” this is a widespread movement among mainline Protestant and Catholic churches in the West arising from and influenced by, but no longer directly connected to, Pentecostalism. It emphasizes divine healing and speaking in tongues as gifts of the Holy Spirit (from the Greek word *charisma*, the New Testament word for “gifts”), as well as lively (“Spiritfilled”) worship services.

**charity:** From the Latin term *caritas* (used to translate the New Testament term *agape*), it is the form of love which consists of obedience to the commandment to love God and neighbor. (Note: In Christian theology, giving money to the poor is not called charity but “alms,” which of course can be one form of love of neighbor, but is not the only one.)

**chrism:** (See confirmation.)

**chrismation:** (See confirmation.)

**Christology:** Branch of Christian theology concerned with the person and work of Christ, including especially the doctrine of the Incarnation (the person of Christ) and the atonement (the work of Christ).

**church fathers:** The orthodox Christian theologians up to about A.D. 500, including Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine in the West and Athanasius, Gregory Naziansen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Cyril of Alexandria in the East.

**clarity:** From the Latin word for “brightness,” a quality of glorified human bodies after the resurrection, which means they shine with a beautiful light derived from the blessedness of their souls. (See agility, impassibility, and subtlety. For the clarity of scripture, see perspicuity.)

**close communion:** In Baptist theology, this means the practice, advocated most insistently by Landmarkism, of allowing only members of the local congregation (not visitors, even from other Baptist churches) to participate in the Lord’s Supper.

***communicatio idiomatum***: Latin for “the sharing of characteristics,” the phrase refers to a Christological doctrine developed most importantly by Cyril of Alexandria, who taught that because of the Incarnation, divine characteristics belong to the man Jesus (for example, he does miracles; he is worshiped) and human characteristics belong to God (for example, he has a mother; he suffers and dies).

**communion**: From the Latin word *communio*, which can be translated “sharing,” “partaking,” or “fellowship” (the root idea is found in the English phrase “to have in common”). It is a theological term with many meanings, including a fellowship of churches (such as the Anglican communion) and the act of partaking in the Eucharist, a sacrament which is therefore often called “Communion.”

**confession**: A word with many theological uses. It can mean the act of confessing the faith (for example, by reciting the creed) or a written confession of faith adhered to by a particular group of churches (such as The Augsburg Confession, which is the standard of faith for the Lutheran churches). It can also mean the act of confessing one’s sins, including especially private confession of sins to a priest in the sacrament of Penance, which is why the sacrament itself is often called “Confession.”

**confessor**: A priest who hears confessions in the sacrament of Penance.

**confirmation**: From a Latin term for “strengthening,” one of the seven sacraments of Roman Catholicism (also in Eastern Orthodoxy, where it is usually called chrismation, after the consecrated oil that is used, which is called chrism). This sacrament includes anointing with oil and laying on of hands (in Roman Catholicism, this must be done by a bishop) for the purpose of bestowing the Holy Spirit upon the baptized, strengthening them in faith, and bestowing a sacramental character upon the soul. Usually this is done when young people are entering early adulthood. In other high church traditions, such as Anglicanism and Lutheranism, confirmation is an important practice but is not regarded as a sacrament.

**conformity**: (See nonconformist.)

**Congregatio de Auxiliis:** A series of formal debates about the help of divine grace (*de Auxiliis* means “about the help”) held in Rome from 1598–1607, to settle the controversy between Jesuits, who advocated Molinism, and Dominicans who advocated the Augustinian doctrine of grace as developed by Thomism. In the end the pope declared both viewpoints legitimate, prohibited either side from calling the other heretics, and forbade further discussion.

**congregationalism:** (See polity.)

**contrition:** Hatred of one’s own sin, which produces sorrow of heart and the intention not to sin again. It is one of the four parts of the sacrament of Penance.

**conversion:** From a Latin word meaning “turning,” as a theological term this refers to a turning of the will from evil to good, typically by coming to Christian faith and joining the church.

**corporeal:** An adjective formed from the Latin word *corpus*, meaning “body.” In ancient philosophy, this is a word that could be translated “bodily,” referring not just to the human body but to anything that we would now call “physical.” (See materialism.)

**Councils of the Church:** (See ecumenical.)

**covenant theology:** A major element in Reformed theology, beginning with Calvin’s contention that the Old Testament promulgated the same covenant of grace as the New Testament, but under a different form of administration. This covenant of grace is contrasted with the covenant of works which God made with Adam.

**created grace:** Catholic concept of grace as an inherent quality or habit of the soul, distinct from uncreated grace, which is the action of God, the Holy Spirit. (See sanctifying grace.)

**creature:** In theology, a technical term meaning “something God created.” The term designates absolutely everything that has being other than God, who is not creature but Creator.

**creed:** From *credo*, “I believe,” the word with which the Latin creeds begin, it is a verbal formula of Christian faith originally used as a confession of faith at Baptism. (See Apostle’s Creed.) It was later used as a way of excluding heretical teaching and included in the regular Sunday liturgy. (See Nicene.)

**dark night:** Term used by John of the Cross to describe the stages in the soul’s ascent to God when its powers are emptied of all that is not God, like an eye emptied of light.

**decrees:** In Calvinist theology, the eternal resolution of God’s will to bring about some specific thing in time. For Calvinists, all things are ordained to happen by divine decree, but evil is decreed permissively—allowed rather than ordained—but in the very act of allowing them to happen God determines that they shall inevitably happen.

**Deipassionism:** From a Latin phrase meaning “God suffers,” an implication of the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation, according to which the same word of God who is “God from God” and eternally begotten of the Father, is also born of Mary and crucified under Pontius Pilate. (Contrast Patripassionism, which the orthodox deny.)

**deism:** An 18<sup>th</sup>-century Enlightenment theology in which critiques revealed religions (including especially Christianity) in light of natural religion, which is understood to be the religion of reason.

**dejamiento:** Spanish for “letting” or “letting go,” sometimes translated “abandonment.” This is a key concept among the *Alumbrados*, which seems to have influenced Quietism, that is, the idea that the highest form of spiritual life consists not in doing anything but in letting God do all things in you.

**Dispensationalism:** A theological movement originating in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century based on biblical interpretation that divides history into different periods or dispensations in which God relates to humanity differently. It is characterized by premillennialism, the expectation of the imminent return of Christ, and the belief that the people of Israel would enjoy an earthly kingdom prior to the end in fulfillment of God’s promise.

**dissenter:** An English Protestant who is not a member of the Church of England; hence the term includes Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Quakers, among others.

**Docetism:** From the Greek word for “appearance,” the view characteristic of many Gnostic groups that the physical body of Christ is not real but an illusion or mere appearance.

**doctrine:** From a Latin term *doctrina*, meaning “teaching,” it is a prime concern of Christian theology, because teaching about Christ is the basis of Christian faith.

**dominical institution:** From the Latin word *dominus*, meaning “lord,” it is the requirement that every sacrament, in the strict sense of the term, be instituted by the Lord Jesus.

**Donation of Constantine:** A document purported to be by the Emperor Constantine (280–337), donating all the lands of the West to the pope. It was exposed as a fraud in 1440 by the humanist scholar Lorenzo Valla, who showed that it was written in 8<sup>th</sup> century Latin.

**Dordt, Synod of (Sometimes spelled “Dort”):** A conference of Dutch Reformed pastors and theologians in 1619 which rejected Arminianism and formulated the famous five points of classic Calvinism, represented in English by the acronym TULIP: T = total depravity; U = unconditional election; L = limited atonement; I = irresistible grace; and P = perseverance of the saints.

**double predestination:** A version of the Augustinian doctrine of predestination, originating with Calvin but arguably found in some passages of Augustine, teaching that God not only predestines some people for salvation but predestines others for damnation. (See reprobation.)

**double procession:** (See *filioque*.)

**Eastern Orthodoxy:** (See orthodox.)

**ecclesiology:** From the Greek word for “church” (*ecclesia*), the branch of theology that considers the nature, government, and mission of the church. (See polity.)

**economy:** From a Greek word, *oikonomia*, meaning literally “household management” or “stewardship” (hence the related word *oikonomos* or “steward”), is used in the New Testament to refer to the divine dispensation or plan of salvation in Christ. In Eastern Orthodox theology, the term “economy” (sometimes spelled “oeconomy”) becomes almost synonymous with the Incarnation of Christ. (See *theologia*.) As a side note, theological uses of this term have nothing to do with the modern study of economics, though both come from the same Greek word. The ancient discipline of economics was concerned with managing the wealth of a household; hence the modern discipline of economics was originally called political economy, as it was concerned with managing the wealth of nations.

**ecumenical:** From a Greek word meaning “worldwide,” this term refers both to recent discussions aimed at restoring unity between the various Christian churches (that is, ecumenism) and also to ancient church councils representing the worldwide church. There is disagreement about which councils were truly ecumenical and thus speak for the whole church. Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics agree on the first seven ecumenical councils (whose names include the year the council occurred), which were the First Council of Nicaea 325, the First Council of Constantinople 381, the Council of Ephesus 431, the Council of Chalcedon 451, the Second Council of Constantinople 553, the Third Council of Constantinople 681, and the Second Council of Nicaea 787. But thereafter councils called ecumenical by the Roman Catholic church (for example, Trent, the First Vatican Council,



and the Second Vatican Council) are not regarded as truly ecumenical by other churches. Also, many Protestants do not accept all seven early councils as ecumenical. For example, most Protestants reject the Second Council of Nicaea, which taught the veneration of icons, and other Protestants do not accept the authority of church councils at all. For the issues discussed at these councils, see the timeline.

**ecumenism:** (See ecumenical.)

**effectual call:** Calvin’s teaching, based on Romans 8:28–30, that there is a specially effective call of the Gospel, when God by the Holy Spirit works in a sinner’s heart to produce true saving faith—the kind of faith which is sure, by the grace of God, to persevere to the end and thus to result in eternal salvation.

**election:** From the Latin word for “choice,” the doctrine concerning God’s eternal choice about who will ultimately be saved, often called “predestination.” “Unconditional election” is the Calvinist label for the doctrine taught by Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther, as well as Calvin, that God eternally chooses (that is, predestines) those whom he will save, without considering any of their foreseen merits or faith. (See Dordt, Synod of). “Conditional election” by contrast is the doctrine of Arminianism, that God eternally chooses to save those who he foresees will accept Christ in faith. In conditional election, human faith is the basis or “condition” of God’s choice; in unconditional election human faith is a “result” of God’s choice. (See reprobation.)

**Elizabethan Settlement:** The mature form taken by the English Reformation under Queen Elizabeth I, rejecting Roman Catholicism but not reforming the church as thoroughly as the Puritans thought necessary, it was characterized by the *Book of Common Prayer* (reissued in 1559) as well as the *39 Articles* (1563) and enforced by the Parliament’s Act of Uniformity (1559).

**encyclical:** From the Greek word for “circular” (because an encyclical was originally a letter circulated among the bishops by the pope), it is a type of papal document used in modern times as a venue for major teachings, though not usually declared infallible.

**energies:** From a Greek word for “activities” or “workings” (or “operations,” from *operationes*, the usual Latin translation of this word), a technical term in Eastern Orthodox theology that refers to the uncreated activities and glory of God, distinct from his essence.

**Enlightenment:** A broad term for 18<sup>th</sup> century European intellectual developments, including deism and other movements critical of orthodox Christianity, that are characteristically modern, emphasizing reason against tradition and authority.

**enthusiasm:** Originally a pejorative term suggesting religious fanaticism and self-deception, applied by opponents to Quakers and others who believed they received direct inner revelation from God or his Spirit.

**epiclesis:** Greek for “invocation,” a calling upon the name of God; specifically it is the part of the eucharistic liturgy in which the priest prays for God to send his Holy Spirit to make Christ’s body present in the sacrament.

**Epicureans:** (See hedonism.)

**episcopacy:** (See episcopate, polity.)

**episcopate:** From the Greek term *epi-scopos*, literally “overseer” or “supervisor,” but translated “bishop” (a corrupted English form of the word *episcopos*), this term refers to the network of bishops which governed the worldwide church from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century onward. This arose from the “monarchical episcopate” which prevailed within a century after the New Testament, a structure of local church governance in which there was only one bishop per town, under whom the presbyters (priest or elders) of the church served.

**Erastianism:** From a now obscure Swiss theologian named Erastus (d. 1583), the view of an influential party within the Anglican tradition that the government (especially the crown) is properly supreme over the church in matters of discipline and ecclesiastical appointments.

**eschatology:** Greek for teaching about “the end” (*eschaton*), in New Testament studies this term refers to early Christian understanding of the drama of the world between the “already” (Christ is already raised from the dead) and the “not yet” (Christ has not yet returned in the Parousia). In later theology, eschatology means the doctrine of the four “last things,” namely death, the last judgment, hell, and heaven.

**essence:** Translation of the Greek term *ousia*, sometimes translated “being” or “substance” (because the Greek term was usually translated into Latin as *substantia*). In ordinary philosophical usage, it refers to what makes something what it is (for example, the essence of a human being is human nature). In Nicene trinitarianism it refers to the unique divinity that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have equally in common. (See *homoousios* and *energies*.)

**established church:** A state church, such as the Church of England, the Lutheran churches in Scandinavia and parts of Germany, and the Congregationalist churches in Connecticut and Massachusetts until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. (The United States Constitution forbids a nationally established church and was not to interfere with established churches in the states). Established churches are typically supported by taxes (which pay ministers’ salaries), are usually under some degree of government control (for example, in the appointment of ministers), and often subject other churches in the territory to various penalties and sometimes persecution.

**Eucharist:** From the Greek word for “thanksgiving” (because the words of institution grow out of the Jewish rite of thanksgiving over bread and wine at the passover meal), it is the central Christian rite of a sacred meal in which bread and wine are used to signify or present the body and blood of Christ. Also called, in various traditions, “the sacrament of the altar,” “Communion” or “the Lord’s Supper.”

**evangelicalism:** In English-speaking countries, this term refers broadly to low-church movements beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with an emphasis on conversion and revival (for example, Methodism and various branches of Calvinism and Anglicanism), and more narrowly to the movement beginning in the 1950s, led by figures like Billy Graham in the United States and John Stott in England, in which Christians who have previously called themselves “Fundamentalist” turned to engage modern culture rather than separate from it. Note, in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, “evangelical” or *evangelische* simply means Protestant.

**ex cathedra:** (See *cathedra*.)

**excommunication:** A church’s act of refusing communion to a person, which means not allowing him or her to share in the church’s celebration of the Eucharist.

**Existentialism:** A 20<sup>th</sup> century movement in philosophy and theology which makes use of a concept of human existence derived from Kierkegaard, for whom existence is a task, a concern that inevitably involves guilt, anxiety, and despair, which can only be honestly faced by the free decision of faith.

**Extreme Unction:** Derived from a Latin phrase which is more literally translated, “final anointing,” it is the sacrament now called “Anointing of the Sick,” which in the Middle Ages was performed only for those thought to be dying.

**extrinsicism:** A criticism often leveled against neo-Thomism that it separated the supernatural order from the natural order so sharply that it made the life of grace extrinsic and irrelevant to normal human life and experience.

**federal theology:** From the Latin word *foedus*, meaning “covenant,” another term for covenant theology. (It has nothing to do with the United States federal government.)

**filioque:** Latin term meaning “and of the Son,” from a clause in the Western version of the Nicene Creed saying that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” This doctrine of “double procession” is rejected by the Eastern Orthodox and became the cause of the schism between the Eastern and Western churches in 1054, resulting in the formal separation of Eastern Orthodox from Roman Catholic.

**forensic justification:** The predominant form of the doctrine of justification in Protestantism, according to which believers, being united to Christ by faith, are declared righteous by God in view of the merits of Christ that are imputed to them. (See imputation, fourpoint Calvinism, and Amyraldianism.)

**Fundamentalism:** A 20<sup>th</sup> century religious movement which originated in the Fundamentalistmodernist controversy in the United States beginning about 1920, although rooted in AngloAmerican evangelicalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and characterized by a high view of scriptural infallibility and the concern that liberal Protestantism was abandoning the fundamentals of the faith. Also typically (though not always) involving Keswick or Holiness piety and Dispensationalist theology.

**glossolalia:** Term used by nonPentecostals to describe “speaking in tongues.” In fact it comes from a Greek phrase which means “speaking in tongues,” a phenomenon of ecstatic worship attributed to the Holy Spirit in which believers give utterance to what sounds like language but is not any recognizable human tongue. (Contrast *xenolalia*.)

**Gnosticism:** A broad label for a wide variety of non-orthodox forms of Christianity which proliferated in the early centuries A.D., which is discussed at length in Lecture Six. The Gnostics’ central conviction is that there is a special higher knowledge (Greek *gnosis*) which the human spirit needs in order to escape this evil world and go to a heaven that is above the stars and beyond the material world.

**Gospel:** English translation of the Greek (New Testament) term *evangelion*, meaning “good news.” This is a central term in the theology of Luther, who insists on a strong contrast between Law and Gospel because Law can only tell people how to be righteous, and thereby condemn them for not doing what they’re told, whereas the Gospel makes them righteous by giving Christ to all those who receive him by faith.

**grace:** A New Testament term for the unmerited mercy of God used by Christian theologians as a label for the power of God to redeem and transform human beings, it is an especially important term in Augustinian theology. (See created grace, infused, irresistible grace, prevenient grace, sanctifying grace, and supernatural.)

**Great Awakening:** A period of religious revival in the early 1740s in colonial America, in which Jonathan Edwards was a leading theologian.

**Great Church:** A name that mainstream Christianity gave itself in the first few centuries, in contrast to sects and heresies.

**Halfway Covenant:** Policy agreed upon by most of the Puritan (Congregationalist) churches in New England in 1662, allowing the baptized children of church members to join the church without being converted.

**Harrowing of Hell:** The traditional teaching that after his death the soul of Jesus descended into hell, rescued the souls of those who believed in him, and later brought them to heaven.

**hedonism:** From the Greek word for “pleasure,” *hedone*, the view in ancient philosophy that happiness is a feeling, that is, a good feeling—pleasure. (It does not mean living a wild party life. In fact, the most important hedonist philosophers, the Epicureans, believed that a quiet and tranquil life was the most pleasant and therefore the happiest.)

**heresiologists:** Church fathers writing against heresy, typically by producing a book cataloguing the views of a large number of diverse Christian groups, such as Irenaeus's treatise *Against Heresies*. These books are often our main source of information about forms of Christianity that have since disappeared.

**heresy:** From a Greek term meaning "sect," theologians of the Great Church applied this term to doctrines they rejected as not catholic or orthodox.

**Herrnhut:** Town in the lands of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf, where he offered asylum to Moravians and became their bishop. Hence a "Herrnhuter" means a Moravian, and it was to this that Schleiermacher referred when he called himself "a Herrnhuter of a higher order."

**hierarchy:** From a Greek word meaning literally "rule by priests," this term refers to churches with an episcopal polity. (See episcopate). The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches are hierarchical, whereas Baptist and Presbyterian churches are not.

**high church:** Originally an Anglican term, this describes churches that have a high view of the sacraments (for example, baptismal regeneration and Real Presence in the Eucharist). Also typically involving a hierarchical polity. It emphasizes learned ministry (pastors need to go to seminary and learn Greek and Hebrew), accepts religious art in churches (for example, stained glass, statues, or icons), and uses formal liturgy and ritual. (Contrast low church.)

**Holiness movement:** A Wesleyan perfectionist movement founded in the 1830s in America by Methodist teacher Phoebe Palmer and advocating a special act of consecration (which Palmer calls "laying all upon the altar") to acquire the "second blessing" of entire sanctification or Holiness.

**Holy Saturday:** The day between Good Friday, when Christ was crucified, and Easter Sunday, when he was raised from the dead. Accordingly, it is the day when the eternal Son of God descended among the dead, and for that reason is of particular importance in the theology of von Balthasar.

**homoousios:** Key term used in the Nicene Creed to describe the relation of the Son to the Father, translated into English in various ways: consubstantial (from *consubstantialis*, the standard Latin translation of the term), “of one substance,” “of one essence” or “of one being,” it means that the Son has the same divine essence as the Father.

**hyperousios:** A technical term meaning literally “above essence” or “above being” and sometimes translated “superessential” (since the Latin preposition *super* is the equivalent of the Greek preposition *hyper*, both of which mean “above”). PseudoDionysius used this term to express the transcendence of the Trinity, which is beyond all being and knowing.

**hypostasis:** A Greek term for “complete individual being” (a tree, a star, a dog, an angel, and a human being are all hypostases. A hand, an eye, and human nature or essence are not). This is a technical term for what is three in the Trinity and one in Christ, which Eastern Orthodox theologians use to designate what Western theology typically calls “persons.”

**hypostatic union:** A technical term for the unique unity between the two natures, divine and human, in the one person or hypostasis of Christ.

**icon:** The Greek word for “image” (for example in the biblical phrase “image and likeness of God”), used to describe the holy images of Christ, saints, and angels venerated by the Eastern Orthodox and also by Roman Catholics.

**iconodules:** Those who venerate icons, in contrast to iconoclasts (which means literally those who break icons). The word “iconodule” incorporates the key defense of icons made in the Second Council of Nicaea 787, which is that icons are not worshiped like an idol (with the worship called in Greek, *latreia*) but only venerated (with the veneration called in Greek, *dulia*).

**Immaculate Conception:** The Roman Catholic doctrine, defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin—thus her conception was immaculate (literally “spotless”) because it was free from any spot or stain of original sin.



**impassibility:** An attribute of God, according to Platonism and the church fathers, which means that he suffers no passions. That is, nothing is done to him that moves him or causes him to change, to suffer, or to respond emotionally. According to Western medieval theology, a similar freedom from suffering is one of the four qualities of glorified bodies in the resurrection, along with clarity, subtlety, and agility. (See passion.)

**imputation:** From a Latin word which translates a Greek word in the New Testament whose basic meaning is to credit something to a person's account, to reckon or "count as." It is a fundamental term in doctrines of forensic justification, according to which the righteousness that justifies believers in God's sight is not acquired by their efforts nor infused in them as created grace, but imputed to them when the merits of Christ are credited to their account.

**Incarnation:** Literally "en-flesh-ment" (from the Latin for "flesh," *carnem*), the doctrine concerns how Christ is both God and man. In Christian theology, the term "Incarnation" refers only to Christ, not to human embodiment in general or to theories of "re-incarnation," as in Hinduism.

**incomprehensibility:** From a Latin term meaning literally "ungraspability." In Nicene Christian theology, God is typically described as incomprehensible, which means beyond the understanding of any created mind.

**indulgence:** In Roman Catholicism, a formal promise by the church (in Luther's day, typically in a written document that could be purchased) that someone meeting certain criteria (for example, participating in a crusade, going on a specified pilgrimage, or purchasing a written indulgence) will receive a reduction in the amount of time one suffers in purgatory.

**infralapsarianism:** From the Latin phrase *infra lapsum* meaning "after the Fall." In the Calvinist theology of the decrees of God, this is the view that the eternal decree of double predestination logically follows the decrees to create the world and permit the Fall. (Contrast supralapsarianism.)

**infused:** From the Latin word for “poured in” (derived from Romans 5:5, “The love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us”). This term is used in Roman Catholic theology, in contrast to “acquired,” to describe graces, virtues, and activities of the soul that are not acquired by effort and practice but bestowed by God and poured into the soul by the grace of God. This Catholic concept of infused virtue is often contrasted with the Protestant doctrine of forensic justification, in which believers receive the righteousness of Christ by imputation, not infusion.

**intelligibility:** From the Latin term *intellectus*, which originally meant “understanding.” This concept originated in Platonist philosophy, which insisted on a fundamental contrast between sensible and intelligible things, that is, things perceptible to the senses and things perceptible to the intellect by a kind of intellectual vision or insight (as when we suddenly understand a difficult mathematical concept and say, “Aha! Now I see it!”). In neo-Platonism, intelligibility is also contrasted to the incomprehensibility of the highest divine principle.

**irresistible grace:** The Calvinist teaching of the Synod of Dort, that when God chooses to give grace to sinners, that choice is effective, in such a way that even sinners who do not want grace are made willing to accept it, by the power of grace itself. (See *praevenient* grace.)

**Jansenism:** A 17<sup>th</sup> century French religious movement within Roman Catholicism, centered in the PortRoyal convent near Paris and advocating the highly Augustinian theology of sin, grace, and predestination developed by Cornelius Jansen, which was condemned by Rome because of its affinities with Calvinism yet survived for generations until it was effectively suppressed by King Louis XIV.

**Jew:** This word comes into English from a Greek word used in the New Testament, *Ioudaios*, which literally means “Judean.” After the fall of the Northern Kingdom consisting of ten tribes of Israel in 722 B.C., this term, originally referring to people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah or Judea ruled by kings in the lineage of David, became the term for all the surviving people of Israel, that is, all 12 tribes descended from the 12 sons of Jacob or Israel (which is another name for Jacob). Hence Jesus, coming from the

northern area of Galilee, is in one sense a Jew (that is, an Israelite) but in another sense not, because he does not come from Judea, the region around Jerusalem. This is important for understanding why the Gospel of John often contrasts Jesus with “the Jews,” meaning the Judean establishment in Jerusalem.

**justification:** The doctrine about how God makes human beings just or righteous. (See righteousness, sanctification and *sola fide*.)

**Kerygma:** Greek for “proclamation,” based on the Greek word for “herald,” someone who proclaims official news, for example, of the king. The verb formed from this noun can be translated “proclaim,” but is usually translated “preach” when it appears in the New Testament. Biblical scholars often use this New Testament term to emphasize that early Christian preaching was understood to be the proclamation of the kingdom of God and Jesus, the Messiah, as its king.

**Keswick:** Named after annual meetings held in Keswick, England, beginning in 1875, it was a BritishAmerican theological movement influential to later Fundamentalists and evangelicals, incorporating themes from the Holiness movement in a nonperfectionist (that is, nonMethodist) theology, typically including such teachings as: the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit as an endowment of power for service, continually yielding to the influence of the Spirit so as to obtain ongoing victory over sin, and the motto “let go and let God.”

**Landmarkism:** A radical separatist and primitivist movement among Southern Baptists beginning in the 1850s, taking as its watchword a biblical admonition not to remove old landmarks of the faith. The Landmarkists rejected alien immersion, insisted on closed communion, rejected missionary societies, and promoted a successionist history of Baptist faith and practice.

**lex orandi, lex credendi:** Latin for “The law of praying [is the] law of believing,” the phrase is a label for a form of theological argument used, for example, by Augustine in his doctrine of grace, in which what we pray for informs us of what we should believe about the help God can give us.

**liberalism:** Not to be confused with political liberalism with which it is sometimes but not always in alliance with theology, liberalism is rooted in developments in German universities of the 19<sup>th</sup> century led initially by Friedrich Schleiermacher. It is characterized by criticism of ancient orthodox dogmatic formulas (such as “two natures” Christology) and by the attempt to find a new basis of Christian faith in a turn to inner experience.

**light of Tabor:** (See Tabor.)

**limited atonement:** Also called, more accurately, “particular redemption,” the most controversial point in the “fivepoint Calvinism” taught by the Synod of Dordt, according to which Christ died to redeem only those whom he actually does redeem, which does not include everybody.

**liturgy:** A form of worship, characteristic of the high churches, using an ancient and venerated written text (such as the Roman Rite in the Catholic church, the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom among the Eastern Orthodox, or the *Book of Common Prayer* in the Anglican Communion).

**logos:** A Greek word meaning, among other things, “word” and “reason.” *Logos* is a central term in trinitarian and Christological discussions because of the opening chapter of the Gospel of John, which identifies Christ as the “divine *Logos* made flesh.”

**low church:** Originally an Anglican term, this describes churches that have a low view of the sacraments (for example, teaching that baptism and the eucharist are not means of salvation) and typically also having a strong emphasis on conversion. Among nonAnglicans, this is often joined by a suspicion of liturgy and a rejection of hierarchy. (Contrast high church.)

**maranatha:** An Aramaic term meaning “O Lord, come,” which Paul used in 1 Cor. 16:22, it was probably a familiar piece of liturgy calling upon the exalted Lord Jesus in the Jewish Christian church. (Aramaic was the common spoken language of 1<sup>st</sup> century Israel.)

**Mariology:** Teachings concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus’s mother—an important branch of Roman Catholic theology.

**materialism:** From the word for “matter,” in ancient philosophy, this means the view that all things, including God and the soul, are made up of some kind of bodily or corporeal stuff—the material or matter out of which they are made. In ancient philosophy, matter consists of four elements: earth, water, air, and fire, and perhaps a fifth element in the heavens, called “ether” or “quintessence.”

**Mennonites:** Named after Menno Simons (1496–1561), who led Dutch Anabaptists in a resolutely pacifist direction after the failure of the violent Anabaptist revolt in the Dutch city of Münster, they are the most widespread group of Anabaptists today, of which the Amish are an offshoot.

**Messiah:** From a Hebrew term for “anointed one,” referring to the king of Judaea (since ancient Israelite kings were anointed with oil rather than crowned), translated into Greek as *Christos*, whence the term “Christ.” To call Jesus “Messiah” or “Christ” is to say he is the King of the Jews, the legitimate successor to the lineage of King David.

**Methodism:** Revival movement begun by John and Charles Wesley with others in 18<sup>th</sup> century England, characterized by Arminian theology and a strong emphasis on practical Holiness, including the expectation of entire sanctification or Christian perfection. (See perfectionism.)

**Molinism:** A theology of grace based on the writings of the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina, who argued that the effectiveness of divine grace depends on the will’s prior consent, which means that the decision about who is to be saved or not is ultimately up to the human will.

**Monarchy of the Father:** From a Greek word meaning “one principle” or “one source” (the Greek word *arche*, like its Latin translation *principio*, means source or beginning), it is the doctrine that the Father is the sole source of the being of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Both Eastern and Western churches affirm this doctrine, but in light of the doctrine of double procession they may have different understandings of what it means.

**Monophysitism:** From the Greek phrase for “one nature,” the teaching, rejected by the orthodox, that Christ incarnate has only one nature.

**Monothelitism:** From the Greek phrase for “one will”: the teaching, rejected by the orthodoxy, that Christ incarnate has only one will.

**Montanism:** A Christian movement, calling itself “the New Prophecy,” founded in Phrygia (in modern Turkey) in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century by Montanus, who designated himself the Paraclete, that is, the Holy Spirit. Its rejection by the Great Church as a heresy meant that prophecy was no longer part of the authority structure of the church as it had been in the New Testament.

**Moravians:** A Protestant group from Moravia (in what is now the Czech Republic) who, fleeing from persecution in the 1720s, settled on the lands of Count Zinzendorf and accepted him as their pastor, bishop, and theologian. Their missionary work was widespread and has resulted in churches in America, England, and elsewhere.

**mysticism:** Originally called “mystical theology,” a term taken from the treatise of that name by PseudoDionysius, referring to aspects of God that are hidden from human understanding because God is incomprehensible. “Mystical theology” became an important term in medieval devotional theology and eventually came to refer (for example, in the writings of Theresa of Avila) to the theology of states of prayer that involve a supraintellectual experience of God. Later, the term “mysticism” was taken over in 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century theories of religion and was used to describe paranormal states of religious experience that need not be specifically Christian.

**neoorthodoxy:** A trend in 20<sup>th</sup> century theology originating in the dialectical theology of the early Karl Barth and including such theologians as Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, and Emil Brunner. It rejects the 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal theology of consciousness in favor of a focus on how the divine-human encounter affects human existence (typically conceiving the latter in existentialist terms). The later Barth rejected this existentialist focus and thus broke with other NeoOrthodox theologians.

**neo-Thomism:** (See Thomism.)

**Nicene:** Having to do with the Council of Nicaea 325 or the trinitarian theology that stems from it. Nicene theology is the orthodox theology of the Trinity on which Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants agree. What is commonly called the “Nicene Creed” was actually formulated at the Council of Constantinople 381, incorporating key elements of the original creed promulgated by the Council of Nicaea, including the famous *homoousios* clause. (For a listing of these councils, see the timeline.)

**Nonconformist:** Originally a term for Puritan ministers who did not conform to the church practices and ceremonies mandated by the Act of Uniformity under the Elizabethan Settlement. It was later a label for all Protestants who were dissenters.

***oikonomia*:** (See economy.)

**ontology:** From a Greek term meaning “theory of being,” a branch of metaphysics or philosophy that is concerned with the nature of being. Hence, for example, Augustine’s teaching that all being is good can be labeled “ontological optimism.”

**original sin:** The doctrine, advocated most powerfully by Augustine, that every human being is born not only with a corrupt and sinful nature but guilty of Adam’s sin and deserving damnation.

**orthodox:** From a Greek term meaning both “right belief” and also “right worship.” When capitalized, it refers to Eastern Orthodoxy, the mainstream of the Christian tradition in the East, rooted in the Greek-speaking half of the ancient Roman Empire, developing in the Byzantine Empire, and later spreading to the Slavic peoples (thus including not only Greek Orthodox but Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox, etc.). When not capitalized, the term typically includes Catholics and Protestants as well as Orthodox. The opposite of “orthodox” is “heretical.”

***ousia*:** (See essence and *homoousios*.)

**Paraclete (Sometimes spelled “Paraklete”):** Greek for advocate, counselor, or comforter. Jesus used the term in the Gospel of John to refer to the Holy Spirit.

***parousia:*** Greek term meaning “presence” or “arrival,” which is used in the New Testament to refer especially to the presence of Christ at his Second Coming, when the exalted Christ returns to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

**passion:** In ancient thought, this means a form of passivity (since “passion” is related to passivity as “action” is related to activity) associated both with emotion (that is, being moved by passions) and suffering (for example, the “passion of Christ” means his suffering). All ancient writers assume that passion is at best a form of weakness, at worst a form of irresponsibility or vice. For it is better to act than to be acted on, to move than to be moved, to form than to be formed, and so on. Ancient moralism focused as intently on the problem of passion as modern moralism focuses on the problem of selfishness. (See impassibility.)

**Patripassionism:** From a Latin phrase, “the father suffers,” which claims the God the Father suffered. But orthodox maintains the inviolability of God by asserting that it is the incarnate word of God (the Son) who is crucified and suffers, not God the Father. (See Deipassionism and theopaschite formula.)

**patristic:** Having to do with the church fathers (from the Greek word *pater*, “father”).

**Pelagianism:** The view ascribed to Pelagius and rejected as heretical that believers are capable of overcoming sin and living meritorious lives without the inner help of grace.

**penance:** An old word for “repentance,” often used specifically to designate the sacrament of Penance or Confession, in which a penitent confesses sins to a priest and receives absolution.

**penitent:** A person engaged in repentance, especially by participating in the sacrament of Penance and confessing his or her sins.



**Pentecost:** From the Greek word for “fifty,” the name for the Jewish harvest festival or “feast of weeks,” held seven weeks and a day after the festival of Passover. (See Leviticus 23:15 ff.). Christian theology celebrates the birth of the church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, as narrated in the New Testament book of Acts, chapter 2. Christians now celebrate their feast of Pentecost fifty days after Easter.

**Pentecostalism:** Evangelical religious movement named after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and originating in the United States at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (especially at the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles beginning in 1906). Its distinctive teaching is that speaking in tongues is the necessary evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (See glossolalia.)

**perfectionism:** The doctrine of various Protestant groups, most notably the Methodists and the Holiness tradition derived from them, that the attainment of perfect or entire sanctification (Holiness) is not only possible but normative for Christians.

**perseverance:** In Western theology after Augustine, this is a technical term for the “gift of grace,” which causes those who have begun the life of faith to persevere in faith (and works of love) to the end of their lives. The Calvinist doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, taught at Dordt, is that all who truly have faith in Christ are given this gift (which implies that anyone who gives up the Christian faith never really had true saving faith to begin with). The crucial consequence is that if you know you have true faith, then you know you are saved for eternity. This Calvinist doctrine is sometimes known by labels such as “eternal security” or “once saved, always saved.”

**person:** A technical term for what there are three of in the Trinity (that is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each persons of the Trinity) and one in Christ (who is one person in two natures). This is a translation of the Latin term *persona* or the Greek term *prosopon*. (See hypostasis and hypostatic union.)

**perspicuity of scripture:** The Protestant doctrine that in matters necessary for salvation, the words of the Bible are clear enough that any devout and attentive believer can properly interpret them.

**Pietism:** A 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century reform movement, primarily among Lutherans in Germany, emphasizing the need for true Christianity, based on true faith, repentance, conversion, and rebirth, as opposed to the kind of scholastic theology that does not touch the heart. Methodism is often regarded, with reason, as an offshoot of Pietism.

**Pleroma:** A Greek term meaning “fullness,” and in Gnosticism, the divine realm of the *aeons*.

**polity:** A technical term for the various forms of church government. For example, episcopacy means the church is governed by bishops (that is, an episcopate); Presbyterianism means it is governed by synods of elders or presbyters; and congregationalism means that each congregation is self-governing.

**pope:** The Roman Catholic bishop of Rome, understood to be the successor of the apostle Peter, who was the first bishop of Rome and thus the first occupant of the Apostolic. (See *cathedra*.)

**postmillennialism:** The view of biblical prophecy, characteristic of early 19<sup>th</sup>-century American evangelicals, which holds that a golden age (the millennium mentioned in the book of Revelation, 20:4) will be brought about by the progress of Christian civilization and missions before the end of the world. (Contrast premillennialism.)

**postmodernism:** A term with many disputed meanings. In these lectures, it refers to the view that traditions are the inevitable context of thought and that modern thought, which regards tradition as irrational, cannot survive the recognition that modernity itself is a tradition. In Dr. Cary’s terminology, *left wing postmodernists*, such as Derrida and Foucault, draw skeptical or deconstructive conclusions from this recognition (for example, suggesting that claims of rationality are really disguised bids for power) while *right wing postmodernists*, such as Gadamer and Alasdair MacIntyre, draw the conclusion that tradition is the necessary context for learning, rationality, and wisdom.

prayer book: (See *Book of Common Prayer*.)

**predestination:** Originating with Augustine’s interpretations of New Testament usage of the verb “to predestine” (in Romans, Ephesians, and Acts), this doctrine is specifically about God’s eternal plan, choice, or decree to bestow the grace of salvation on some unworthy sinners rather than others. Since the doctrine of predestination is always part of the doctrine of grace, it should be distinguished from the more general doctrine of God’s sovereignty or providence over all events that happen, as well as from philosophical theories of determinism. (See election, double predestination, and reprobation.)

**prelate:** A high-ranking member of a hierarchical church, such as an abbot, an archbishop, or the pope. Both the pope and the (Anglican) archbishop of Canterbury are prelates. The Puritans rejected prelates.

**premillennialism:** The view of biblical prophecy characteristic of Dispensationalism, which teaches that the Second Coming of Christ is imminent and will occur before the millennium, in which the saints reign with Christ in a golden age (book of Revelation, 20:4). (Contrast postmillennialism.)

**Presbyterian:** (See polity and presbyters.)

**presbyters:** From the Greek word *presbyteroi*, usually translated “elders” when it occurs in the New Testament. Originally this term referred to the leadership of local churches, then to a group of leaders under one bishop (the monarchical episcopate). This group later came to be called “priests” (an English word derived from *presbyteroi*). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Presbyterians were the mainstream of English Puritanism, who aimed to revive the New Testament form of church government based on a council of elders or presbyters, whom the Presbyterians did not think of as priests. (See polity.)

**prevenient grace:** From the Latin word *praevenire*, meaning “to come before,” it is grace that comes before the human choice to accept grace in faith, as opposed to grace that comes as a result of such faith. Questions about exactly what role grace plays in a person’s initial conversion to faith are thus always questions about the role of prevenient grace. The key disagreement is between the Augustinian view prevenient grace causes us to have faith and the Arminian view prevenient grace is an offer or incitement

or preparation that leaves it ultimately up to us whether to believe or not. In the Calvinist version of the Augustinian view, prevenient grace is called “irresistible grace.” In the Thomistic version of the Augustinian view, it is called “efficacious in itself.”

**procession:** Technical term in trinitarian theology for the divine origination of the Holy Spirit, in contrast to the begetting of the Son, which is a different mode of divine origination. The Western doctrine of double procession teaches that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father “and the Son.” (See *filioque*.)

**Protestant:** Term now used for the Western churches that broke with Roman Catholicism beginning with the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation, including Lutherans, Reformed, and Anabaptists. The term does not refer to any kind of protest against the church, but to a formal protest lodged by Lutheran princes against an unfavorable decision made by the imperial Diet of Speyer in 1529.

**providence:** From a Latin verb meaning both “foresee” and “provide,” the doctrine concerning God’s benevolent sovereignty over the events of history.

**pure nature:** Technical term in modern Roman Catholic theology designating human nature as considered apart from the effect of the supernatural.

**purgatory:** In Roman Catholic doctrine, the realm of temporal punishment and purification after death for redeemed souls who are not yet perfect in holiness.

**Puritanism:** English religious movement beginning in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) and seeking to push the Church of England further in the direction of Reformed theology and practice throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Outgrowths of Puritanism include Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists. (See Vestiarian controversy.)

**Quietism:** Roman Catholic theological term for a form of mystical theology originating in 17<sup>th</sup> century Spain and influential in France and Italy, which focused on passive contemplation and letting God work in the soul, denying the importance of the active pursuit of virtue, holiness, salvation, and even the desire for beatitude.

**Real Presence:** The doctrine that Christ's body and blood are really present in the Eucharist, in such a way that they are literally eaten by those who partake of it (whether or not they believe it or partake worthily). Transubstantiation is the Roman Catholic version of this doctrine, according to which the substance of bread and wine are removed from the Eucharist and changed into the substance of Christ's body and blood. Whereas Lutherans teach that the bread and wine remain and the body and blood of Christ are present in them.

**Reformation:** A 16<sup>th</sup> century movement for church reform beginning with Luther in Germany and Zwingli in Switzerland, from which arose the Protestant churches.

**Reformed:** The form of Protestantism originating in Switzerland, predominant in Holland, and represented in the English speaking world by Puritans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and many Baptists, its most important founding figures are Zwingli and Calvin. It takes its name from the conviction that the church needs to be reformed according to the word of God. It is important to note that, despite the similarity of words, the Reformed do not represent the whole of the Reformation, which includes nonReformed movements such as the Lutherans and Anabaptists.

**regeneration:** From a Latin term meaning "born again," any theological doctrine describing an individual's passage from birth in Adam, which means a life subject to sin, to rebirth, and new life in Christ. Baptismal regeneration, for example, is the doctrine that one is born again through baptism—a doctrine shared by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, and Anglicans, but rejected by most other Protestants, who associate rebirth with the experience of conversion.

**reprobation:** The doctrine that God predestines some people for damnation. (See double predestination.)

**resurrection:** In Christianity, the doctrine that God will bring the dead to life and has done this already with Jesus. This is not to be confused with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, according to which the soul lives on after being separated from the body in death. Most Christian theologians combine the two doctrines but do not confuse them.

**Revivalism:** Religious practices focused on preaching that aims at bringing about the experience of conversion, characteristic of Wesleyan and Methodist churches beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well as certain Reformed circles in the United States, especially those indebted to Jonathan Edwards (of whom Charles Finney is representative).

**righteousness:** Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century this word was the standard English translation for the terms for “justice” in Latin *justitia* or Greek *dikaiosyne*. In theological usage, therefore, it is simply equivalent to the word “justice.” (It is important to be aware that the word “righteous” was never used theologically as an equivalent to “selfrighteous,” though that has become its primary usage in contemporary English.)

**sacrament:** From the Latin term *sacramentum*, which translates the Greek term *mysterion* or “mystery,” originally referring to any secret or hidden meaning. By the Middle Ages this term came to have a specialized meaning referring to seven sacred rites of the church (Baptism, Eucharist, Penance, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, Ordination, and Matrimony), which were authorized by dominical institution to serve as outward signs conferring the inner grace they signified and hence were called as “means of grace.” Protestants typically reduced the number of rituals to two (baptism and eucharist), while still practicing most of the others but not calling them sacraments. And they often rejected the notion that sacraments were a means of conferring grace. Many Protestant groups reject the term “sacrament” altogether and prefer to call baptism and Eucharist “ordinances.”

**sanctification:** From *sanctus*, the Latin word for “holy,” the process by which a person becomes holy. In Protestant theologies, this is contrasted with justification, which is typically treated as a once-in-a-lifetime event, an act of God, which takes place at conversion, in which God forgives people’s sins, imputes to them the merits of Christ, declares them righteous, and bestows salvation (hence later Protestants often equate justification with salvation), but does not make a real inward change in their hearts. Sanctification is the name for the process of real inward transformation that begins immediately at conversion and results in holy living. In the Holiness traditions stemming from Wesley, the term typically refers to the stage of Christian perfection or entire sanctification.

**sanctifying grace:** Standard English translation of the Roman Catholic theological term *gratia gratum faciens*, literally “grace that makes [a person] acceptable,” it is the supernatural but created form or habit that is infused into the soul so as to make it righteous before God and capable of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

**sanctus:** The Latin word for “holy,” the name of a prayer early in the eucharistic liturgy which begins, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.”

**satisfaction:** From a Latin verb meaning “to do enough” (the basic idea being to “make up for” some wrong or injustice you have done to someone else). In Anselm’s theory of atonement, the term refers to the payment of an infinite debt which sinners incur by their offense against the infinite majesty of God—a payment that no one is capable of making except God-made-man. This term is also a technical term in the sacrament of Penance, meaning what penitents must do after absolution to make up for their sins.

**Schleitheim Confession:** The most important doctrinal statement of the early Anabaptist movement, published in Switzerland in 1527.

**scholasticism:** University-based theology in the west from the Middle Ages to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Aquinas is a medieval scholastic theologian, in contrast to Anselm, who is a medieval monastic theologian (you find Aquinas at universities and Anselm in monasteries). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there also arose a Protestant form of scholasticism, against which Pietism was a reaction.

**Scopes “Monkey Trial”:** Trial of a biology teacher, John Scopes, in rural Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925 for defying a state law forbidding the teaching of Darwinism in public schools. With the help of skeptical journalist H. L. Mencken, Fundamentalists suffered a cultural disaster, which drove them from the north and east to the south and west.

**scriptures, holy:** Theological term for the Bible, used not just to indicate this particular set of writings but to stress their divine authority.

**see:** From Latin *sedes*, meaning “seat,” the location of a bishop’s authority (for example, the see of the bishop of Venice is Venice). The see of Rome, that is, the papacy, is called the Apostolic See because Rome’s first bishop, and thus the first pope, was the apostle Peter. (See *cathedra*.)

***semper reformanda*:** Latin for “always needing to be reformed,” a Protestant motto about the need for continual reformation of the church.

***Shepherd of Hermas*:** An early Christian book, written in Greek in Italy in the late 1<sup>st</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, read with appreciation by many in the Great Church, some of whom regarded it as part of the canon.

**simplicity:** A philosophical concept used in theology to describe God. To say God is simple is to say he has no parts and is not composed of many things.

***simul justus et peccator*:** Latin for “at the same time righteous and a sinner,” this term is a key doctrinal formulation of Luther, stemming from his conviction that even the good works of someone who is justified by faith in Christ are in themselves (that is, apart from Christ) mortal sins.

**Socinianism:** A Unitarian theology that arose in the radical Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and became widely influential in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, affecting both Deist and Enlightenment thinkers.

***sola fide*:** Latin for “by faith alone,” this term is a catchphrase for distinctively Protestant doctrines of justification after Luther, according to which people become righteous simply by believing the Gospel of Christ, quite apart from any good works.



***sola gratia***: Latin for “grace alone,” this term is a catchphrase for the characteristic Protestant insistence that believers are saved simply by God’s grace, without any contribution of their own merits.

***sola scriptura***: Latin for “scripture alone,” this term is a catchphrase for the Protestant conviction that no teaching is binding on the conscience as necessary for salvation except what is taught (explicitly or by clear implication) in scripture.

**soteriology**: From the Greek word for “salvation,” this technical term refers to the part of theology concerned with the nature of salvation.

**Stoics**: An ancient school of philosophy which taught that the life of wisdom and happiness consisted of living by reason without passions—a radical version of the most common form of moralism in the ancient world. The Stoics were also materialists, believing that both God and the soul were made of living fire.

**subordinationism**: This view of the Trinity was widespread before the Council of Nicaea, according to which the preexistent *Logos* or word of God (prior to the Incarnation) is a divine intermediary between God and the creation, an intelligible image of the incomprehensible God, but existing at a lower and more understandable level.

**subtlety**: In medieval theology, a quality of glorified human bodies after the resurrection, which means they can enter or pass through another body like fire or air. (See agility, clarity, and impassibility.)

**successionism**: The view of Baptist history advocated by Landmarkism, according to which the Baptist churches of today can trace their roots through an unbroken succession of Baptist churches going back to the Baptism of Jesus.

**superessential**: (See *hyperousios*.)

**supernatural:** In Roman Catholic theology, especially Thomism, the concept of grace as not only assisting, healing, and restoring human nature but also elevating it so as to make it capable of a happiness or beatitude beyond the natural capacity of any created being. In this Catholic context, the term has nothing to do with ghosts, demons, or miracles. When used in later Protestant contexts, it usually refers to miracles, understood as acts of divine intervention in nature that contravene natural law, such as the virgin birth of Jesus.

**Supernatural Existential:** Advocated by Roman Catholic theologian Karl Rahner, a concept of a supernatural, graced component of human existence meant to explain how all people can experience a divine call to supernatural happiness or beatitude, even though that call does not belong to pure human nature.

**supralapsarianism:** From the Latin phrase *supra lapsum* meaning “prior to the Fall.” In the Calvinist theology of the eternal decrees of God, this is the view that the decree of double predestination logically precedes and determines the decree to create the world and permit the Fall. (Contrast infralapsarianism.)

***Sursum Corda:*** Latin for “lift up your hearts,” it is the name of the opening prayer of the eucharistic liturgy, which includes these words.

**synod:** A regional meeting of clergy from more than one local church.

**Synoptic Gospels:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, so called because they tell the story of Jesus’s life in roughly the same order, so that making a synopsis covering all three is relatively easy. The Gospel of John tells the story differently, and is not one of the Synoptics.

**Tabor, light of (Sometimes spelled “Thabor”):** In Eastern Orthodox theology, the light of the glorious energies of God shining from the transfigured body of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, traditionally identified as Mount Tabor; this is the light of the beatific vision, as the Eastern Orthodox understand it.

**teleology:** From the Greek word *telos*, meaning “end” in the sense of goal, completion, or perfection. Teleology is a philosophical view of nature typical of ancient philosophy, according to which everything acts and moves in accordance with a goal inherent to its nature. For instance, human nature is inherently oriented toward the ultimate goal of happiness.

**temporal:** A technical theological term meaning the opposite of eternal, equivalent to “in time” as opposed to in eternity. Not to be confused with the ordinary, nontechnical term “temporary.”

**theologia:** Greek for “theology,” the Eastern Orthodox often use this term as a synonym for the doctrine of the Trinity. It is paired with the term *oikonomia*, which refers to the Incarnation; thus, *theologia* and *oikonomia* designate the two prime concerns of Christian doctrine. (See economy.)

**theopaschite formula:** The formula “one of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh,” an expanded version of which was accepted by the Second Council of Constantinople 553, that is, “our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified in the flesh is true God and the Lord of glory and one of the holy Trinity.” (See Deipassionism.)

**theotokos:** A Greek term meaning literally “Godbearer” (the translation preferred by Protestants) or more loosely translated, “Mother of God” (the traditional Roman Catholic term). This title was given to Mary by orthodox Christians not because she originated God—for of course she didn’t—but because the baby Jesus to whom she gave birth is the Word, which is God incarnate. Nestorius was condemned for denying that Mary was *theotokos*.

**Thomism:** Roman Catholic thought based on the work of medieval theologian and philosopher Thomas Aquinas, especially prominent in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when it is often called “neo-Thomism.”

**total depravity:** This term is a Calvinist label for a doctrine shared with Lutheranism, according to which every aspect of human life is corrupted by sin, including not just free will but also reason. Total depravity thus does not mean humans are pure evil (for like all Augustinians, Calvinists teach that there can be no such thing as pure evil, because everything that exists is

God's good creation), but that no part of human nature is free from the evil of sin and the corrupting effect it has on God's good creation. (See Dordt, Synod of.)

**tradition:** From a Latin verb meaning "to hand down," this term originally referred to the teaching of the apostles as handed down in the churches they founded. Later it came to be paired (and sometimes contrasted) with scripture, which contains the written record of apostolic teaching.

**transcendence:** From a Latin verb meaning "to go beyond," modern theologians use this term to describe God's being beyond the natural world.

**Transfiguration:** Name for the event narrated in the Synoptic Gospels in which Jesus is transfigured or transformed by a glorious light (in Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9), which the Eastern Orthodox tradition regards as the uncreated and beatifying light of the divine energies.

**transubstantiation:** Roman Catholic doctrine, developed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, that explains the eucharistic change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ as a change of substance but not of accidents, so that the substance of Christ's body and blood is present under the appearance of bread and wine.

**transverberation:** From a Latin term meaning "to pierce all the way through," this was a visionary experience Theresa of Avila had, in which an angel pierced her heart several times with a long golden spear tipped with fire, setting her heart aflame with a love of God both painful and sweet.

**Trent, Council of:** The council of Roman Catholic bishops meeting in the city of Trent (on the border of Austria and Italy) with interruptions during nearly two decades (1543–1547, 1551–1553, 1562–1563), that formulated the definitive Roman Catholic response to Protestantism, as well as initiated reforms in the Roman Catholic church itself.

**Tridentine:** Having to do with the Council of Trent (taken from the Latin form of the name of the city of Trent).

**Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The orthodox version of this doctrine is called Nicene theology.

**typology:** From the Greek word *typos* or *type*, often translated into Latin as *figura* and hence into English as “figure,” a form of Christian reading in which persons, things, and events in the Old Testament are taken as prefiguring Christ, Christians, the Church, or Christian life.

**uncreated:** This technical theological term designates what is in the strictest sense divine, by contrasting it with all the things God has created. (The meaning of the term is thus parallel to “not made” rather than “unmade.” The word “uncreated” does not imply that God ever “unmakes” anything.) The underlying idea is that everything that exists is either created by God or is God the creator, who is uncreated. Hence it is an important question whether grace (or one kind of it) is created or uncreated.

**unitarianism:** This is a label for Christian theologies that deny the doctrine of the Trinity (unitarianism being opposed to trinitarianism), including an American church denomination espousing unitarian theology, now called the Unitarian Universalist church.

**Vatican, First Council:** A council of Roman Catholic bishops in 1869–1870, presided over by Pope Pius IX, known for its definition of the doctrine of papal infallibility and also for the teaching that the existence of God can be known by natural reason.

**Vatican, Second Council:** A council of Roman Catholic bishops in 1962–1965, presided over by Pope John XXIII and then Pope Paul VI which, in a move called in Italian *aggiornamento* or “updating,” envisioned a new and more positive relation between the church and the modern world, other religions, and other Christian groups, including a powerful emphasis on *ecumenism*.

**Vestiarian controversy:** Debate in the Church of England beginning in the 1560s and marking the emergence of Puritan theology, which objected to the continued use of Catholic vestments, such as cope, surplice, and stole.

***via media***: Latin for “middle way,” often used to describe Anglican theology and practice as a middle way between Catholicism and Protestantism.

***via negative***: Latin for “way of negation.” (See apophatic.)

**Vincentian Canon**: The widely accepted principle in the Great Church, articulated by Vincent of Lerins in 433, that the criterion of orthodox doctrine is its catholicity, in the sense that it is what is taught “everywhere, always, and by all” (*ubique, semper, et ab omnibus*).

**Westminster Confession**: A Reformed confession of faith composed by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, a group of Puritan theologians called together by Parliament and meeting from 1643–1647. It is frequently used as a doctrinal standard by Presbyterian churches.

**Words of Institution**: The words of Jesus, “This is my body [etc.]” and “This is my blood [etc.],” repeated as part of the liturgy of the Eucharist.

***xenolalia***: Greek phrase meaning “foreign speaking,” which means speaking in a foreign language that the speaker has never learned or studied, a phenomenon which Pentecostals call “missionary tongues” because it is highly useful in missionary preaching; unlike glossolalia, the evidence that this actually occurred is not compelling.

## Biographical Notes

Note: Ancient and medieval figures, as well as popes, are typically listed by first name. For ancient theologians, where exact dates of birth and death are often unknown, “c.” (Latin for *circa*) means “approximately” and “fl.” (for “flourished”) refers to the period at which time this person was known to be active.

**Amyraldus:** (See Amyraut.)

**Amyraut, Moses** (1596–1664): Also known by a Latinized version of his name, Amyraldus, was a French Protestant (a Huguenot) who advocated a modified form of Calvinism which came to be known as Amyraldianism, hypothetical universalism, or fourpoint Calvinism, because it accepted all the teachings of the Synod of Dordt except limited atonement.

**Anselm** (c. 1033–1109): Monk, then abbot of Bec in Normandy, then archbishop of Canterbury (1093–1109); the first great medieval theologian of the West who is famous for his account of how Christ’s death made satisfaction for human sin in the treatise *Why God Became Man*.

**Aquinas, Thomas** (c. 1225–1274): Dominican friar, teacher at the University of Paris, central figure of medieval scholasticism, and the most authoritative theologian of the Roman Catholic tradition; known for his use of Aristotelian philosophy and his conception of supernatural grace.

**Aristotle** (384–322 B.C.): Greek philosopher, student of Plato, founder of the sciences of logic, physics, and biology, whose writings were a major conceptual resource for medieval scholastic theologians, especially Aquinas.

**Arius** (c. 256–336): Alexandrian presbyter whose teaching on the Trinity was condemned at the Council of Nicaea 325.

**Arminius, Jacobus** (c. 1560–1609): Dutch pastor and originator of the form of Protestant theology rejected by the Calvinists at the Synod of Dordt and now called “Arminianism.”

**Arndt, Johann** (1555–1621): German Lutheran pastor and author of *True Christianity* (1606–1609), the most important precursor to the German Pietist movement.

**Athanasius** (c. 293–373): Bishop of Alexandria and early proponent of the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity.

**Augustine** (354–430): Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, the most influential theologian of the West, known especially for his doctrine of grace, including related doctrines of original sin and predestination.

**Baius, Michael** (1513–1589): Also called Michael du Bay, professor at the University of Louvain. The Vatican in 1567 condemned this Catholic theologian for his denial of the supernatural and radical doctrine of the corruption of human nature. Baius submitted to the condemnation and later became chancellor of the University.

**Balthasar, Hans Urs von** (1905–1988): Swiss priest and Roman Catholic theologian, friend of Henri de Lubac, Karl Barth, and Adrienne von Speyr, is known for his emphasis on beauty as the theme of theology. Balthasar proposed a controversial new theology of Holy Saturday, which is connected with a hope for universal salvation.

**Barth, Karl** (1886–1968): Swiss Reformed pastor and professor, founding figure of NeoOrthodoxy and probably the most influential Protestant theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was known for a Christocentric theology highly critical of Protestant liberalism.

**Basil of Caesarea** (c. 330–379): Older brother of Gregory of Nyssa and leader of the Cappadocian Fathers, who advocated a reformulation of Nicene theology that prevailed at the Council of Constantinople 381.



**Baxter, Richard** (1615–1691): English Puritan, advocate of Amyraldianism or “fourpoint Calvinism.”

**Benedict XVI** (1927–): Born Joseph Ratzinger, German priest and theology professor, archbishop of Munich (1977–1982), cardinal (1977–2005), and pope beginning in 2005.

**Brunner, Emil** (1889–1966): Swiss Reformed pastor and theologian, advocate of a neoOrthodox theology of divinehuman encounter that requires a “point of contact” between God and human nature, a point famously and fiercely rejected by Karl Barth.

**Bultmann, Rudolf** (1884–1976): German New Testament scholar, neo-Orthodox theologian, advocate of “demythologizing” the language of the New Testament and interpreting it using Existentialist concepts.

**Calvin, John** (1509–1564): French Protestant theologian who lived most of his adult life in Geneva. He was the most influential figure in Reformed theology and author of the *Institutes*, the most important systematic theology text of Protestantism.

**Cyril of Alexandria** (c. 378–444): Nestorius opponent, Bishop of Alexandria, dominant figure at the Council of Ephesus 431, known for his Christology of hypostatic union, which emphasizes the unity of the person of Christ, and his defense of the title *theotokos* (Mother of God) for the Virgin Mary.

**Dante Alighieri** (1265–1321): Italian poet and author of the *Divine Comedy*, an epic poem in which Dante portrays himself journeying through hell, purgatory, and heaven. He’s an important source for the Christian imagination of the afterlife.

**Darby, John Nelson** (1800–1882): AngloIrish theologian, leader of the Plymouth Brethren, and founder of Dispensationalist theology.

**Dionysius** (fl. c. 500): Pseudonymous Christian neo-Platonist theologian, in the west called Saint Denys (or Denis), and by modern scholars labeled PseudoDionysius because his identification with Dionysius the Areopagite, mentioned in Acts 17:34, is not credible. An author of an extremely influential little treatise on the incomprehensibility of God called *Mystical Theology*, as well as a treatise about concepts used to describe God called *On the Divine Names*, and a treatise on the nine orders of angels called *Celestial Hierarchy*.

**Eckhart, Meister** (c. 1260–c. 1327): Dominican priest and mystical theologian, the most prominent figure in German mysticism, whose teachings were under investigation for heresy at the time of his death.

**Edwards, Jonathan** (1703–1758): Puritan minister, Calvinist theologian, the first American theorist of revival, and leader of the Great Awakening in New England.

**Fénelon, Francois** (1651–1715): Archbishop of Cambrai in France, known for teachings about “pure love,” which Rome condemned as “semiQuietism” in 1699.

**Finney, Charles Grandison** (1792–1875): Presbyterian minister, theological heir of Jonathan Edwards, and the most prominent American *Revivalist* in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Fosdick, Harry Emerson** (1878–1969): American Baptist minister, leading spokesman for theological liberalism, noted especially for his 1922 sermon, “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?”

**Franck, Sebastian** (c. 1499–c. 1542): Leading spiritualist theologian of the radical Reformation.

**Francke, August Hermann** (1663–1727): German Lutheran pastor and theology professor at the University of Halle, protégé of Philipp Jakob Spener, organizer and proponent of Pietism.

**Gregory Naziansen** (c. 330–c. 390): Sometimes known as Gregory of Naziansen, one of the Cappadocian Fathers. Among the Eastern Orthodox he is called “Saint Gregory the Theologian” because of the importance of his *Theological Orations* in formulating the orthodox trinitarian theology that prevailed after the Council of Constantinople 381.

**Gregory of Nyssa** (c. 335–c. 394): One of the Cappadocian fathers, brother of Basil of Caesarea, and author of important works on the Trinity, including a brief but influential treatise explaining why the orthodox do not say there are three Gods.

**Guyon, Madame Jeanne** (1648–1717): Mystic, writer, and spiritual director, a major inspiration for the “semiQuietist” theology of Fénelon and influential for a time at the court of Louis XIV. Her writings were rejected by the French church but admired by Wesley and later evangelicals.

**Heidegger, Martin** (1889–1976): German philosopher whose early work, *Being and Time* (1927), which owed a great deal to Kierkegaard’s analysis of human existence, was one of the most important sources of existentialism and thus highly influential on 20<sup>th</sup> century theology.

**Hooker, Richard** (c. 1554–1600): Anglican theologian, author of the multi-volume treatise *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, which defended the Elizabethan settlement from Puritan criticisms.

**Hopkins, Samuel** (1721–1803): New England Puritan pastor and theologian; student and rigorous advocate of Jonathan Edwards’s theology.

**Irenaeus** (c. 120–200): Bishop of Lyon, the most important Christian theologian of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century; author of a large work, *Against Heresies*.

**Jansen, Cornelius** (1585–1638): Catholic bishop of Ypres in Belgium, and author of the posthumously published *Augustinus* (1640), which argued for a doctrine of grace that Jansen believed was truly Augustinian but which was rejected by Rome as too close to Calvinism.

**John XXIII** (1881–1963): Born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, Italian priest, archbishop of Venice (1953–1958), then pope (1958–1963), who summoned the Second Vatican Council with the aim of *aggiornamento*, bringing the church up to date.

**John of the Cross** (1542–1591): Spanish monk, mystical theologian, Roman Catholic saint, and friend of Theresa of Avila; known for his concept of the dark night of the soul.

**John Paul II** (1920–2005): Born Karol Wojtyła, Polish priest, philosophy professor, archbishop of Krakow (1963–1978) then pope (1978–2005) in the secondlongest pontificate in history, important theologically for his theology of the body, his defense of longstanding Catholic doctrines and practices (such as not ordaining women to the priesthood) and his advocacy of a philosophically-informed Christian humanism.

**Justin Martyr** (c.100–c. 165): Born in Palestine early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Justin was educated as a philosopher and converted to Christianity, retaining many of his Platonist convictions. He wrote an important *Apology* (meaning a defense of Christianity against the pagans) and the *Dialogue with Trypho*, trying to convince a Jew of the truth of Christianity.

**Kant, Immanuel** (1724–1804): German philosopher and founder of the idealist tradition of German philosophy, in which the structure of consciousness gives structure to the world.

**Kierkegaard, Søren** (1813–1855): Danish philosopher and theologian, who adapts Hegel’s dialectic to describe the role of anxiety, guilt, and despair in an individual human existence facing the task of becoming Christian. His focus on human existence as a task makes him a founder of Existentialism.

**Lindbeck, George** (1923– ): American Lutheran theologian whose influential work, *The Nature of Doctrine* (1984), positioned him at the forefront of postliberal theology. He was the Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology at Yale University until his retirement in 1993, and is widely respected for his commitment to ecumenical dialogue.

**Lubac, Henri de** (1896–1991): French Jesuit theologian, patristic scholar, and leading critic of neo-Thomism. His views led to the church silencing him in the 1940s, though he was in effect vindicated after the Second Vatican Council, when he was made cardinal.

**Luther, Martin** (1483–1546): German theologian, pastor, professor at the University of Wittenberg, ex-monk, and founding figure of Protestantism. He was known for his doctrine of justification by faith alone and his insistence on distinguishing between Law and Gospel.

**Machen, J. Gresham** (1881–1937): Presbyterian minister, New Testament scholar and advocate for the Fundamentalist side of the Fundamentalist-modernist controversy, most notably in his book *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923).

**Marcion** (fl. early 2<sup>nd</sup> century): Early Christian opponent of orthodoxy, known for his sharp distinction between the good God and the God of the Jews.

**Maximus the Confessor** (c. 580–662): Early Byzantine monk and theologian, advocate of the orthodox view that Christ has two wills, divine and human.

**Melanchthon, Philipp** (1497–1560): German theologian, reformer, and professor at the University of Wittenberg, Martin Luther’s colleague and best friend, and principal author of The Augsburg Confession (1530), the most important Lutheran confessional document.

**Mencken, H. L.** (1880–1956): Controversial American journalist and critic renowned for his biting critiques of provincialism and prudery in American society. His scathing portrayal of fundamentalists during the Scopes “Monkey Trial” generated a cultural stereotype that persists to this day.

**Molina, Luis de** (1535–1600): Spanish Jesuit whose theology of free will was opposed by the Dominican Thomists represented in the *Congregatio de Auxiliis* debates.

**Montanus** (fl. 2<sup>nd</sup> century): Founder of a “New Prophecy” in Phrygia (in modern Turkey), which advocated stricter moral discipline—for example, no remarriage of widows or widowers and the veiling of unmarried women—on the basis of statements alleged to be made by the Holy Spirit through himself and several followers.

**Moody, Dwight L.** (1837–1899): The most prominent American *Revivalist* of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, influencing and influenced by the Keswick movement.

**Mullins, E. Y.** (1860–1928): Southern Baptist pastor, professor, theologian, denominational leader, and advocate of “soul competency.”

**Müntzer, Thomas** (c. 1490–1525): A pastor and Luther’s former student who became a leader in the Peasant Revolt of 1525, claiming authority from the Spirit to preach the violent overthrow of the wicked in the end times.

**Nestorius** (fl. early 5<sup>th</sup> century): Archbishop of Constantinople who denied that Mary was *theotokos* or Mother of God. His Christology was accused of splitting Christ into “two sons” and was condemned at the ecumenical Council of Ephesus 431.

**Origen** (c. 185–254): Alexandrian theologian famous for his commentaries and homilies on the scriptures, which established a long-lasting tradition of Christian allegorical exegesis. Long after his death, his speculations about the preexistence and the Fall were a cause of intense controversy and were officially rejected by the church.

**Osiander, Andreas** (1498–1552): Lutheran pastor, professor, and theologian, in whose doctrine of justification believers are united to the essential righteousness of God. The forensic doctrine of justification, developed as both Reformed and Lutheran, rejected Osiander’s doctrine.

**Owen, John** (1616–1683): English Puritan, classic advocate of the high Calvinism represented by the Synod of Dordt and the Westminster Confession, especially known for his defense of the doctrine of limited atonement or “particular redemption,” as he called it.

**Paine, Thomas** (1737–1809): American political writer, author of *Common Sense* and *The Rights of Man*, but also author of the most famous work of American deism, *The Age of Reason*.

**Palamas, Gregory** (1296–1359): Byzantine theologian, known for his articulation of characteristic Eastern Orthodox doctrines, especially the distinction between the divine essence and divine energies, the latter of which include the deifying light of the Transfiguration of Christ.

**Palmer, Phoebe** (1807–1874): American Methodist and Bible teacher, whose “shorter way” to the blessing of entire sanctification, “laying all on the altar,” made her the founding figure in the Holiness movement.

**Paul** (c. 4 B.C.–c. A.D. 64): Apostle and early Christian missionary, whose letters are the earliest documents contained in the New Testament and thus the first extant writings in Christian theology.

**Pelagius** (fl. 410–420): British monk, spiritual advisor, and theologian whose teaching gave rise to Pelagianism, the view against which Augustine’s doctrine of grace was developed.

**Philo of Alexandria** (c. 20 B.C.–A.D. 50): Jewish philosopher and exegete who used an allegorical method to interpret the scriptures that was influential on ancient Christian writers, especially in Alexandria.

**Pius IX** (1792–1878): Also known by the Italian form of his name, “Pio Nono,” pope from 1846–1878, the longest reigning pope in history, who defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, promulgated the Syllabus of Errors in 1864, and presided over the First Vatican Council, which defined the doctrine of papal infallibility in 1870.

**Plato** (c. 427 B.C.–c. 348 B.C.): Greek philosopher, Socrates’s student, Aristotle’s teacher, and founder of the only rigorously nonmaterialist philosophical tradition in the West and, therefore, a major philosophical resource for Christian theology.

**Plotinus** (c. A.D. 205–270): Pagan philosopher and founder of neo-Platonism, one of the major sources of Christian Platonism (for example, Augustine and PseudoDionysius).

**PseudoDionysius**: (See Dionysius.)

**Rahner, Karl** (1904–1984): German Jesuit theologian, known especially for his concept of the “supernatural existential,” a major theological influence at the Second Vatican Council and subsequently in liberal Catholic theology.

**Sales, Francis de** (1567–1622): Roman Catholic bishop, French author of the highly influential devotional writings, *Introduction to the Devout Life* and *Treatise on the Love of God*.

**Schleiermacher, Friedrich** (1768–1834): German theologian and philosopher, minister in the Reformed church, professor at the University of Berlin (1811–1834), and founding figure of Protestant liberalism.

**Scofield, C. I.** (1843–1921): Minister, Bible teacher, Dispensationalist theologian, and editor of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, whose 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (1917) is the most influential book in the Dispensationalist movement.

**Servetus, Michael** (c. 1511–1553): Antitrinitarian theologian, arrested and executed in Geneva on evidence Calvin presented.

**Simons, Menno** (1496–1561): A former Catholic priest in Holland who became a leader in the Dutch and North German Anabaptist communities, which were later called “Mennonites” because of him.

**Spener, Philipp Jakob** (1635–1705): German Lutheran pastor who became one of the founders of Pietism when, in 1675, he published *Pia Desideria* (“Pious Desires”), calling for reform of the Lutheran church.

**Speyr, Adrienne von** (1902–1967): Swiss physician and Roman Catholic theologian whose visionary experiences were a major inspiration for the theology of von Balthasar.



**Stoddard, Solomon** (1643–1729): Puritan minister in Northampton, Massachusetts (and grandfather of Jonathan Edwards), who allowed unregenerate church members under the Halfway Covenant to take communion.

**Teresa of Avila** (1515–1582): Also known as Saint Teresa of Jesus; Spanish nun and mystical theologian known for her descriptions of the various levels of mystical experience, including the Prayer of Quiet and Spiritual Marriage.

**Tertullian** (c. 160–225): North African priest and theologian, the first major Latin Christian author. Despite the large number of his writings that have survived, his influence was limited because at the end of his life he joined the Montanist heresy.

**Tillich, Paul** (1886–1965): German Lutheran minister, neoOrthodox theologian, and Existentialist philosopher, who had an influential teaching career in the United States beginning in 1933.

**Valentinus** (c. 100–c. 175): Author of an influential and philosophically sophisticated version of Gnosticism. He was active in Rome in the 140s, and even hoped to become bishop of Rome.

**Voltaire** (1694–1778): Pen name of FrançoisMarie Arouet, a French Enlightenment writer, satirist, and critic of Christianity.

**Wayland, Francis** (1796–1865): Baptist minister, president of Brown University (1827–1855), and advocate of congregational autonomy and the right of individual judgment in religion.

**Wesley, John** (1703–1791): Anglican priest, revival preacher and organizer, and together with his brother Charles, a founding figure of Methodism, whose theology combines Arminianism and Pietism and is known for a strong emphasis on sanctification, including the expectation that believers will seek and sometimes attain Christian perfection.

**Zinzendorf, Count Nikolaus Ludwig von** (1700–1760): Lutheran minister, Pietist theologian, godson of Philipp Jakob Spener, and leader of the Moravian religious community based in Herrnhut, Germany that was known for “heart Christianity,” which emphasizes the wounds of the Savior.

**Zwingli, Ulrich** (or Huldrych) (1484–1531): Swiss pastor and theologian based in Zurich, a founding figure of the Reformed Protestant tradition, most famous for his low view of the Eucharist.

## Bibliography

### General

*Ante-Nicene Fathers*. 10 vols. A series of 19<sup>th</sup>-century translations, reprinted by various publishers (most recently Eerdmans and Hendrickson) containing the most extensive English collection of writings by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, and others. (See *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* series below.)

The Bible, English Standard Version. Wheaton, IL: Good News Publishers, 2001. I recommend this translation over any other English version of the past century. It avoids paraphrase and translates “word for word,” which gives readers a better grasp of the verbal echoes that are essential to the artistry of the original. Quotations of the Bible in these lectures are usually taken from this version, although often modified to bring them even closer to the original.

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Livingston, James C. *Modern Christian Thought*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006. Everything you wanted to know about 19<sup>th</sup> century European theology with some of the 18<sup>th</sup> century background.

Marthaler, Berard L., ed. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Detroit: Gale, 2003. Indispensable reference source for all things Catholic, including details of doctrinal controversies about such things as Jansenism, Molinism, etc.

*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Together with the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, its companion series (see above), this is still the most complete collection of English writings by the church fathers, containing 19<sup>th</sup>-century translations. It is broken into two series, the first consisting solely of writings by Augustine and Chrysostom (14 vols.) and the second covering everybody else (14 vols.). For more recent translations with up-to-date scholarly introductions and notes, look for individual volumes in the *Ancient Christian Writers* series, which unlike these two series does not come as a set. For Augustine's writings, look for publications by New City Press, which is in the process of publishing the first complete edition of his works in English (look for Hill's translations; avoid Boulding's translations).

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*Dogma 1300–1700*, and the history of modern theology (*Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture since 1700*).

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### **More Specialized**

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———. *Summa Theologica*. 5 vols. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981. A complete edition of the greatest masterwork of medieval thought, for those who wish to pursue in-depth study of Roman Catholic theology.

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Schmid, Heinrich. *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (1899). Translated by C. Hay and H. Jacobs. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961 (reprint). The indispensable guide to Lutheran orthodoxy or scholasticism, the shape of Lutheran theology in the two centuries after Luther. (For Reformed scholasticism in the same period, see Heppes.)

Scofield, C. I., ed. *The Scofield Reference Bible*. Rev. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1917. This edition of the King James Version of the Bible was first published in 1909 with Scofield's notes presenting in great detail his Dispensationalist reading of the text. The 1917 edition, which is Scofield's own revision (mainly an expansion) of his notes, became the single most influential book for Dispensationalist theology. Those interested in the history of Dispensationalism should be aware that recent revised editions of the Scofield Bible are by later editors who tone down some of Scofield's more controversial views. The notes from the 1917 edition can now be found online at <http://www.studylight.org/com/srn>.

Spong, John Shelby. *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998. A introduction to what the church's teaching might look like without theism, that is, without belief in a creator-God existing independent of the world.

Stead, Christopher. *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Knowledgeable and scholarly study of how the church fathers used philosophy, together with a helpful introduction to the ancient philosophy they used.

Sweeney, Douglas A. and Allen C. Guelzo. *The New Haven Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. A selection of writings from Jonathan Edwards and his followers, including Charles Finney. The best single volume for understanding how New England *Revivalism* developed from Edwards's Calvinism to Finney's near-Pelagianism.

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Voltaire. *Philosophical Dictionary*. Translated by T. Besterman. New York: Penguin, 1984. Not really a dictionary or very philosophical, this is actually a collection of short essays, written in Voltaire's inimitably vigorous satirical style, providing a vivid introduction to the later Deists' critique of revealed religion and especially of the Bible.

Watt, Jan van der. *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2008. A brief introduction both to the theology of the Gospel and Letters of John and to recent scholarship on them.

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Williams, Daniel H. *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. How Protestantism might benefit from taking the Christian tradition more seriously, as suggested in Lecture Thirty-Two.

Williams, George Huntston. *The Radical Reformation*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc., 1992. A big, informative book, including not only the best history of the Anabaptist movement available but also a lucid account of the social unrest of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Europe.

Wills, Garry. *Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit*. New York: Doubleday, 2000. A progressive American Catholic's diagnosis of the ills of his church by pointing to its inability to admit past errors.

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———. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008. In a popular summary of the massive scholarship of his *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), Wright explains the difference between New Testament eschatology and the notion of immortal souls going to heaven.

———. *What Saint Paul Really Said*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. A brief and accessible presentation of the theology of Paul, in line with the "New Perspective" inaugurated by E. P. Sanders (above).