Philosophy and Religion in the West
Part I
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Prof. Cary would like to express his gratitude to his colleagues at Villanova for years of stimulating conversations about the history of Christian thought, and to his colleagues at Eastern (especially Prof. Raymond Van Leeuwen) for instructive discussions about the relation between Biblical and philosophical traditions of wisdom.

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Part I

Philosophy and Religion in the West

Scope:

This course of lectures is an historical examination of the interaction between philosophical traditions and religious traditions in the West. We begin with the roots of the philosophical tradition in ancient Greece, examining how Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus dealt with issues concerning God, the soul, and the nature of the cosmos (Lectures One through Five). The key concepts which this tradition contributed to Western religion are the Socratic practice of critical inquiry and the Platonist theory of intelligibility: the notion that the ultimate truth about which we inquire consists in certain timeless Forms or essences which our souls perceive with the "mind's eye." From this notion come the philosophical concepts of the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, the Fall and "going to heaven" as the soul's return to its native place.

Next we turn to the two great Western religious traditions, Judaism and Christianity, which are interpreted as traditions vested in particular historical communities, their practices of worship, their sacred texts, and their allegiance to specific "places" where human beings meet God. We look at the scriptures of Israel and their rabbinic interpretation in Judaism, as well as the New Testament and its interpretation by the Church Fathers, who were decisive for the formation of the Christian tradition (Lectures Six through Ten).

The interaction between these two traditions and the Platonist philosophical tradition begins even before the New Testament was written, and continues through the works of medieval philosophers, both Jewish and Christian. These philosophers combined Platonist metaphysics and Biblical religion so as to formulate the intellectual system that has been called "classical theism"—a system which was taken for granted by most religious thinkers, including mystics, up through the time of the Reformation (Lectures Eleven through Sixteen).

Modernity (Lectures Seventeen through Twenty-Six) is rooted in a crisis of religious authority, which means that some philosophers became critics of religion (Hume, Marx, Nietzsche) but others tried to set it on new philosophical foundations (Locke, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel)—in the process of which they sought a deeper conception of the human self and its relation to the divine (Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard).

Many 20th-century thinkers have sought to re-conceive the synthesis between philosophy and religion that undergirded classical theism, questioning especially the Platonist metaphysics which led classical theists to suppose God was timeless and impassable (Lectures Twenty-Seven through Twenty-Nine). In recent years, the meaning and rationality of religion have been rethought in ways that make them less dependent on philosophical theories, yet leave an essential place within religion for the practice of critical inquiry (Lectures Thirty through Thirty-Two).

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of these lectures, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the historical interaction between philosophical traditions (such Platonism) and religious traditions (such Judaism and Christianity).
2. Describe the philosophical origin of certain key religious concepts, such as the immortality of the soul, the Fall, and "going to heaven."
3. Explain the attractiveness of ancient philosophy for Judaism and Christianity.
4. Summarize the synthesis of philosophy and religion that characterized the "classical theism" of the medieval period.
5. Describe the significance of modernity for the history of Western religion.
6. Discuss the most prominent philosophical criticisms of religion.
7. Describe the classic proofs that have been attempted of the existence of God.
8. Explain why many religious thinkers of the 20th century are suspicious of the alliances between philosophy and religion
9. Discuss the relation of critical rationality and religious belief.

Lecture One
Introduction—Philosophy and Religion as Traditions

Scope: Philosophical and religious ideas arise within particular historical traditions, such as Platonism, Judaism, and Christianity. Religious traditions are vested in particular communities, their practices of worship and their sacred texts. Philosophical traditions are rooted in practices of critical inquiry which can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, and especially to the life and work of Socrates. These two kinds of traditions interact, because the philosophical traditions have always been interested in religious issues (e.g. about God and the soul) and the great Western religions have a long history of using philosophical concepts and adopting practices of critical inquiry that originated in the philosophical traditions.

Outline

I. Approach: A History of Interacting Traditions

    A. Religions as Traditions
        1. Religions are human views of what is ultimately real and what ultimately matters.
        2. Religions are historical phenomena—traditions vested in practicing communities.
        3. Religious traditions face inherent questions to which they can give rational answers, and thus they are capable of being self-critical.
        4. Religions traditions interact with other traditions, both religious and philosophical.

    B. Western Philosophy as a Tradition with Religious Dimensions
        1. Philosophies too are historical phenomena consisting of traditions.
        2. Philosophical traditions are traditions of critical inquiry.
        3. Philosophers often inquire into issues about ultimate reality (religious issues, by our definition of "religion").
        4. Philosophers may also inquire into issues raised by religious traditions—thus bringing about an interaction between a philosophical and a religious tradition.

    C. The focus of these lectures is on:
        1. Western religious traditions—Judaism and Christianity
        2. Philosophical issues that are also religious issues
        3. How religious traditions and philosophical traditions *interact*
        4. Specifically philosophical elements in religious traditions.

II. Topics of Inquiry: God, World, and Humanity

    A. Two Types of Philosophical Questions
        1. Metaphysical—what is the ultimate nature of reality? What is the nature of being? Of the soul?
        2. Epistemological—how do we know?

    B. A Metaphysical Question: What Is the Nature of God?
        1. A Greek philosophical answer: the supreme being is an unchanging First Principle, Ultimate Truth, etc.
        2. A Jewish and Christian answer: God is someone who speaks and acts on behalf of his people.
        3. Interaction: Christian and Jewish theologians conceiving God as Supreme Being face problems about how a "person" can be an unchanging First Principle.

    C. Another Metaphysical Question: What Is the Nature of Ourselves?
        1. Ancient Hebrew used a variety of overlapping terms (e.g. "heart," "soul," "spirit," and "bowels") to describe the nature of human beings.
        2. Beginning with Plato, the Western philosophical tradition tended to divide the human being into two: soul and body (a view called "dualism").
        3. The Christian tradition adopted this soul/body dualism and made it its own.
        4. The Jewish tradition (as was typical of its relations with Western philosophy) was never so unambiguously committed to this philosophical dualism.

    D. A Third Metaphysical Question: What Is the Structure of the World?

1. Most attempts to prove God's existence argue from the structure and order of the world to the existence of a mind that designed it or set it in motion.
2. Whether or not one regards these proofs as successful, it is clear that our understanding of the causal structure of the world (what sets it in motion and gives it order) will affect any conception we have of God.

E. A Key Epistemological Question: How Can Human Beings Know Anything about God?
   1. The religious traditions answer this question by referring to holy places and special practices connected with divine presence: temples and sacred writings, chosen people and divinely-instituted forms of worship.
   2. The philosophical traditions answer by giving a theory about the nature of the world or the human self, which explains its connection to the divine.
   3. Especially important is Plato's concept of intellectual vision: the soul's capacity to see divine things with "the mind's eye."
   4. The story of how this Platonic concept interacted with the Western religious traditions will be a central thread in these lectures.

III. Introduction to the Philosophical Traditions of Ancient Greece
   A. A Cultural Contrast between Greece and Israel
      1. An ancient Israelite wondering how to live a good life would be referred to Israel's religious tradition: the Mosaic law, the teachings of the prophets, and the wisdom literature of the Bible.
      2. The Greek religious tradition did not have so much cultural or intellectual power, and its prescriptions for human life came to seem like mere "custom."
      3. Hence some ancient Greeks wondering how to live a good life ended up trying to figure it out for themselves—by philosophical inquiry.

   B. Plato and the Origin of Philosophical Writing
      1. Plato was the first great philosophical writer in the Western tradition.
      2. Before Plato, philosophical thought was preserved mainly in the form of poetry (which was composed orally) and often posed as a kind of divine oracle.
      3. Plato wrote prose dialogues in which the main character was his teacher Socrates.
      4. In Plato's later (longer and more technical) dialogues, Socrates appears mainly as a mouthpiece for Plato's views, but in his earlier dialogues we seem to have a portrait of the historical Socrates (even though the actual conversations are fictional).

   C. Socrates and the Origin of Philosophical Inquiry
      1. Socrates appears as an inquirer asking questions about the nature of a good life: "what is justice?" "what is piety?" etc.
      2. Unlike self-styled "wise men" or Sophists, Socrates does not claim to know the answer to his own questions—for such knowledge belongs only to the gods.
      3. Hence Socrates proceeds by questioning people who do claim to know the answer.
      4. The result of the questioning is typically that the person Socrates questions cannot clearly explain his answer.

IV. Two Final Notes
   A. On Listening to Philosophy Lectures
      1. Philosophy lectures have a tendency to "go by quickly" in a kind of blur.
      2. The reason for this is that philosophy is concerned with complex, interrelated wholes.
      3. Hence the first time you listen to one of these lectures you should get a sense of one over-arching idea that makes sense to you, even though the details may be blurry.
      4. The details are more likely to "snap into place" the second time you hear them.
      5. So don't hesitate to listen to each lecture twice if you feel confused.

   B. On Critical Objectivity
      1. These lectures will focus on description rather than evaluation of the philosophical and religious views under discussion.
      2. Assessments and criticisms will be offered only occasionally.

3. The reason for this is to allow listeners to make their own critical judgments about the truth or falsehood of these views.

Essential Reading:

Plato, *The Apology of Socrates*

Supplemental Reading:

Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, pp. 7-79

Questions to Consider:

1. Is it a good idea to ask critical questions about religion? Why or why not?
2. How do you picture the relationship between God (or the Divine, or What Ultimately Matters) and yourself?

Lecture Two
Plato's Inquiries—The Gods and the Good

Scope: In Plato's early dialogue, *Euthyphro*, Socrates tries to get a pious windbag named Euthyphro to think critically about his own piety, beginning by asking him to define what "piety" is. Euthyphro can't give an answer that stands up under critical questioning, but is unwilling to admit he doesn't know—which Plato suggests is a moral as well as intellectual fault.

In later dialogues, Plato tries to say what kind of things might supply an answer to questions such as "What is Piety?" He calls these kinds of things Forms or essences. They are unchanging intelligible essences which we understand with our minds, rather than see with our eyes. This notion of Form, and the related notion of intellectual vision (seeing the Forms with our "mind's eye"), will play an enormous role in later Western religion.

Outline

I. Socrates' Questions

    A. Plato's Early ("Socratic") Dialogues
- **1.** Plato's earliest writings are dialogues—like miniature plays—whose main character is Socrates, Plato's teacher and hero.
- **2.** Though fictional, the dialogues give us a sense of Socrates as a person and a philosopher.
- **3.** Each dialogue focuses on a quest to define some key term in the good life, such as "piety," "justice" or "temperance."
- **4.** Since Socrates claims to have no wisdom, it is always Socrates' interlocutor who volunteers an answer to the question, and then Socrates asks him questions about it.
- **5.** These Socratic dialogues always end in perplexity, without finding a satisfactory answer.
- **6.** In fact what people learn by talking with Socrates is not "the right answer" but rather their own ignorance.
- **7.** Of course not all of Socrates' interlocutors appreciate discovering their own ignorance, so Socrates ends up making many people angry, and they get him put to death on a charge of impiety.

    B. Socrates and Euthyphro
- **1.** The *Euthyphro* is a Socratic dialogue focusing on the question: "What is piety?"
- **2.** Euthyphro, Socrates' interlocutor, is a self-righteous windbag who thinks he knows everything about piety.
- **3.** Euthyphro has hauled his father into court, hoping to get him executed.
- **4.** Shocked, Socrates suggests (with veiled irony) that surely Euthyphro surely wouldn't dare to do this unless he was very sure it was pious.
- **5.** Upon receiving Euthyphro's assurance that he knows everything about piety, Socrates asks him to enlighten him by defining it for him—and the fun begins.
- **6.** After offering a string of unsuccessful definitions, none of which stands up under Socrates' critical questions, Euthyphro ends up completely flustered yet still trying to pretend he knows it all.
- **7.** Euthyphro's unwillingness to admit his own ignorance is a moral as well as intellectual failing, as it means he is not willing to reconsider the impiety of trying to get his own father killed.
- **8.** Ever since, philosophy has stood as a perennial challenge for religious people to be self-critical and intellectually humble.

    C. The "Euthyphro Problem"
- **1.** One of Euthyphro's definitions of piety is "what the gods love."
- **2.** The problem with this definition is that the Greek gods often disagreed about what sort of actions they loved.
- **3.** After Socrates points this out, Euthyphro accepts a modified version of the definition proposed by Socrates: a pious act is one that *all* the gods love.
- **4.** The problem here is that (as Euthyphro and Socrates agree) the gods love pious acts because those acts are pious—not the other way around.

5. Hence there must be some form or essence of piety that causes the gods to love pious acts—so the acts are not pious just because the gods love them.
6. Thus Plato clearly subordinates personalities (the gods) to principles (the form or essence of piety, which is the standard by which the gods should judge).
7. A monotheistic version of this problem has become known as "the Euthyphro problem": are good deeds good because God says so, or does He say so because they are good?

II. Plato's Answers
   A. Plato's Theory of Forms
      1. What Socrates is seeking in his dialogue with Euthyphro is the one form or essence of piety that all particular acts of piety have in common.
      2. Plato later develops this notion of Form into an elaborate theory of eternal, unchanging essences.
      3. In Plato's theory, the one eternal Form or essence of piety is related to the many particular acts of piety much as an ideal
      geometrical triangle is related to triangles one draws on a chalkboard.
      4. The Form is universal and eternal; the particulars are always changing, coming into being and passing away.
      5. The Form is the standard by which particulars are judged.
      6. The Form is also the original or model, of which particulars are copies or imitations.
      7. The Form, unlike the particulars, is something we cannot see with our eyes but only understand with our minds (it is "intelligible" not "sensible").
      8. There is a whole realm or region of intelligible Forms which is the source of order in this world and by which the goodness of things in this world is to be judged.
   C. The Allegory of the Cave
      1. Plato pictures the relation of the two worlds (sensible and intelligible) in a famous story called the "Allegory of the Cave."
      2. Understanding the Forms of things is like being freed from captivity in a cave, where one had only seen shadows cast by firelight, to see real things in the light of the sun.
      3. The "real things" are the Forms, and the sun is the Form of the Good, the highest Form, The First Principle, which gives goodness and being and intelligibility to the whole intelligible world.
   D. Interpretations of the Allegory
      1. Plato tells us the Allegory is about education, and it seems to illustrate the career of Socrates—someone who, catching a glimpse of the true reality of the Forms, descends back into the cave and gets into trouble for trying to help others see.
      2. Yet the allegory has had its most important influence not on education but on spirituality: it is a superb metaphor for certain kinds of mystical illumination.
      3. Monotheists attracted to Plato will identify God with the intelligible world or the Form of the Good.
      4. Hence the Christian Platonist response to "the Euthyphro problem" has always been to identify God with the form of the Good (i.e., God is "the Supreme Good").
      5. Thus the standard by which God judges is His own goodness, which is Himself.
      6. But note how this affects the concept of God: unlike the pagan gods who may choose to do what is good or not, the Supreme Good is a deity whose content is necessary and unchanging—much more like a principle than a person.

Essential Reading:

Plato, *Euthyphro*

———, *Republic*, book 7, 514a-521b (The Allegory of the Cave)

Supplemental Reading:

———, *Republic*, book 6, 505a-511e (discussion of the structure of the intelligible world)

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think you'd react to Socrates' insistent questions differently than Euthyphro did? What role does critical questioning play in your religious life?
2. Does Plato's notion of Forms make sense to you? In other words, do you think the order of the world is based on unchanging essences that you can only understand or see with your mind's eye?

Lecture Three
Plato's Spirituality—The Immortal Soul and the Other World

Scope: Plato's philosophy is inherently religious, and has had a deep influence on Western spirituality. In the "Allegory of the Cave" (in Plato's *Republic*) we see the theme of the soul's ascent and intellectual vision. In the *Meno* we examine the concepts of Platonic recollection and transmigration of souls. In the *Phaedrus* we find the Fall of the soul. And in the *Symposium* we encounter the original version of Platonic love, in which the Form we desire to know is Beauty, and the very desire to know it is the deepest form of eroticism.

Outline

I. The Spirituality of Platonic Philosophy

    A. Philosophy and Spirituality
        1. It has been said that the God of the philosophers is not one that can be worshipped, but this is historically and factually false.
        2. For Plato, that which is most divine is not a person, but it can be loved.
        3. Plato's First Principle, the Supreme Good, can be the object of a very deep spirituality.

    B. The Spirituality of the "Allegory of the Cave"
        1. The cave represents "this world," the world we see and touch.
        2. To be liberated from the cave is to be freed from dependence on our bodily senses.
        3. This requires a conversion: a turning away from the body, Plato suggests in the *Phaedo*, so that we may see with the mind alone.
        4. Hence the ascent from the cave means leaving behind the things of "this world" so that our souls may ascend to "the other world."
        5. The ascent culminates in intellectual vision: seeing the Forms with the "mind's eye" (a key metaphor in the Platonist tradition).
        6. Ascetic or other-worldly spirituality (including the picture of "the soul going to heaven") thus originates with Plato.

II. The Doctrine of Recollection in the *Meno*

    A. The "Meno Problem"
        1. The first third of Plato's dialogue *Meno* is just like the early Socratic dialogues: Socrates' interlocutor Meno ends up perplexed, unable to answer the question, "What is virtue?"
        2. Meno had once confidently been able to orate at great length about virtue, but now is so paralyzed with confusion that he feels as if lips were numb.
        3. How can one hope to find answers to Socrates' questions, Meno asks, if one is totally ignorant of what one is looking for?
        4. In terms of the theory of Forms, the question is: how can one realize one has "seen" a Form, if one has no idea what one is looking for or how to recognize it?

    B. Platonic Recollection
        1. Plato answers this "Meno problem" by reminding us of the phenomenon of recollecting something one had temporarily forgotten.
        2. Seeing an unchanging form feels like recollecting in this sense—as is illustrated by mathematical insights when one says "aha! now I get it—*of course*, it was obvious all along."
        3. Plato suggests that this really is a form of recollection: that the soul is remembering something it learned from a previous life but had forgotten.
        4. For this Plato draws on myths of the transmigration of souls—the passing of souls from one body to another upon death.

III. Immortality in the *Phaedo*

    A. Setting of the Dialogue

1. Plato depicts Socrates on the day he is to be executed for impiety, talking with his followers about whether the soul survives after death.
2. Socrates' followers are afraid that the soul is exhaled with the last breath (as Homer sometimes suggests) and dissipates on the wind.
3. To show that there is life after death Plato must give us a new concept of the soul, which explains why it has a different destiny: where does it go, if not to be blown away or to become a mere shadow in the underworld?

B. Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul
1. Plato has Socrates offer a multi-layered argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*, which turns on the notion that the soul belongs with the Forms.
2. Plato's theory of recollection implies that the soul had existed before it came into this body.
3. But more important, the phenomenon of Recollection suggests a certain kind of kinship between the soul and the Forms—as if its true home is with them.
4. Hence Plato suggests that if the soul has properly purified itself from its attachment to bodily things, then after death it will no more return into bodies, but will return to the intelligible world of Forms, from which it came.

IV. The Doctrine of the Fall in *Phaedrus*
A. If (as Plato says in the *Phaedo*) our bodies are prisons for the soul, whose real home is "above" in "the other world," then how did we ever come to be in our bodies at all?
B. The answer given in this dialogue (*Phaedrus*, not to be confused with *Phaedo*) is that our souls began their existence without bodies, contemplating the Forms, but "fell" into their bodies when they got tired or undisciplined.
C. Therefore in *Phaedrus*, recollection leads back beyond the transmigration of souls to an original disembodied state.
D. Thus the *Phaedrus* pictures a history of the soul that begins in a heavenly vision of the Forms, followed by a "Fall" to earth, and consummated by a return to the disembodied state of pure intellectual contemplation.
E. The attempt to recollect the Forms is an erotic return to our origin, a love for things we possessed once but lost.
F. Plato analyzes the phenomenon of falling in love as a kind of divine madness which occurs when another person serves in some way to remind us of the beauty of the Forms.

V. Love in the *Symposium*
A. In the *Symposium* Plato presents a related analysis of the phenomenon of love.
B. For Plato, the driving force behind Socratic inquiry is not mere curiosity but love (*eros*), the desire to behold ultimate Beauty.
C. Hence in the *Symposium* the Form of the Good is also the Highest Beauty, and just as all things are good insofar as they reflect the Highest Good, so all things are beautiful insofar as they resemble the highest Beauty.
D. A beautiful body reminds us of the Highest Beauty in one way, but a beautiful soul (i.e., one full of virtues) reminds us in a higher and better way.
E. There is thus a ladder of love leading us "upward" from bodily things to souls to the Forms, and philosophical inquiry becomes a labor of love with strong religious overtones, as we ascend from transitory earthly beauties to the eternal beauty of the "other world."

VI. A Question about Plato's View of the Soul: if our real home is a disembodied realm of unchanging Forms, then does our immortality involve leaving behind our history in this world, the marks it has left on our bodies and souls—much of what we call our individuality and personality?

Essential Reading:

Plato, *Meno* 80a-86c

———, *Phaedo* 57a-84c.

Supplemental Reading:

Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a-257b

———, *Symposium* 198a-223d

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think the body is really a hindrance to the mind? Why or why not?
2. Is Plato's notion of the immortality of the soul—its dwelling in a realm of unchanging essences—the kind of afterlife that you want for yourself?

Lecture Four

Aristotle and Plato—
Cosmos, Contemplation, and Happiness

Scope: After examining the soul and its relation to the eternal Forms in the previous two lectures, we look now at the religious significance of the natural world according to Platonism, and especially according to Plato's great student Aristotle. After glancing at Plato's version of the doctrine of creation (in his *Timaeus*) we examine Plato's and Aristotle's attempts to trace the movement of the heavens back to their divine starting point or first principle. We look at Aristotle's conception of God as First Mover (i.e., first principle of movement) and also as divine Mind in which our minds participate (through the identity of mind and form that takes place in the contemplation of intellectual knowledge). And we encounter the notion of a world that is inherently purposeful, naturally ordered toward the good and ultimately toward God.

Outline

I. Nature: Bringing the Forms to Earth

  A. Critics of Platonic Spirituality
   1. Christians (more than Jews) were often very attracted to Platonist spirituality, but found they had to resist some aspects of Platonist dualism—especially the tendency to see the body or the bodily world as evil.
   2. The crucial point is that Bible sees the visible world as good , and treats our embodied state as a good and natural thing.
   3. No other ancient philosophical movement was so deeply spiritual as Platonism—in fact most of them were materialistic.
   4. Most telling of all, Aristotle, Plato's own student, criticizes him for separating the world of the Forms so much from the world of nature that it is impossible to explain how the two are related.
   5. Unlike the materialists, Aristotle retained the notion of Form, but argued that Forms were "embodied" in the material things of the natural world.

  B. A Less Dualistic Plato: the *Timaeus*
   1. One possible answer to Aristotle's criticism is contained in Plato's *Timaeus*, which depicts a divine craftsman (the demiurge) who shapes the material of the world into an ordered cosmos, using the Forms as models or paradigms.
   2. Unlike the Allegory of the Cave or the *Phaedo*, the *Timaeus* emphasizes the goodness of the sensible world, which is an image of the intelligible world.
   3. In the *Timaeus*, embodiment is a good thing, and the visible world itself is a living thing, animated by a divine World-soul.
   4. Themes from the *Timaeus* were often used in Christian explanations of the Creation, but there were also important differences.
   5. Unlike Plato, Christians and Jews came to the conclusion that God created the world *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), i.e., with no pre-existing material.
   6. They also insisted that the Forms by which God created the world were not external paradigms or standards which governed God's creative activity from outside, but were eternal ideas within God's own mind.

II. The Living Heavens

  A. Most ancient peoples thought of the starry heavens as the home of immortal beings or gods.

  B. Ancient astronomers thought of the heavens as a series of moving concentric spheres containing the planets and stars (which were living beings) with the earth at the center.

  C. Plato suggested that the World-soul set the heavenly spheres in motion.

  D. Aristotle suggested instead that each sphere was moved by the sphere outside it.
   1. Rather than a World-soul, Aristotle argued there had to be an unmoved First Mover, positioned at the outside of the universe.

2. The basic idea in this argument (which became the model for many later proofs of the existence of God) is that an infinite regress is impossible: the chain of movers or causes of motion cannot go back infinitely, but must come to a stop in a First Mover.

III. Aristotle's Spirituality: Contemplation

    A. God as Mind and First Mover

        1. Aristotle argues that the First Mover moves not by pushing, but by being desired by the lower sphere.

        2. The First Mover is God, who is not concerned with lower things, but only with his own perfection.

        3. Aristotle's God is a Mind or Intellect that continuously contemplates itself.

    B. Our Intellects and the Divine Mind

        1. Although Forms are "embodied" in material things, Aristotle believes that when we know Forms we see them separate from the material in which they are embodied.

        2. The "light" which makes Forms visible to the mind is called "active mind" or (in medieval translations) the "agent intellect."

        3. Most strikingly, Aristotle thinks our minds become identical with the Forms they contemplate separate from matter, so that intellectual vision is actually a kind of identity between the intellect and the Forms it sees (the "identity theory" of intellectual knowledge).

        4. The standard ancient interpretation of Aristotle is that "active mind" is the same thing as God, i.e., the divine Mind eternally contemplating itself.

        5. This interpretation thus supposes that what Aristotle's God contemplates is the whole world of Forms—and in continuously contemplating it he is eternally identical with it.

        6. Hence after Aristotle there arose (among the "middle Platonists") the notion that the intelligible world of Forms is the content of the divine Mind—ideas in the mind of God.

        7. If this is a correct interpretation of Aristotle, then it follows that whenever we contemplate a Form, we are to that extent identical with God.

        8. In other words, intellectual vision is really union with God.

    C. Contemplative Happiness without Ascent

        1. In his surviving writings, Aristotle gives us no picture of the soul ascending out of the body to a disembodied state.

        2. The ultimate happiness on earth, for Aristotle, is our moments of intellectual contemplation.

        3. For Aristotle, a happiness like that of a blessed god (consisting of neither doing nor making, but only pure contemplation) is the natural goal of the best and most divine part of us, our minds.

        4. This makes sense if our knowledge of the Forms makes us (so long as we are actually contemplating them) identical with God.

IV. Aristotle on the Good

    A. Physics: the Teleology of Nature

        1. Aristotelian physics is the study of natural things, their forms and movements.

        2. For Aristotle, each natural thing aims at some purpose (some "end" or "good") which is good for it.

        3. Living things seek what is good for them (nourishment, etc.) and inanimate things seek their proper place in the cosmos (stones fall to earth and fire rises toward heaven, which is where they belong).

        4. Aristotle's view of nature is thus profoundly optimistic: every being in Aristotle's cosmos is ordered by purposes which are good for it (teleology).

    B. Ethics: the Goal of Human Life

        1. For Aristotle, ethics is the study of the natural end or goal of human life.

        2. Aristotle takes it as obvious that the goal of human life is happiness.

        3. The Greek word translated "happiness" (*eudaimonia*) does not designate a feeling but rather refers to whatever makes human life a success.

        4. Hedonists, in the ancient sense of the word, are those who think happiness or success in life is a feeling (i.e., the feeling of pleasure or feeling good).

        5. Aristotle and Plato, on the contrary, both argue that happiness consists ultimately in wisdom, i.e., the contemplation of the ultimate Forms of the universe.

        6. The word for happiness gets translated in the Western Christian tradition as "blessedness" or "beatitude."

7. Hence in the Christian Platonist tradition happiness consists in "beatific vision," i.e., seeing God with our mind's eye.

V. Platonic-Aristotelian Religion

    A. Plato and Aristotle view God as a First Principle, not as a person.

    B. Yet their religious views include a deeply spiritual account of the human soul and its love for higher things beyond this earth (intelligible things, not sensible things).

    C. This spirituality is centered on intellect rather than emotion, yet it is emotionally rich, embracing desire and happiness in a wisdom that is ultimately divine.

Essential Reading:

Plato, *Timaeus* 27c-53b

Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 12:6-9

———, *On the Soul* (often referred to by its Latin title, *De Anima*) 3:4-8

———, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1:1-7 and 10:7-8

Supplemental Reading:

Lear, *Aristotle: the Desire to Understand*, pp. 116-141 (on Aristotle's view of the mind) and pp. 293-320 (on the contemplation of God)

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think purposes or goals are somehow built into the universe? If not, why not? If so, how?
2. Is there one thing or activity that makes human beings ultimately happy? If so, what is it? If not, why not?

Lecture Five
Plotinus—Neoplatonism and the
Ultimate Unity of All

Scope: Plotinus (205? A.D.-270 A.D) was the great systematizer of Platonist and Aristotelian thought, the founder of the tradition known as Neoplatonism, the most important philosophy to influence Western religion for the next thousand years. Plotinus organized the world into four levels. First is the One or the Good, which is simple (i.e., without parts, division or boundary) and above all Forms, essence and intelligibility—like the sun, too bright to see. Second is the divine Mind or the intelligible world, which contains all the Forms as Ideas in the divine intellect. Third is the Soul, which includes both the World-Soul and human souls, differing from the Mind because it is changeable and involved with bodies. Last is the visible or material world, which is the realm of change, division and death. Plotinus' spirituality is based on the desire for ultimate unity, and the conviction that the Soul is already, at its highest point, unified with the One.

Outline

I.   Key Concepts of the Platonist Tradition

    A. Intelligible Form as:
      1. Standard of judgment
      2. Origin of order in the cosmos
      3. Intelligible (i.e., "visible" to the eye of the mind)
      4. Object of desire and love (*eros*).

    B. The Soul is:
      1. Immortal being separable from the body
      2. More like the Forms than like the body
      3. "Fallen" into this world of change, death, and embodiment
      4. Occupying an intermediate place between intelligible and sensible worlds: changeable like the one, imperishable like the other.

    C. Intelligibility is:
      1. Visibility of Form to mind's eye (or, conversely, mind's capacity to "see" forms)
      2. Potential for identity between mind and Form (Aristotle's theory, which becomes the conceptual backbone of Neoplatonism).

    D. Neoplatonism, originated by Plotinus, gathers up these concepts and synthesizes them into a system of metaphysics and spirituality.

II.   The Four Levels of Plotinus' Universe

    A. The Divine Mind
      1. Aristotle's concept of God as a Mind or Intellect understanding itself was picked up by later Platonists (those before Plotinus have been called "Middle Platonists") and developed into a concept of a divine Mind which contains the whole intelligible world.
      2. The divine Mind does not figure things out (like human minds, passing from a state of ignorance to knowledge) but eternally contemplates the Forms within itself.
      3. The divine Mind is thus both One and Many—one Mind, but having many Forms as its content.
      4. In this way Platonic Forms become Ideas in the Mind of God.
      5. It might seem then that Plotinus would identify God with this divine Mind, but he thinks there is something higher and more divine.

    B. The Good or the One
      1. For Plotinus (in contrast to Middle Platonists) the highest level of the universe must be a pure unity, an absolute One, not a One-and-Many: it must be *simple* in the sense of having no parts.
      2. Plotinus identifies this absolutely simple One with the Form of the Good in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," which is above all the other Forms—like the Sun of the intelligible world, giving form, being, and intelligibility to everything else.

3. For Plotinus the One is in fact not a Form at all but above all Form.
4. To be above Form means to be above definition, structure or limitation: this is what Plotinus means by calling it "infinite."
5. To be above Form means also to be beyond intelligibility: the One is incomprehensible, beyond the understanding of any mind (like the sun, which is too bright to be looked at directly).
6. Picking up on a phrase of Plato's, Plotinus says the Good is above essence or being.

C. The Soul
1. The Soul is an image of the divine mind, but capable of change and of entering into relationship with bodies.
2. For Plotinus there is ultimately only one Soul, and our "individual" souls are related to the one Soul as the many Forms are related to the one Mind.
3. Soul receives its blessedness, life and unity by contemplating the divine Mind.
4. The best or highest part of the Soul is the World-soul, which moves the heavens, governing its "body" without paying attention to bodily things but only to the Mind.
5. In Plotinus' version of the Fall, individual souls became alienated from the Soul when they descended into bodies out of curiosity and arrogance; motivated by the desire to have power over lower things, they lowered themselves.
6. Virtue consists in a soul's purifying itself from bodily entanglements and turning itself (i.e., converting) toward the higher world.
7. There is a part of our souls which has never descended, but which is always contemplating the intelligible world, even if we are not aware of it.
8. The ultimate in mystical ascent is to go beyond the vision of the divine Mind and experience unity with the One.

D. The Visible World
1. The three previous levels of the universe (One, Mind, and Soul) were divine.
2. The last level is the sensible or visible world—the world of bodies, of change, birth and death, growth and decay.
3. Only at this level can things fall apart and be destroyed: the higher levels are more unified, hence more divine and immortal.

III. Structure and Dynamic of the Plotinian Universe
A. A Picture of the Plotinian Universe as Concentric Circles
1. The One is at the center—like a geometrical point, the origin of light, the sun.
2. The divine Mind as an orb filled with light and Forms.
3. The Soul revolves around Mind, turning inward to contemplate it or outward to be divided among the fragmentary world of bodies.
4. Lastly, the "outside world"—the dark mortal world of bodies.

B. Emanation and Return
1. In Plotinus, the divine is not a person who creates, but a First Principle from which things emanate—as all light and color emanate from the sun.
2. This emanation does not result from a divine choice, but is a necessary and inevitable feature of the overflowing divine abundance.
3. Because everything flows from the divine light, everything is good (at its own level) but our happiness lies in turning away from lower goods and returning to our ultimate divine source.

C. The Theme of Unity and Identity
1. Plotinus is the philosopher for those who feel a deep Unity at the heart of things is the secret of the universe.
2. For Plotinus, the "individual" soul is at its highest point identical with the Divine.

IV. Later Developments
A. The Neoplatonist theme of unity remains central to Western thought, and is especially prominent in mysticism—where, however, the emphasis is often on experience rather than intellectual knowledge.
B. Orthodox Christianity often borrows one piece or another from this scheme, but cannot buy the whole system.

C. Proclus

    1. For Plotinus, because Mind and Form are identical in intellectual knowledge, each Platonic Form is also a Mind or Intelligence.

    2. Thus the divine Mind is not only a world of Forms, but also a world of minds or intelligences.

    3. In Proclus, a later Neoplatonist, this realm of divine minds becomes a hierarchical order of gods.

    4. The Christian writer known as Denys (or Pseudo-Dionysius) adapts this idea and uses it to describe the celestial hierarchy of the angels.

Essential Reading:

Plotinus, "On Beauty" (=*Ennead* 1:6), "The Soul's Descent into Body" (=*Ennead* 4:8), "The Three Initial Hypostases" (=*Ennead* 5:1), "On the Intellectual Beauty" (=*Ennead* 5:8), "The Intellectual Principle, the Ideas, and the Authentic Existence" (=*Ennead* 5:9) "On the Good, or the One" (=*Ennead* 6:9), all in Plotinus, *The Enneads*.

Supplemental Reading:

Paul Henry, "The Place of Plotinus in the History of Thought" in Plotinus, *The Enneads*, pp.xlii-lxxxiii.

John Dillon, "Plotinus: an Introduction" in *The Enneads*, pp.lxxxiv-ci.

Questions to Consider:

1. What do you find attractive and unattractive about Plotinus' picture of the universe? What makes you feel that way?

2. Do you think the soul is, at its highest or deepest point, one with the divine—or it is other than divine? Why do you think so?

Lecture Six

The Jewish Scriptures—Life with the God of Israel

Scope: In the religious tradition of Israel, God is a person not a principle, a character in a story rather than a concept in a theory. Like all religious traditions, the religion of the ancient Israelites identified specific places where their God could be met, and told specific stories about how he was met. The foundational story of the meeting of the Israelites and their God is told in the book of Exodus, in which the God of Israel announces his name and establishes a holy place where he can be met. Since that time the holy place has become a temple and then a ruin, while the Name has ceased to be uttered aloud—yet in Jewish eschatology there is a hope of both being restored.

Outline

I. The God of the Scriptures

  A. The Term "Scriptures"

    1. "Old Testament" is the Christian name for the collection of texts that Jews call simply "the Bible" or "the Scriptures."

    2. The New Testament also calls these writings "the Scriptures."

    3. Hence in these lectures they will be called simply "the Scriptures," as a neutral designation acceptable to both Jews and Christians.

    4. The terms "Bible" and "Biblical" will be used to refer to both the Scriptures and the New Testament.

  B. The Main Character of the Scriptures

    1. If in Platonism "the divine" is a concept, in the Scriptures "God" is a character.

    2. In being a character rather than a concept, the God of the Scriptures has more in common with pagan gods than with the Platonist concept of the divine: He is a person, has feelings, gets angry, feels compassion, makes choices. In short, He is anthropomorphic.

    3. Above all, the God of Scripture does things—He takes action at specific times and places.

    4. In contrast, the Platonist One or the Divine Mind has an activity which is not an action or deed: its effect on the world is like the constant shining of the sun, which is no different in different times and places.

II. Places of Meeting

  A. How Do We Know the Divine?

    1. For Platonism, we see what is divine with our mind's eye; we do not look in a specific visible place with the eye of the body.

    2. But for early Israelite religion there were literally places where people met God—shrines and holy places (e.g., the shrine of Beth-el, founded by Jacob).

    3. This is a common feature of all ancient Mediterranean religions.

  B. Holy Places in Israel

    1. Some of the earliest narratives in Genesis tell of encounters with God at particular places that seem to have become shrines.

    2. Later portions of Scripture contain polemics against hill-shrines or "high places," where Israelites worshipped the God of Israel alongside other gods.

    3. Eventually Israelite worship became centralized in the Temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem.

    4. Thus there came to be something like concentric spheres of holiness: the whole Land of Israel was holy, Jerusalem was its holy city, the temple was the holy place in its midst, the sanctuary was the holy place in the temple, and its inner sanctum was the "holy of holies."

    5. The precursor to this development is the story of the tabernacle (the mobile tent-shrine) in Exodus, which is connected to all the key concepts of divine revelation in the Scriptures.

III. The Invisible God with a Name (a reading of the book of Exodus)

  A. Key Question: Pharaoh Asks, "Who is the LORD?" (Exod. 5:2)

1. When Pharaoh says "I do not know the LORD" he is not claiming to be an atheist (in fact he believes in many gods) but he's asking Moses why he should recognize this unknown God, whose name is the LORD.
2. In contrast to the Egyptian gods known to Pharaoh, this god has no statue or image, nothing to identify him—except his association with a powerless and enslaved people.
3. The whole book of Exodus can be read as an answer to Pharaoh's question: "you shall know that I am the LORD" (Exod 6:7, 7:5 etc.).

B. The Unspeakable Name of the God of Israel
1. "I am the LORD" does not mean "I am master," for "the LORD" is not a title but a name.
2. The original name, transliterated from Hebrew, is YHWH.
3. It is held so sacred by orthodox Jews that it is blasphemy to attempt to utter it aloud.
4. Because ancient Hebrew script was written without vowels, no one anymore is quite sure how it was pronounced.
5. When Jews today read Scriptures aloud and come to this word, they do not say it, but instead use the word "Adonai," meaning "Lord"—hence the English translation "LORD" for the name YHWH (usually printed in capital letters to indicate that the word in the written text is YHWH, not Adonai).
6. "I am the LORD"—so frequently repeated throughout Exodus and the rest of the Scriptures—is thus an announcement or proclama-tion of the Name of Israel's God, a way of making him known.

C. Proclamations of the Name occur at all the high points of the story.
1. The name YHWH is revealed at the burning bush, where its meaning is something like: I am who I am (Exod. 3:14).
2. Israel worships in this Name for the first time when they sing and dance in celebration of the destruction of Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea (Exod. 15).
3. The Ten Commandments begin with not with a command but with God announcing his Name and connecting it with the liberation of Israel from Egypt (Exod. 20:2).
4. The phrase "The LORD, God of Israel" contains both a name and a promise: it refers to the terms of the LORD's covenant with his people: "you shall be my people and I shall be your God" (Exod. 6:7).

D. Crisis and Resolution
1. When the Israelites rebel against the LORD, they fail to know him, bowing down instead to the Golden Calf and saying: "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of Egypt" (Exod. 32:8).
2. After threatening to destroy or abandon Israel, the LORD hears Moses' plea on their behalf and gives him plans to construct the ark of the covenant within the tent of meeting, the tent-shrine that Moses pitches outside the Israelite camp.
3. This tent-shrine or tabernacle is holy, i.e., dangerously charged with the presence of the LORD like a kind of electricity that may kill anyone who approaches unworthily.
4. With the tabernacle is established a priestly class, which manages access to the holy place in ways designed to minimize the possibility that the LORD will "break out" against the people (cf. Exod. 19:10-24).

IV. Conclusions: the Epistemology of Scripture
A. Israel's God makes himself known not in visible form (paganism) nor intellectual understanding (Platonism) but in *words*.
1. He identifies himself not by a conceptual definition (Creator, First Principle, Ultimate Reality or Essence) but by a *name* whose meaning is elusive but which can be called upon in worship.
2. He ties himself to a particular people by the promises of a *covenant*.
3. He is identified and distinguished from other gods by the *story* of his relationship with this people.

B. The place of divine presence is dangerous, endangered, and deferred.
1. It is a place of danger, to be approached carefully and worthily (in ritual cleanness and reverence, at appointed times, in accordance with priestly protocol).
2. It is destroyed by the Babylonians (6th century B.C.), rebuilt after the Babylonian exile, and destroyed again by the Romans (70 A.D.).
3. It is presently a hope: that one day the LORD will restore his people and the Temple will be rebuilt.

C. Eschatology is an essential element in scriptural epistemology.

1. The place where Israel meets God is a ruin and a hope for restoration: the temple which is not, but which will be again.
2. The knowledge of Israel's God is thus inseparable from a hope for a divine act of redemption that is yet to come.
3. The story of Israel's redemption is thus incomplete: unfinished, but therefore open to a future that will be a long-expected surprise.
4. The name for this hope of a final restoration of divine presence is *eschatology* (from the Greek term for "last things").
5. Thus in Scriptural epistemology space is subordinated to time: the *place* of divine presence is caught up in a *history* of divine action, in which Israel's relation with her God is disrupted, deferred, and kept open to an expected but unimaginable glory.
6. Scriptural epistemology is therefore inescapably eschatology: the project of knowing God is continually disrupted and completed only in hope—for the LORD is the God who cannot be seen, whose place of presence is to be awaited, and whose name cannot yet be spoken.

Essential Reading:
Exodus, chapters 1-24, 32-34, and 40; Genesis, 28 and 35 (an encounter with God at a holy place);1 Kings, chapter 8 (the temple in Jerusalem as the place where Israel meets the LORD their God)

Questions to Consider:
1. Does the God in the Scriptures seem "too human" (anthropomorphism), or is the concept of the divine in Platonism "too impersonal"?

2. Do you agree that it is a bad idea for Christians to attempt to pronounce the name of YHWH, the God of Israel?

Lecture Seven
Platonist Philosophy and Scriptural Religion

Scope: Referring to the three levels of Plotinus' view of the divine, this lecture compares Platonist spirituality with Biblical portraits of God and his people, and begins examining how these two traditions came to be combined in Western thought. The Platonist concept of the One as First Principle can be combined with the Scripture's emphasis on worship of only one God. The Platonist concept of Forms as paradigms or blueprints for the visible world can be combined with the Scriptural portrait of God as creator. And the Platonist concept of the soul's return to the "heaven" of Forms can be combined with the Biblical eschatology of resurrection of the dead. How wise it is to combine these two traditions is a central and recurrent problem in the Jewish and Christian theological traditions.

Outline

I. The One First Principle

    A. In the ancient world, no one believed in "Mono*theism*."
        1. *Theos* means "god," which in ancient usage is synonymous with "immortal."
        2. Everyone in the ancient world, including Jews and Christians, believed there were many immortal beings.
        3. Hence Jews and Christians too were "polytheists" in this sense, though they tended to call their immortal beings "angels" rather than "gods" (but cf. Psalm 82:1, 86:8 and 138:1).

    B. The key point in common between Platonism and the Scriptural religions is "Mon*archia*."
        1. *Arche* means Beginning, First Principle, or Prince.
        2. Hence in ancient philosophical usage, *monarchia* meant belief in only one First Principle or Beginning or Source of all that is.
        3. The Jewish God was particularly interesting to Greek philosophers because he was invisible, the creator of the visible world, absolutely sovereign, and not begotten by previous deities—and thus resembled a Platonist First Principle more than pagan deities did.

    C. The key difference between ancient pagan Platonism and the Scriptural religions is "Mono*latry*"—worship of only one God.
        1. *Latria* is the Greek word for worship.
        2. Paganism was based on the civic obligation to participate in the public worship of gods who were regarded as protectors of the community.
        3. Pagan Platonist philosophers, rather than rejecting their civic obligations, participated in civic rituals, thus worshipping many gods.
        4. Typically, however, they did not literally believe in the gods of Greek mythology, but reinterpreted the stories of the gods as allegories symbolizing higher truths.

II. The Mind of God, Wisdom and Creation

    A. Philo of Alexandria's Treatise *On the Creation of the World*
        1. Philo (c. 20 B.C. – 50 A.D.) is the first middle Platonist whose writings are known to us.
        2. Philo developed a Platonist method of reading the Bible based on the practice of allegorizing—seeing Biblical stories as symbols of timeless truths (e.g., the Adam and Eve story).
        3. Philo interprets the creation story in Genesis using the metaphor of an architect designing a city according to a sort of blueprint in his mind.
        4. The blueprints for the world are Platonic Forms in the mind of God, which Philo describes as God's *logos*, His reason or word.

    B. Augustine on Forms in the Mind of God
        1. Augustine gives an argument in favor of this view, which was so effective that it convinced the rest of the Western Christian tradition to adopt Philo's picture of Platonic Forms as Ideas in God's mind.
        2. Augustine's argument is that God must have created the world according to a rational or logical plan (*ratio* in Latin, *logos* in Greek).

3. But it would be "sacrilegious," Augustine argues, to think the Forms were outside God, governing his actions (as with the demiurge in the *Timaeus*)—so they must be God's own eternal ideas.
4. The Forms in God's mind are eternal and uncreated (God did not make them or think them up) so they are an inherent and necessary aspect of God's very being.

C. The Scriptural Wisdom Traditions
1. "Wisdom" is a theme in nearly every culture or tradition—usually focusing on the practical wisdom of life.
2. The Scriptural wisdom traditions (e.g. the Book of Proverbs) contain, in addition to a great deal of practical advice, some meditations on Wisdom as a kind of divine principle of creation.
3. Most notably, in Proverbs 8, Wisdom is personified as the LORD's consort from the beginning, by which he created the world.
4. Thus Proverbs' "Wisdom" resembles Platonic Forms, and provides a Scriptural basis for Philo's notion of *Logos*.

D. The *Logos* of God in the Scriptures
1. Also part of the background for Philo's picture are Scriptural references to the "Word" of God, which in the Greek translation of the Scriptures is *logos*.
2. These references are most common in the prophets, who deliver messages to Israel which they describe as "the Word of the Lord."
3. The God of the Bible is constantly speaking (not just thinking) even at the beginning in creation (e.g. "And God *said*, 'Let there be light,'" in Gen. 1:3).
4. On a traditional interpretation, it is reasonable for a Platonist to identify God's speaking at the beginning of creation with a *logos* or Form in God's mind (since no air has been created yet in which God could literally *speak*).
5. Yet certain features of the text resist this interpretation, including the apparent social setting (God says "let *us* make...." in Gen. 1:26).
6. Many historians think an earlier version of this story might have included reference to a heavenly "court" of angels or gods, but that this was edited out of the canonical version of the story.
7. Thus the canonical text is headed in the direction of the traditional (Platonizing) interpretation of God as a unique First Principle—but does not quite get there.
8. This is typical of the shape of the canonical Scriptures: no longer pagan, but not yet Platonist—neither mythological nor philosophical, but capable of being read in both ways.

III. The Soul Going to Heaven
A. The Return of the Soul in Platonism
1. Plotinus' theme of the Soul turning back toward the divine Mind is rooted in Plato's account of the return of the human soul to the realm of the Forms in the *Phaedo*.
2. Plato argues that even our life in the body should be spent practicing for death, which is the separation of the soul from the body.
3. Plato uses metaphors of ascent, even ascent to the heavens, to describe this return to the realm of the Forms; but the Forms cannot literally be located in the visible heavens.

B. Going to Heaven in Cicero
1. The earliest Western author to describe the soul literally going to heaven after death is Cicero in the *Tusculan Disputations* and *The Dream of Scipio*.
2. According to ancient physics, the natural world is made of four elements, arranged in order of weight: earth, water, air and fire.
3. Cicero (following the Stoics and Aristotle) says the body is composed of the heavier elements (earth and water), the soul of the lighter ones (air and fire, or else a celestial "fifth element").
4. The soul, after being released from the body by death, rises to its natural place—high up in the heavens with the fire (or fifth element) in the stars.

C. Going to Heaven and the Bible
1. The implications of both the Platonist and Ciceronian view is that we do not really belong on earth.
2. The implications of Genesis are the opposite: God made Adam and Earth with bodies (feet that are clearly designed to walk on earth) and when he looked at the whole arrangement he saw that "it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).

3. The notion that good people's souls go to heaven when they die is not found anywhere in the Bible.
4. The one passage which locates disembodied souls in heaven is Revelation 6:9-11, and there they are not happy but waiting for God to finish his work of judging the world, after which they will be re-united to their bodies (Rev. 20:4-6).
5. In the same Biblical book there is a heavenly city, the new Jerusalem where the blessed dwell, but people do not go up to it—instead it descends from heaven so that God may make his dwelling among human beings on earth (Rev. 21).
6. In the Bible only two people are described as going to heaven, Elijah (1 Kings 2) and Jesus; but both of them ascend *bodily*, neither are dead, and both are expected to return.

Essential Reading:

Genesis, chapter 1; Proverbs, chapter 8; Psalm 82; Revelation, chapter 21;

Philo, *Philo of Alexandria* pp. 87-109 (esp. pp. 99-100); Cicero, "Scipio's Dream" (=*Republic* 6:9.9 - 6:26.29)

Supplemental Reading:

Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1:16.36 - 1:31.75

Augustine, *City of God* 8:1-12 and 10:1-3 (on Christianity and Platonism)

———, *Confessions* 11:4.6 - 11:9.11 (on what kind of word God "spoke" at the beginning of creation)

Questions to Consider:

1. What kind of afterlife makes most sense to you: one in which we still have our bodies or one in which we are pure souls?

2. Does the notion of Platonic Forms in the mind of God fit your picture of who or what God is?

Lecture Eight
The New Testament—Life in Christ

Scope: In contrast to the Platonist view of the immortality of the soul, the New Testament speaks of the bodily resurrection of the dead, beginning with Jesus Christ. Those who believed the proclamation of Christ's resurrection thought of themselves as sharing in his everlasting life, and gathered in congregations that called themselves the "body of Christ." Hence for Christians Jesus' body is the holy place where God is to be met: this is the root of the Christian teaching that Christ is God incarnate.

Outline

I. Death and Resurrection

    A. Comparison: Socrates' Body and Jesus' Body
        1. At the hour of his death Socrates warns his students not to look on his dead body as if it was *him*: his soul, not his body, is his real self (*Phaedo*).
        2. By contrast, the Easter story identifies the life of Jesus with his resurrected body, which is no longer dead and will never die again.
        3. Thus the two traditions have two different conceptions of "the afterlife": Platonism teaches the immortality of the soul, and Christianity the resurrection of the dead (or resurrection of the body).
        4. The orthodox Christian tradition combines these two pictures by supposing that upon death souls go immediately to heaven or hell (immortality of the soul) but that on Judgment Day they will be re-united with their bodies (resurrection of the dead).

    B. How Socrates and Jesus Faced Death
        1. Socrates faces his death cheerfully, convinced that the grief and tears of his followers are based on an intellectual mistake.
        2. In the synoptic Gospels, by contrast, Jesus sweats blood in the garden of Gethsemane praying to be spared from the cross, and he dies in anguish, uttering the "cry of dereliction:" "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
        3. The raising of Jesus from the dead, in this context, is God's vindication of Jesus' mission—confirmation that the man on the cross was not forsaken, but is well-pleasing to God.

    C. The Body of Christ as Holy Place
        1. Far from being insignificant like Socrates' body, the body of Christ becomes for Christians the site of God's presence, the holy place where they meet God.
        2. Eternal life, for Christianity, means sharing the life of this unique man who once was dead and now lives forever at God's right hand.
        3. The community which shares the life of the resurrected Jesus is called "the body of Christ."
        4. The community's central ritual, the Eucharist, is an evocation of the body and blood of Christ designed to bring its members to participate in his life.
        5. The invisibility of this holy place is the Christian version of Scriptural eschatology: the presence of God in a place where human beings may meet him face to face is a thing awaited and hoped for rather than seen.

II. Life in Christ

    A. The Proclamation of Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead
        1. Some time in the decades after Jesus' death, his followers (who were originally all Jews) started preaching to Gentiles (i.e., non-Jews) throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.
        2. The central element in this preaching was the proclamation that God had raised Jesus from the dead.
        3. Those who believed this proclamation were invited to join the church, a community consisting of both Jews and Gentiles.
        4. The basic understanding of these congregations was that by believing in the resurrected Jesus they shared in his everlasting life.

    B. The Church, as the Body of Christ, Shares His Life

1. Unlike Israel (and most ancient religions) the church of Christ was a community whose membership was defined not by ethnicity or civic obligation, but by faith—i.e., the fact that its members believed the proclamation of Christ's resurrection.
2. Initiation into this community was by the solemn ceremony of baptism, a form of ritual washing indicating a passage from death to life—from the life of "this age" to the life of the body of Christ.
3. Paul, the most important of the Jews who preached the message of Christ to the Gentiles, taught his congregations to think of themselves as "the body of Christ," a community whose head was Christ, from whom they drew their life (1 Cor. 12).
4. Hence to believe in Christ and to be baptized was to be "incorporated" into Christ, and to share His life and Spirit.
5. The Gospel of John uses a similar image: Christ is like a vine, and those who believe in Him are like branches who live and grow in Him.
6. Paul uses a bold version of this image to suggest that believers in Christ are "grafted" into the people of Israel, so that Gentiles may share in the covenant between God and His people (Romans 11).
7. Through faith the community of believers thus shares in the life of the risen Jesus and the expectation of a resurrection like His—i.e., the hope of everlasting life.

III. The Divine Identity of Jesus

    A. Jesus as Lord
1. The proclamation that "Jesus is Lord" seems to have been central to early Christian preaching, along with "God raised him from the dead."
2. This proclamation implies the pre-eminence of Jesus over other heavenly or cosmic powers.
3. When brought into the discourse of the Scriptures of Israel, it implies some kind of unity between Jesus and the LORD God of Israel, such that the honor due to the LORD alone can be given to Jesus too.
4. This is implicit in an early Christian hymn quoted by Paul (in Philippians 2:5-11) which applies to Christ language that had been reserved in the Scriptures for the LORD God of Israel (cf. Isaiah 45:23).
5. The implication at the end (Philippians 2:11) is that glory given to Jesus is glory given to the LORD.

    B. The Son of Man and the Throne of God
1. The church believed that Jesus lives bodily now in heaven at God's right hand, and would one day return in glory as judge of the world.
2. This belief was associated with the Scriptural picture of a "Son of Man" standing at the right hand of the throne of the "Ancient of Days" (i.e. God) in Daniel 7:9-14 (a passage often alluded to in the New Testament).
3. In one variant of this picture, the book of Revelation pictures Jesus as the Lamb of God, standing not at the right hand of the Ancient of Days, but "in the midst of" his throne (7:17) which is called "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (22:1).
4. The implication is that Jesus is not just God's "right hand man," but that He shares the very throne of God.

    C. Jesus' Divine Identity in the Gospel of John
1. In language reminiscent of Philo, the Gospel of John begins: "In the beginning was the *logos*" by which the world was made, and this *logos* both was "with God" and "was God" (1:1).
2. But John proceeds to identify this *logos* with Jesus ("and the *logos* became flesh," 1:14).
3. This identification of Jesus with the *logos* of God is a keynote especially of Christian Platonist theology: Christ is the eternal Wisdom and Form by which God gave form and order to the universe, the blueprint for all that God made.
4. The language of "life in Christ" takes on a special intensity in the Gospel of John, where being in Christ is tantamount to being in God (e.g. John 17:21f).
5. The fact that Jesus is the eternal *logos* of God helps explain why in the Gospel of John, Jesus at one point pointedly refrains from praying to be spared the cross (John 12:27), regarding it instead as his moment of glory, and His last words are not a cry of forsakenness, but rather, "It is accomplished."
6. Since this depiction of the crucifixion is in the canonical text along with the portrait of his anguish on the cross in the synoptic Gospels, the orthodox Christian tradition is committed to them both: Christ is both impassive victor over suffering and death and anguished victim of them.

Essential Reading:

Romans 11:17-24

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Philippians 2:5-11

John, chapters 1 and 15-17

Daniel 7:9-14 (esp. compare 7:13 with Matthew 26:64 and Mark 14:62)

Revelation, chapters 5-6

Supplemental Reading:

Plato, *Phaedo* 115b-118b

Cullmann, "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?"

Questions to Consider:

1. Does it make sense to say that one man (out of all the human beings who ever lived) died once, but now lives forever? Why or why not?

2. What do you think it means to believe in Christ? In your view, what is Christianity about?

Lecture Nine
Rabbinic Judaism—Israel and the Torah

Scope: The religion we now know as Judaism arose after the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D., when under the leadership of the rabbis (Jewish Scripture-scholars) the focus of Israel's worship changed from temple to Torah. While Christians came to see Christ as the eternal Wisdom of God, Jews saw that role embodied in Torah, the Law of God in both its written and its oral form—the latter consisting of the rabbinic interpretation of the former. The resulting religious tradition focused not merely on obedience to legal rulings, but also on the importance of Torah-study as the "place" of God's gracious presence in Israel.

Outline

I. The Centrality of Law in Judaism
   A. Against Christian Misconstruals of Jewish Law
      1. The Christian tendency to see Judaism as "legalistic" stands in the way of understanding Judaism's devotion to the Law or Torah.
      2. This tendency is often reinforced by a misreading of the New Testament letters of Paul, who contrasted grace with Law, or "justification by faith" with the attempt to be justified by "works of the law."
      3. Paul is not comparing a Christian focus on grace with a Jewish focus on Law, but rather contrasting two different *Christian* answers to the question of how one becomes a member of the body of Christ.
   B. Why the Law Became a Problem for Early Christians
      1. The original followers of Jesus were all Jewish.
      2. Once Gentiles started believing in the message about Jesus, the question was whether they needed to convert to Judaism in order to join the Christian community.
      3. The New Testament answer was "No": it was enough for Gentiles to believe in Christ, without requiring them to observe Jewish Law.
      4. This is what Paul means when he says Christians are "justified by faith" rather than by "works of the Law."
      5. This does not mean that Christians had no rules to follow once they are members of the body of Christ, but only that observing the Jewish law was not an "entrance requirement" for the Church (as E.P. Sanders puts it).
   C. Law as Eternal Wisdom
      1. The difference between Christians and Jews is not that Christians follow no law or that Jews know nothing of grace, but rather that Christians find the law of God (and all good things) in Christ, and Jews find the grace of God (and all good things) in the Law or Torah.
      2. The point can be put philosophically by saying: whereas Christians identified Christ as the eternal Wisdom of God, for Jews the Torah is the eternal Wisdom of God.
      3. For instance when Christians read of Wisdom being with God at the beginning (Proverbs 8:22-31) they think of Christ, while Jews think of Torah.

II. Introduction to Rabbinic Judaism
   A. From Temple to Torah
      1. The religion we now call Judaism developed as the ancient Israelite worship centered on the temple was supplemented by an increased emphasis on observance of the Law of Moses in ordinary households in daily life (not just in the Temple). The Pharisee sect pushed for this kind of daily observance of the Torah.
      2. This development became central to the life of Israel when the second temple was destroyed by the Romans during the Great Revolt in 70 A.D.
      3. The religious life of Israel after this point was organized by rabbis (i.e., scholars of Jewish Law) in Palestine and later in Babylon.
   B. The Chief Rabbinic Texts

1. The *Mishnah*, a collection of legal rulings (*halakhot*) based on the scriptural Law or Torah, which were originally formulated and passed on orally but were compiled in writing c. 200 A.D.
2. The *Talmud* of Palestine (or Jerusalem Talmud) and the Talmud of Babylon, both of which contain the *Mishnah* together with commentary on it (called *Gemara*), developed in the 3rd –5th centuries A.D.
3. The *Midrashim*, collections of rabbinic interpretations of the Scriptures.

III. The *Mishnah*

    A. The Philosophy of the *Mishnah*

        1. The *Mishnah* is a collection of legal rulings (*halakhot*) for a time when there is no Temple, no visible place of divine presence, no story of God's saving acts to tell.

        2. God seems almost absent in the *Mishnah*, except that there is a connection between the Torah and the Divine Presence (*Shekhinah*) in the extraordinary chapter devoted to the sayings of the sages (*Abot* or *Avot*).

        3. This is the underlying philosophy of the *Mishnah*: study and observance of Torah by Israel is the way God comes to earth.

    B. The Status of the *Mishnah*: Oral Torah

        1. The question arises of the status of the *Mishnah* in relation to Scripture: the *Mishnah* is constantly spelling out how to obey Scriptural laws, yet seldom explicitly bases its views on quotations from, or interpretations of, Scripture.

        2. The answer to this question is "the Judaism of the dual Torah" (i.e., rabbinic Judaism as we know it today) which acknowledges Scripture as written Torah, and Talmud as oral Torah, both of which were revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

IV. The Philosophy of Rabbinic *Midrash*: two examples

    A. "The sun also rises" (Midrash on Ecclesiastes 1:5)

        1. A gloomy passage is taken out of context and interpreted as a piece of comfort.

        2. But the allegory is not Platonic in style: it is not about timeless truths or essences, but about how God sustains Israel through history.

        3. The focus of that sustenance—and thus of the rabbis' interpretation—is the Torah and Israel's study of it.

        4. Hence the rabbinic interpretation is about the work of rabbinic interpretation (i.e., their leadership in Israel's Torah study) as the means by which God sustains his people.

    B. "My children have defeated me!" (Babylonian Talmud)

        1. As often happens in the Talmud, we overhear the rabbis arguing about the proper interpretation of Torah.

        2. The passage attributes tremendous authority to the rabbis, but not to any individual rabbi: it's not individual rabbis and their personalities that matter, but Israel's common enterprise of studying Torah, as represented by rabbinic discussion—indeed this discussion is nothing less than oral Torah.

        3. The rabbis "defeat God" not by defying him, but by appealing to written Torah.

        4. God laughs in delight that his children have defeated him this way: the story pictures God as a gracious father (not a legalistic judge) and shows the playfulness (not literalism) of rabbinic exegesis.

        5. In such texts (called *Haggadot*, the "lore" or "legends" of the rabbis) God once again is present in stories—unlike *Mishnah* (with its focus on *Halakhot* or legal rulings).

        6. The playfulness of these stories demonstrates the interpretive freedom of Rabbinic Midrash: the rabbis feel free make up funny stories about God!

        7. These stories do not have the weight of the Scriptural narratives, and they constantly point to the written Torah as the fundamental authority—yet they are themselves part of oral Torah, and have decisively formed Jewish conceptions of God.

V. God, Torah and Israel's Place in the Universe

    A. Study of Torah is for the rabbis what contemplation of the form of Wisdom is for the Platonists: it is what we were made for, what the creation is all about.

    B. Yet there is a difference: study of Torah is not an activity of pure intellect, but is always embodied in practices of memorization, discussion, and recitation in the religious life of a particular people, Israel.

C. Study and obedience to Torah is how Israel loves her God—how Israel and her God take joy in one another.

D. Torah study is not just for sages and rabbis, but is an obligation of all adult Israelites: which is why the central event of Jewish coming-of-age (bar-mitzvah) is the young person's recitation of Torah in the synagogue.

E. It is as if, when the Torah scroll is read aloud in synagogue the meaning of the universe is being fulfilled.

Essential Reading:

Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud*, chapters 1-4.

Supplemental Reading:

Neusner, ed., *The Mishnah* esp. *Abot* (pp. 672-688)

Neusner, *What is Midrash*? esp. Part III.

Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp.419-428.

Questions to Consider:

1. Jewish-Christian relations have often gone terribly wrong. Do you think there are intellectual reasons for this—specific philosophical and religious misunderstandings (as opposed to mere racism and other forms of ignorance)?

2. In what respects is the philosophy of "the Judaism of the dual Torah" the same as that of the Scriptures of Israel? How do they differ? Is the one a continuous development from the other, or a break from it?

Lecture Ten

Church Fathers—The *Logos* Made Flesh

Scope: While the rabbis were forming orthodox Judaism, the Church fathers were forming orthodox Christianity. The latter has two central doctrines, Trinity and Christology, both of which stem from the Christian practice of worshipping Jesus. Belief that Jesus is God leads to the doctrine of the Trinity, the distinctively Christian concept of God, according to which God is the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, yet one God. Belief that this same Jesus is human leads to the Christology of Incarnation: the teaching that Jesus is both truly God and truly human, and that in His humanity He is the mediator or link between God and the creation. Because this one man is God, God suffers crucifixion; but because this God is a man, His human flesh has life-giving power.

Outline

I.   Scriptural Torah, Biblical Christ, and Platonic Form

   A. The Rabbis and the Church Fathers

      1. As the Rabbis were the formative teachers at the beginning of orthodox Judaism, the Church Fathers fulfilled the same role in early Christianity.

      2. Both developed a philosophy that can be expressed in Platonist terms: for the rabbis, Torah is the eternal Form of Wisdom, while for the Church fathers, Christ is (cf. Proverbs 8).

   B. Christ as Divine Wisdom

      1. The Church Fathers identify the divine Wisdom who was with the LORD from the beginning (Proverbs 8) with Christ as the *Logos* which was with God in the beginning (John 1:1).

      2. Parallel to the rabbis, who say that Torah is "the beginning" by which God created the heavens and the earth, the Church Fathers say the *Logos* is the beginning (i.e., the First Principle, *arche*) by which God created all things.

      3. But there is a crucial difference: according to the rabbis, Torah was the first thing God created, but according to the orthodox Church Fathers, Christ the *Logos* was never created, but existed before all creation.

      4. This difference leads to the distinctively Christian concept of God: the doctrine of the Trinity.

II. Trinity: the Status of Christ's Divinity

   A. Roots in Christian Worship

      1. In contrast to the Jews, who give extraordinary honor to Torah but do not worship it, Christians very early on began to worship Jesus.

      2. But since Scripture is very clear that worshipping anything God made is idolatry, this means Christians must believe Jesus is not one of the things God created.

      3. To formulate the relation between the eternal *Logos* and God, Christians used the Biblical language of begetting: as a father begets a son, so God generated the *Logos*.

      4. Interpreted with the help of Platonist philosophy, this came to be understood as a begetting before all time, an "*eternal* generation."

      5. But the entrance of Platonist philosophy caused new problems.

   B. Eternal Generation in Platonism

      1. In Plotinus, the divine Mind is eternally generated by the One: its being is always dependent on the One , yet it has always existed and never came into being.

      2. Because it is dependent on the One (and not vice versa) the Mind is lower and less than the One.

      3. Precisely because it is lower than the One, the divine Mind can mediate (act as intermediary) between the supreme One and all lower things.

      4. It does so by containing the Forms or essences which give form to the visible world, but also by being knowable (intelligible) while the One is above all knowledge.

   C. Subordinationism

      1. The early Church Fathers, led by Origen of Alexandria, adopted the notion of eternal generation and the mediatorial function of the *Logos* (analogous to Plotinus' concept of divine Mind).

    2. In the "subordinationist" doctrine of Origen, the *Logos* is the intelligible image of the incomprehensible God, making God knowable in an indirect or mediated way.

    3. This means Christ is not an object of ultimate worship, but the means or channel by which our worship reaches the Father, who is the one ultimate God.

  D. Arianism

    1. This Origenist subordinationism was thrown into a crisis when a priest in Alexandria named Arius pressed the Biblical question: since the *Logos* was generated by God, doesn't that mean he was *created*?

    2. Arius and the Arians answered yes: Christ the *Logos* is a creature, not at the same level as the Creator, God the Father.

    3. Abandoning the notion of eternal generation, Arius insisted that because the *Logos* was generated by the Father, he must have come into being and therefore "there was once when he (i.e., the *Logos*) was not."

    4. Arius' view (Arianism) became one of the great heresies rejected by the orthodox Christian tradition.

  E. Nicene Orthodoxy

    1. The orthodox response to Arianism was to affirm that Christ as *Logos* is properly the object of our worship, insisting that he is God at the same level and of the same nature as the Father.

    2. Orthodoxy eventually rallied around the teaching of the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) which defines Christ as eternally generated, begotten not created, and (the crucial new non-Biblical phrase) having "the same essence" (*homo-ousios*) as the Father.

    3. This phrase makes it clear that the *Logos* is not a created thing, but is God in the same sense and at the same level as God the Father.

    4. The phrase rules out subordinationism as well as Arianism, and therefore was widely resisted—because Origenist subordinationism, unlike Arianism, was a respected position among Christian intellectuals of the time.

    5. Ruling out subordinationism meant abandoning the Neoplatonist scheme of mediation (where one or more levels of being intervene and mediate between the One First Principle to the visible world) and replacing it with a sharp Biblical dichotomy: everything that exists is either God the Creator or something God created.

  F. The Trinity: One God

    1. For orthodox Christians, Christ as *Logos* belongs on Creator side of creature/Creator distinction.

    2. Hence the question arises: doesn't that make two Creators, and thus two Gods—three, when you add the Holy Spirit?

    3. No (the orthodox Church Fathers answered) for unlike three human beings, the Trinity has only one will and action.

  G. The Trinity: Three Persons

    1. Now another question arises: if there are not three Gods, then three *what*?

    2. To answer in Greek: 3 *hypostases* or complete individual beings.

    3. To answer in Latin: 3 persons (*personae*)—which in ancient usage does not mean souls or consciousnesses but roles in a drama.

    4. The three persons are differentiated by their interrelations: e.g., the Son is begotten by the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.

    5. Hence the Father is not the Son (*Logos*) and the Son (*Logos*) is not the Holy Spirit—even though each one of them is God, and there is only one God.

III. Christology: the Status of Christ's humanity

  A. Christology: the Doctrine about the Person of Christ

    1. Crucial issues of Christology arise after the Council of Nicaea sets forth the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.

    2. The crucial Christological question after Nicaea is: how is the eternal *Logos* related to the man Jesus?

    3. The key Biblical text in this regard is John 1:14, "And the *Logos* became flesh."

  B. Apollinarianism Rejected

1. Apollinaris, not long after Nicaea, taught that the divine *Logos* inhabited Jesus' flesh or body, taking the place of his soul.
2. This was rejected as heresy because it means Christ is not fully human—he has a human body but not a human soul.

C. Nestorianism Rejected
1. The next logical question is: how is the *Logos* related to the man Jesus (not simply to his body)?
2. Nestorius taught that the divine *Logos* and the man Jesus were permanently united, but were not one and the same person or *hypostasis*.
3. Nestorius' motive was to show that Christians did not worship a man and that God did not suffer crucifixion.
4. His view was rejected as heretical, in favor of the view that the man Jesus *is* God the Son, and not two persons united together, but only one person.
5. Hence, when Jesus was crucified, God suffered (though God the Father did not).
6. Another key implication of the orthodox rejection of Nestorianism is that Mary is "Mother of God" or "God-bearer" (not that she was the origin of God but that the baby she carried in her womb was God).
7. Perhaps the most important implication is that Christ's flesh is "life giving flesh," because it is the very flesh of God.

D. Chalcedon: Orthodox Christology
1. Orthodox Christology (formulated at the Council of Chalcedon in 451) teaches that Jesus is truly human.
2. Yet it also teaches that he is truly God (i.e., it is true to say this man is God and right to worship Him).
3. In Jesus, God and man are united as one person.
4. Hence the Chalcedonian formulation: in Jesus there are two natures, but only one person (in contrast to the Trinity, in which there is only one nature or essence, but three persons).
5. Consequently, Christ does mediate between God and creation, yet not as an intermediate being between them (as in subordinationism) but by being both God and something God created—both Creator and creature in one person.

IV. Incarnation and Particularity
A. The belief that Jesus is God leads to everything that is philosophically distinctive about Christian views of God (Trinity and Christology).
B. The Incarnation is not a principle (like the notion of a divine presence in the world in general) but a particular person: the orthodox Christian claim is that one particular human being, and He alone, is God in the flesh.
C. Unlike the rabbis, who were relatively uninterested in the philosophical questions about how the Torah, a particular thing in history, could be the eternal and universal wisdom of God, the Church Fathers were deeply concerned with the philosophical problems raised by claiming that a particular man is God.
D. Thus begins a special love-hate relationship between Christianity and philosophy, which is more intense than that between Judaism and philosophy.

Essential Reading:

Documents connected with the Council of Nicaea (Hardy, pp. 329-340)

Gregory of Nyssa, Letter to Ablabius "That We Should not Think of Saying There are Three Gods" (Hardy, pp. 256-267)

Documents connected with the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon (Hardy, pp. 346-374)

Supplemental Reading:

Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, chapters 4 and 5

Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate*, chapters 1-4

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think it makes sense to say that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet there is only one God? (Why is it that orthodox Christians want to say this strange thing?)

2. Do you think it makes sense to say that one person, Jesus, is both truly God and truly human? (Why is it that orthodox Christians want to say this strange thing?)

Lecture Eleven
The Development of Christian Platonism

Scope: Christian Platonism combines themes of Neoplatonist spirituality with Christian belief that it is through Christ that eternal life comes to us. The early, more radical Platonists in the Christian tradition focused on the movement of souls escaping bodies to ascend to heaven (Gnosticism) or falling into bodies as they descend from heaven (Origen). In orthodox Christian Platonism, however, souls remain embodied, receiving light from a celestial hierarchy above them (Denys in the East) or finding the light by turning within (Augustine in the West). Yet in the East the flesh of Christ remains the source of divine light represented in icons, and in the West the flesh of Christ becomes the life-giving foundation of the sacraments.

Outline

I. Christianity and Platonist Spirituality

   A. The doctrines of Trinity and Christology define orthodox Christianity's concept of God.

   B. Christian intellectuals from about 300 A.D. onward mostly took it for granted that the divine had to be a Platonist First Principle or Form—unchanging, impassable, and absolute.

   C. Yet when forced to think hard about the philosophical problems about Christ raised by the Bible and Christian worship, the Church Fathers gave prominence to dynamic relations in the Trinity, and to the suffering of God in Christ.

   D. Platonist spirituality, with its desire to escape suffering by being united to eternal essences (Forms or First Principle) was profoundly attractive to Christian intellectuals.

II. Outside Orthodoxy

   A. Gnosticism: the First Christian Heresy
      1. The motif of the soul going to heaven first enters the Christian tradition through the heretical movement known as Gnosticism.
      2. The Gnostics sought secret knowledge (*gnosis*) which would allow them to ascend up to a heavenly world populated by beings called "aeons" (something like a cross between Platonic Forms and Biblical angels).
      3. The Gnostics were thus the first Christians to believe "this world is not my home": they believed they came from the heavenly world, belonged there, and would return to it.
      4. While the orthodox accepted some Gnostic themes, they rejected the Gnostic movement as a whole, and especially the Gnostic view that it was a stupid mistake for the Jewish God to create the material world.
      5. Gnosticism can be regarded as a first (and unsuccessful) attempt to combine Christianity and Platonism in the second and third centuries A.D.

   B. Origen: a Pre-Orthodox Christian Platonism
      1. Origen speculated that we began our existence as disembodied souls in heaven.
      2. Along with the devils, we fell to earth when our eagerness and diligence in contemplating eternal truths flagged, initiating cycles of embodiment, death and rebirth, which serve as remedial discipline and purification.
      3. After many such cycles Origen hoped in the end for a restoration of all things, including the devils.
      4. Like Indian theories of *karma*, Origen's speculations have attracted Westerners interested in explaining why some people suffer more than others do—it's because of evil done in previous lives.
      5. Unlike the Gnostics, Origen affirms that God created the material world in wisdom and goodness—but the implication that it is designed as a remedy for our failures rather than as a good in itself was rejected by Christian orthodoxy.
      6. While Origen's overall system was rejected by later orthodoxy, his form of Christian Platonism was immensely influential.

III. Eastern Orthodox Neoplatonism: Denys ("Pseudo-Dionysius")
   A. Celestial Hierarchy
      1. In the pagan Neoplatonist Proclus, the divine Mind is divided into a whole hierarchy of divine minds or intellects.
      2. Denys, influenced by Proclus, describes a celestial hierarchy of immortal intellects—the angels.
      3. Unlike the Gnostics, however, Denys' realm of immortal beings is not governed by a dynamic of fall and return, but rather of illumination and ecstasy: every being remains in its place in the hierarchy, illuminating beings below it, and going out of itself in love toward God above.
      4. For Denys, God too is "ecstatic" (i.e., he goes out of himself): for it is the nature of the Good to "diffuse itself."
   B. Trinity as Simple Incomprehensible One
      1. Denys clearly puts the Trinity at the level of Plotinus' One.
      2. The simplicity of the One is the explanation of why the Trinity is one God.
      3. Denys enthusiastically adopts the Neoplatonist description of the One as "above essences" or "beyond being."
      4. Denys emphasizes (more than Augustine) God's incomprehensibility.
      5. Denys develops the *via negativa* or apophaticism, the strategy of trying to hint at the nature of God by saying what God is *not*.

IV. Western Christian Neoplatonism: Augustine
   A. Happiness Is Seeing God
      1. While Denys clearly locates the Trinity at the level of Plotinus' One, Augustine of Hippo often uses concepts associated with the level of the divine Mind (e.g., intelligibility and Form) to describe God.
      2. Thus for Denys, God is like the sun, too bright for us ever to gaze at with our mind's eye, while Augustine thinks that when our minds are strengthened and made perfect, we will find our happiness in seeing God.
      3. The desire for this happiness is charity, the love of God, which lifts us up to God (as inevitably as fire goes up to the heaven).
   B. God in the Soul's Inner World
      1. In contrast to Denys, for Augustine the angels have no role as mediators of divine light: we find the true light by turning inward (like Plotinus).
      2. Yet because Augustine does not believe the soul is divine, his inner world is not the same as the intelligible world of Forms in the divine Mind (unlike Plotinus).
      3. Hence Augustine insists we must turn "in, then up": after entering into the inner space of our own souls, we must look above our souls to God.
      4. Thus Augustine adapts Neoplatonist inwardness for Christian purposes: the soul is not divine, but it is the place to go to see God (an epochal new version of the "holy place" where God is met).
      5. The result is a new concept of the self: a private inner world toward which we can gaze, into which we can enter and search for God.

V. Visible Things as Holy Places Where Christ's Body is Met
   A. Denys and Augustine bring key elements of Platonist spirituality into their respective traditions (East and West), making them safe for orthodoxy.
      1. Denys formulates powerful and orthodox versions of the incomprehensibility of the One, apophaticism and the hierarchy of immortal beings.
      2. Augustine introduces an inward turn and emphasis on intellectual vision of God.
      3. But where does Christ fit in to these Neoplatonist spiritualities? Both Western and Eastern Christianity need to say more about how spirituality can be conceived as life in Christ, meeting Christ in His body or life-giving flesh.
   B. East: Icons of Christ's Flesh
      1. In the story of the Transfiguration the Eastern Orthodox churches see the paradigm of divine light streaming from Christ's life-giving flesh.
      2. The body of Christ can be the source of divine light because it is the flesh of God—deified humanity.

3. All those who live in Christ are also deified as adopted children of God—so that in the East "deification" becomes the name of the ultimate goal of human life, as "beatific vision" is in the West.
4. Eastern orthodox Christian venerate icons because in them we see deified humanity—the flesh of Christ or of the saints who live in Christ.
5. Hence the practice of venerating icons embodies the characteristically Eastern Christian understanding of the New Testament theme of life in Christ.

C. West: Sacraments of Christ's Flesh
1. Augustine, picking up on the New Testament theme of the Church as the spiritual Body of Christ, identifies it as an community of souls inwardly united by the shared love of God.
2. The sacraments (especially Baptism and Eucharist) are outward signs marking that inward unity.
3. Unlike icons, in which Eastern Christians see visible images of divine glory, sacraments (for Augustine) point away from themselves to something more inward.
4. A piety centered on the sacraments, understood as uniting us to Christ's body, becomes the basis of a characteristically Western understanding of life in Christ.

Essential Reading:

Matthew 17:1-9 (the Transfiguration)

Denys, *The Mystical Theology* and *The Divine Names*, chapter 1

Augustine, *Confessions*, 10:6-27 (on the inner self)

———, *City of God*, 10:5-6 (on the sacraments)

Supplemental Reading:

Ouspensky, "The Meaning and Language of Icons" in *The Meaning of Icons*, pp. 23-49

Origen, *On First Principles*, book 1

Denys, *The Celestial Hierarchy*

"The Apocryphon of John" in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, pp. 104-123. *The Nag Hammadi Library* is a collection of original texts of Gnosticism, discovered in the Egyptian desert in the 1945. Readers wanting some guidance in reading these texts should consult Jonas (for a critical examination of Gnostic philosophy) or Pagels (for a sympathetic portrait of Gnostic spirituality).

Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, chapters 2, 8,10

Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, esp. chapters 1 and 6

Questions to Consider:

1. Can what is divine change or suffer? Is it good new if it does?
2. Which of these seems to you a more likely place to find God: in icons, in sacraments, or in your own inner self?

Lecture Twelve

Jewish Rationalism and Mysticism—
Maimonides and Kabbalah

Scope: Jewish thought in the Middle Ages went in two opposite directions. The rationalist direction was represented by the great philosopher Maimonides, who interpreted the Scriptures as a figurative expression (suitable for the masses) of underlying metaphysical truths which are explained literally in Aristotelian philosophy. The mystical direction was represented by the *Zohar* and other texts of Kabbalah, the Jewish esoteric tradition that interpreted the words of Torah as revelations of events in the realm of divine attributes (the *Sefirot*). Probably because it took the Torah so much more seriously, the mystical direction had a deeper impact on the Jewish tradition as a whole.

Outline

I. Jewish Rationalism: Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*

    A. Historical Context

        1. With the break up of the Roman Empire, knowledge of the great writings of Greek philosophy was lost in the West.

        2. The Greek philosophical tradition was kept alive in the (Greek-speaking) Byzantine empire, but flourished especially in the new Islamic lands, which were eager to absorb the best in Western thought.

        3. In the early Middle Ages, a large portion of the Jewish world lived within the Muslim world, and thus had access to Greek philosophy.

        4. Hence when Christian philosophy flowered in the 13th century, it was largely because of the influx of Greek philosophical knowledge from Arabs and Jews.

        5. Maimonides (1135-1204), who lived in Egypt and in (Muslim) Spain, is the key example of this Jewish-Arabian philosophy.

        6. The philosophy with which he interacted was Arab Aristotelianism, as represented most powerfully by Avicenna (Ibn Sina).

        7. Maimonides took a rationalist approach to Jewish texts and tradition.

    B. Maimonides insisted on figurative reading of Biblical anthropomorphisms.

        1. Unlike Philo, Maimonides does not read whole narratives as allegorical, but rather focuses on the figurative meaning of specific words, especially as applied to God.

        2. For example, "When God sees" refers to intellectual perception, not the vision of the eyes of the body.

        3. The "face" of God is his presence.

        4. God, being incorporeal, is not located literally in any particular place. He is "Most High, not in space, but with respect to absolute existence, greatness, and power."

        5. When he "descends" that does not imply literal movement in space, but rather that he reveals himself, as when he "descended" upon Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:20).

        6. Maimonides' allegorizing is moderate (in contrast to Philo) yet it still implies that "the many" who read Torah literally, don't understand it.

    C. Maimonides denied there were separate divine attributes.

        1. Divine "attributes" means qualities attributed to God, such as when we say God is wise, powerful, merciful and just.

        2. Such qualities, attributed to creatures like us, are accidents (in the logical sense): our essence could be without them, and therefore they are additional or accidental to our being.

        3. But if such qualities are additional to the essence of God, then we have a plurality of divine things in addition to his essence: his wisdom, power, etc.—which threatens to undermine monotheism.

        4. To preserve monotheism, Maimonides argues that divine attributes are either actions (not qualities added to God's essence) or identical with his essence (so that God does not have wisdom, life and existence, but *is* Wisdom, Life etc.).

    D. Heavenly Intelligences

1. In Maimonides (following Avicenna) the Neoplatonist realm of Mind reappears, wedding Proclus' celestial hierarchy to Aristotelian astronomy and astrology.
2. Each sphere of the heavens is animated by a living Intelligence.
3. Influence descends down the chain of Heavenly Intelligences, communicating Form from higher to lower beings.
4. The lowest of these Intelligences is the Agent Intellect, which illumines our mind with intelligible ideas.

E. Prophecy is illumination by the Agent Intellect that spills over from a human mind to the imagination.

F. Providence affects us in direct proportion to our participation in Agent Intellect.
1. Evil is rooted in the instability of matter, its tendency toward decay and death.
2. Providence, extending downward from the heavens (where all is permanent, orderly and deathless) does not extend to material things below the moon (where change, disorder and death predominate).
3. Providence affects humans to the degree that they participate in intelligible Forms mediated to their minds by the Agent Intellect.
4. To translate this into more Biblical language: Maimonides says human beings "enjoy divine protection in proportion to their [moral] perfection and [religious] piety."

G. Human perfection is not beatific vision but expertise in metaphysics: guided by illumination of Agent Intellect we can frame proofs of the existence, unity and incorporeality of God.

H. Problems with Maimonides' Rationalism
1. It denigrates ordinary believers, who have no expertise in metaphysics and thus participate less in the illumination of the Agent Intellect, and thereby seem *morally* inferior to the intelligentsia.
2. It makes the Torah seem second-rate, consisting merely of symbols of a truth which is stated literally in metaphysics.
3. Maimonides really marks the apogee—and end—of Jewish involvement with classical philosophy.

II. Jewish Mysticism: Kabbalah

A. Historical Background: the Esoteric Tradition in Judaism
1. The *Mishnah* lists three subjects not to be taught in public: Laws regarding incest, the account of creation (in Genesis) and—most dangerous of all—the account of the Chariot (*merkabah*) in the opening chapter of Ezekiel.
2. The *Gemara* comments: there were four sages who "entered the Garden" (of esoteric speculation) "and looked in" (to the Merkabah?); one died, one went crazy, one became a heretic, and only one (Rabbi Akiva) "entered in peace and left in peace."
3. *Merkabah* mysticism developed from what Gershon Scholem calls Jewish gnostic attempts to ascend through heavenly realms and powers to see the throne of God, to a tradition of contemplation of the attributes or *Sefirot* of God—a tradition called Kabbalah.
4. The key developments of the tradition of Kabbalah occurred in 13th century Spain, culminating in the book of "Splendor," the *Zohar*.

B. Mutations of Divine Attributes: *Ein-Sof* and *Sefirot*
1. The fundamental distinction in Kabbalah resembles Plotinus' distinction between the One and the intelligible world in the divine Mind.
2. The distinction is between *Ein-Sof* (the divine as infinite, undifferentiated and unknowable) and the *Sefirot* (the attributes and activities which reveal the divine being).
3. Both are divine, yet the *Sefirot* are derived from and secondary to *Ein-Sof*.
4. The *Sefirot* are the way God interacts with the created world, and they are the aspect of the divine which can be described and at least partly understood.

C. The Realm of *Sefirot*
1. In the classic period of Kabbalah (13th c. Spain) mystical speculations centered on the world of the *Sefirot*.
2. The ten *Sefirot* emanate from *Ein-Sof* in a definite sequence: first *Ketzer* ("Crown" or "Nothingness") then *Hokhmah* ("Wisdom" or "Point") then *Binah* ("Thought" or "Palace") down to *Shekhinah* (the divine Presence) which is the last.

3. The emanation is not direct from *Ein-Sof* but mediated (each *Sefirah* or attribute emanates from the preceding one).
4. There is a definite order of emanation "downward" but the result is not a completely vertical hierarchy (as in Proclus) for there are right-left directions as well.
5. These pairings can be gendered: e.g. *Hokhmah* is masculine while *Binah* is feminine (and often called "Womb").

    D. Suffering and Evil in the Divine Realm
1. In one pairing, the attribute of "severe judgment" (*Gevurah*) may get out of balance, outweighing the attribute of "loving kindness" (*Hesed*)—and then the wrath of God comes upon the world.
2. Thus sin and suffering in our world are bound up with disruption in the realm of the *Sefirot*—i.e., a disruption in God.
3. By the same token, every good act (especially by an Israelite obeying the commandments of Torah) helps heal the disruption in the divine being and brings to the world a kind of restoration (*Tikkun*).
4. *Shekhinah* or "divine presence" is female, and she goes into exile from the realm of the *Sefirot* when Israel is exiled from Jerusalem.

    E. Torah in Kabbalah
1. In contrast to gnostics or Christian mystics, the Kabbalists do not describe their own visionary experiences in the first person.
2. Instead, Kabbalistic texts like the *Zohar* present themselves as *midrashim*, rabbinic interpretations of Torah, finding references to the realm of the *Sefirot* in every word of the Torah.
3. In one branch of Kabbalah, there developed a mystic contemplation of the potency of the Hebrew alphabet, and especially of permutations of the divine name (YHWH).
4. Thus Kabbalistic mysticism could never be separated from the practice of Torah study.

III. Judaism and Philosophy

    A. Kabbalah became a central element in orthodox Judaism for five centuries after the *Zohar*, while Maimonides' philosophy did not.

    B. Many Kabbalists were in fact reacting against Maimonides' rationalism, his tendency to make Torah secondary to Greek metaphysics.

    C. Kabbalah succeeded in maintaining the key emphases of rabbinic Judaism (the ultimate value of Torah and the divine Name) while Maimonides did not.

    D. Thus Kabbalah, with its inconsistent philosophy, could be good Judaism, whereas no amount of sound metaphysics can take the place of Torah in Judaism.

Essential Reading:

Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, 1:1-13, 1:31-35, 1:50-60, 2:32-38, 3:16-18, and 3:51-54

Supplemental Reading:

Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, chapter 6

Questions to Consider:

1. Can or should Judaism be more philosophical? (Does the example of Maimonides serve as a warning against a synthesis of Judaism and philosophy, or an example of how it should be done—or an example of how not to do it?)

2. Does the notion of evil and suffering and disruption within the divine realm of God's attributes make you uncomfortable—or serve as comfort?

Glossary

Adonai: Hebrew for "Lord," this word is pronounced by Jews in place of the sacred name for God, YHWH (*q.v.*)

A priori: Latin for "in advance"; in Kantian philosophy this term refers to knowledge we can have "in advance of experience" or (in other words) without having to make any observations—e.g., mathematics is an *a priori* science, but physics is not.

Absolute: not relative (q.v.).

Active Intellect (called by medieval philosophers, "Agent Intellect"): in Aristotelian philosophy, the part or aspect of the intellect that makes Forms in material objects (which are potentially understandable) actually understood.

Actual Occasions: in Whitehead's process philosophy, this refers to the events which are the basic constituents of reality.

Actualism: the view, characteristic of both Barth and Bultmann, that revelation, faith or the knowledge of God are always *events* (due to the *act* of God) rather than things we can possess.

Agent Intellect: see Active Intellect.

Allegory: method of interpretation in which persons, events or characteristics in a narrative are read as symbols of a higher reality; allegory is specially characteristic of Platonist readings of the Bible "according to the spirit rather than the letter."

"Allegory of the Cave": name given by scholars to a particularly important passage from Plato's *Republic*, book 7.

Anthropomorphism: from the Greek words *anthropos* ("human") and *morphe* ("form"), this refers to the tendency to describe God in ways that make him look human; thus the descriptions of God in the Bible are more anthropomorphic than the concept of the divine in Platonism.

Apollinarianism: the Christological teaching of Apollinarius, who held that in Jesus the divine *Logos* replaced the human soul; rejected by the orthodox because it would mean that Jesus, having no human soul, was not truly human.

Apophaticism: from the Greek term for negation or denial; the characteristically Eastern Christian approach to speaking about God by saying what he is not rather than what he is; called in the West *via negativa*.

Arianism: the view of the Trinity taught by Arius (early 4th century) according to which Christ as *Logos* is the first of all the things God created; known to orthodox or *Nicene* theologians as "the Arian heresy."

Asceticism: from the Greek *askesis*, meaning "discipline"; refers to religious or spiritual disciplines such as fasting and celibacy, which are associated in the Christian Platonist tradition with efforts to give the soul control over or freedom from the body.

Aufhebung: German term (from a verb meaning literally "to pick up") translated in these lectures as "subsumption" (but elsewhere "sublation," "sublimation," supercession," "cancellation," or "abolition"); Hegel uses this term to describe the completion of the dialectical movement from opposition to unification, which involves both canceling and preserving the opposition, and resolving it at a higher level of consciousness.

Autonomy: from a Greek term for "self-legislation"; in Kant, this refers to the fact that rational beings legislate the moral law for themselves—it is not imposed on them from outside (not even by God). Contrast *heteronomy*.

Beatific Vision: literally, "the seeing that makes [us] happy"; in the Augustinian tradition, this means seeing God, which is the goal of human life and the source of our ultimate happiness or beatitude.

Bible: see *Scriptures*.

Binah: Hebrew for "Thought", the name for the third *Sefirah* in Kabbalah, also called "Palace" and "Womb"; emanates from and is paired with *Hokhmah* ("Wisdom" or "Point") the second *Sefirah*.

Canon: a standard collection, in these lectures specifically the *Scriptures* (q.v.) and the Bible, which consist of collections of Jewish or Christian writings, with some texts definitely included and the rest definitely excluded.

Cartesian: adjective formed from the name "Descartes" (originally *Des Cartes*); hence the *Cartesian philosophy* is the philosophy of Descartes.

Categorical: in Kant, a principle that takes the logical form "All X is Y."

Causality: the relation of cause and effect.

Chalcedon: site of a Church council in 451 A.D., where the orthodox Christology was formulated, which teaches that Christ is one person in two natures: both truly God and truly man.

Christology: Christian doctrine concerning the person of Christ, and particularly the relation of his humanity to his divinity.

Church Fathers: the theologians of the early Christian tradition c. 150-500 A.D. (e.g. Origen, Athanasius, Augustine) who formulated the basic teachings of Christian orthodoxy, including the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology.

Classical Theism: the view of God combining Biblical concepts with metaphysical concepts from the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions (emphasizing the eternity and absoluteness of God) developed by the Christian Church Fathers and systematized in the Middle Ages by Islamic thinkers such as Avicenna, Jewish thinkers such as Maimonides, and Christian thinkers such as Anselm and Aquinas.

Contemplation: from a Greek word for "beholding", this is a technical term in Plato and Aristotle for the act of intellectual vision or seeing the Forms (i.e., actually looking at them with our mind's eye, not just having them in our knowledge or memory).

Contingent: the opposite of necessary; hence while a necessary being cannot not exist, a contingent being may exist or not.

Contrition: in medieval penitential theology, the proper state of mind for a penitent (i.e., repentant person), consisting in sincere hatred of one's sins.

Cosmological Proof: an argument for the existence of God which reasons from the existence (or contingency) of the world (*cosmos*) to the existence of a necessary first principle from which the world originates. See the *ontological proof* and the argument from *design*.

Creature: a thing created by God; i.e., according to orthodox Christian theology everything that exists other than God (see *uncreated*).

Deconstruction: a strategy of reading devised (or at least named) by Jacques Derrida, which is concerned (among other things) to observe how philosophical texts undermine their own attempts to formulate a comprehensive or totalizing theory of the nature of being (see *metaphysics*).

Demiurge: Greek for craftsman or artificer, Plato's term for the divine being who forms the world—the Platonic version of God the Creator.

Demythologization: in Bultmann, the project of re-interpreting mythological concepts (in the New Testament) in terms of more adequate modern concepts, such as those of existentialism.

Deontological: from the Greek word for "ought", this refers to an ethics based on the concept of duty, i.e. what we *ought* to do, rather than what will make us ultimately happy (see *eudaimnonism*).

Design, Argument from: a proof for the existence of God based on the inference that the order or apparent purposiveness of the world requires an intelligent Designer.

Dialectic: originally Greek for "conversation" (similar to our word "dialogue"), this word came to refer to the art of debate or logical argument (in Plato and afterwards), then was used by Hegel to describe the logical development of *Geist* or reason in history.

Dignity: in Kant, a technical term for the value of rational beings, which is beyond price.

Dogmatics: from German *Dogmatik*, a term for "systematic theology," as in the title of Karl Barth's systematic theology, the *Church Dogmatics* (*Kirchliche Dogmatik*); unlike the English word "dogmatic," the term is not pejorative.

Dualism: this term has many philosophical meanings, but in these lectures it refers only to the Platonist tradition's tendency to divide the human self neatly into two parts, soul and body.

Ecstasy: (from a Greek word meaning "to stand outside"), in Denys, the natural tendency of all intellectual beings to be drawn out of themselves by love.

Ein-Sof: "the Infinite," a designation of the hidden and unknowable God in Kabbalah.

Elect: old way of saying "chosen," used in Calvinist theology to describe those predestined by God for salvation; the usage goes back to Paul's phrase "the election of grace" (i.e. literally God's "choice of favorites") in Romans 11:5.

Enlightenment: self-description of a movement in 18th century thought which was critical of revealed religion and its dogmas and insisted on the primacy of the individual and his own reason; it arose in Britain (represented by Locke and Hume), flourished in France (among philosophers like Voltaire, whose critical thought contributed to the French Revolution) and found its last great champion in Germany, with Kant. It was succeeded by Romanticism.

Empirical: from the Greek word for "experience," this adjective refers to knowledge that is based on sense-experience or observation: e.g., physics and biology are empirical sciences, but mathematics and metaphysics are not.

Empiricism: refers to philosophies which place a decisive emphasis on sense-experience as the source of all our knowledge (contrast *rationalist*); *logical empiricism* is a 20th century version of this philosophy which makes extensive use of the mathematical logic developed by Russell and Whitehead in *Principia Mathematica* (1910-12).

Enthusiasm: from a Greek term meaning "God within," a pejorative term used by Locke and other 18th-century mainstream Protestants to refer to religious sects that based their beliefs on claims of direct inward inspiration.

Ephesus: site of a Church council in 431, where the orthodox officially adopted the description of Mary as "mother of God" and Christ body as "life-giving flesh."

Epistemology: from the Greek *episteme*, meaning "knowledge," this is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and possibility of human knowledge.

Eschatology: from the Greek *eschaton*, meaning "last thing", this is any account of the end or goal or ultimate future of history and humanity; giving such an account is typical of Jewish and Christian views of history rather than Greek philosophical views.

Essence: a word that can have many meanings (the root sense of the original Greek term is "being") but in Platonic and Aristotelian usage it is typically identified with Form. For Christian usage, see *hypostasis*.

Eternal Recurrence: a theory in 19th-century physics that every physical state of the universe will eventually recur, so that all events will repeat themselves forever; for Nietzsche the highest test of life-affirmation is whether someone loves life enough to say "Yes" to this.

Eudaimonism: from the Greek term for "happiness" (q.v.), an ethics based on the pursuit of happiness as the ultimate goal of human life.

Event: see *Substance*.

Evidentialism: the epistemological view that it is irrational for a person to believe something without evidence.

Existentialism: a philosophical movement concerned with problems of human existence, originated by Kierkegaard and developed by (among others) Heidegger in *Being and Time*.

ex nihilo: Latin for "out of nothing"; used in the phrase "creation *ex nihilo*" to describe the distinctively Christian and Jewish conception of creation. In contrast to the Platonist view (e.g., in Plato's *Timaeus*) that the creator or demiurge formed the world out of pre-existing matter, orthodox Christians and Jews believe that God created matter as well—hence the process of creation began with nothing but God.

Experience: in modern philosophy up to Kant, this term refers mainly to sense-experience, and especially to the kind of observation which takes place in the physical sciences. Beginning with Schleiermacher, the word takes on a broader meaning that includes every sort of consciousness and feeling, including religious experience.

Externalism: the epistemological view that a belief may be rationally justified by factors outside (i.e., *external* to) the believer's own knowledge.

Fallacy of Composition: an illogical inference from *each* to *all*, as for example the inference from the premise "in the long run each of us will be dead" to the conclusion "there will come a time when everyone is dead"—for clearly, even

though each one of us will die, the human race could continue reproducing, so that there would never come a time when everyone is dead.

Fideism: from *fides*, Latin for "faith," this refers to an emphasis on religious faith to the exclusion of reason.

Form: for Plato, the eternal essence of things, separate from this world (also called *idea*); for Aristotle, the essence of a material thing (also called "species") which is inseparable from the thing—embodied in it, as it were. For Aristotle, material things are composed of matter plus form.

Foundationalism: the epistemological view that a belief is rationally justified only if it is based on the proper foundations; according to "classical" foundationalism this foundation must be absolutely certain.

Geist: German term (cognate to English "ghost") central to Hegel's philosophy, which can be translated either Spirit or Mind; historically a descendent of the Platonist concept of the divine Mind.

Gentiles: Jewish term for non-Jews.

Gemara: Talmudic commentary on the *Mishnah* (q.v.).

Given: as in sense-data (from Latin *data*, given); from Kant onwards this refers to the starting point of a person's empirical knowledge, prior to conceptualization or objectification.

Gnosticism: from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge," this refers to a variety of early Christian movements that sought to escape from the material world (regarded as evil) and return to live among heavenly beings by means of special or secret knowledge.

Grace: in many religions, this means simply the favor of a god; in Augustinian Christianity, it means the inner help of God healing the disease of sin and strengthening the soul to do good. In Thomas Aquinas and subsequent Roman Catholic theology, grace not only heals and helps our nature, but raises it to a supernatural level where it may see God.

Ground of the Soul (or "bottom of the soul"): translation of Meister Eckhart's old German term, *Grunt der Seele*, referring to the aspect of the soul that is uncreated, eternally united with the "ground of God."

Haggadot (or *Aggadot*): Hebrew for lore or legends; refers to all rabbinic discourse other than *Halakhot* (*q.v.*).

Halakhot (or *Halachot*): Rabbinic legal rulings or interpretations of Jewish Law.

Happiness: translation of a Greek term (*eudaimonia*) which means whatever makes a person's life a success; hence for ancient and medieval philosophers, happiness is not necessarily a feeling (see *hedonism*).

Hedonism: the ancient philosophical view that happiness is a good feeling (i.e., some version of the feeling of pleasure, Greek *hedone*); Plato and Aristotle rejected this view in favor of the view that happiness consists in a life of wisdom or contemplation.

Hellenistic: the Greek culture of the Eastern Mediterranean in the era from the conquests of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) to the establishment of the Roman Empire (30 B.C.).

Hermeneutics: (from *Hermes*, who as the divine messenger was the god of interpreters) the theory, method, or style of interpretation.

Heteronomy: Greek for "other-legislation"; in Kant, this refers to any sort of law imposed on us by outside sources, in contrast to the moral law, which we legislate for ourselves (see *autonomy*).

Hokhmah: See *Binah*.

Holism: label for any theory which derives parts from wholes rather than building up wholes from pre-existent parts: e.g., the theory that words get their meaning from their place in a whole language (and could not have a meaning if there were no language to be part of).

Homo-ousios: Greek for "the same essence," a key phrase in the Nicene Creed, where Christ is confessed as having the same essence as God the Father (sometimes translated as "of one substance" or "of one being" or "consubstantial").

Hypothetical: in Kant, a principle taking the logical form of an "if-then" sentence.

Hypostasis: Greek term that in the course of theological discussion by the orthodox Church Fathers came to mean particular or individual being, as opposed to essence: e.g., human nature is an essence, but Socrates is a *hypostasis*. Thus in the Trinity there are three *hypostases* but only one essence, while Christ is one *hypostasis* with two essences (divine and human).

Hypostatic Union: The orthodox Christian doctrine that in Christ divine nature and human nature are united in one person or *hypostasis*.

Idea: originally a Greek word meaning "something seen"; Plato uses it to mean something seen *with the mind's eye*—hence the equivalent of *Form* (*q.v.*). In Plotinus and in Christian Platonism, Ideas are located in the divine Mind. Descartes introduced the modern habit of talking about ideas as belonging within the *human* mind.

Idealism: any philosophy which makes reality dependent on the mind; Kant's "transcendental" idealism is the doctrine that we only know how things appear to us in experience, not how they are in themselves.

Impassability: God's freedom from suffering and emotion, both of which were thought of (in ancient and medieval philosophy) as passive states (from Latin *passio*, suffering or emotion, whence come both "passivity" and "passion" in English).

Imperative: in Kant's ethics, a general principle guiding the will in its choices; the appropriate imperative for moral choices is categorical rather than hypothetical.

Incarnation: (from the Latin word for "flesh") the Christian doctrine that the Son of God took on flesh or was embodied as the man Jesus.

Intellect: in the Platonist and Aristotelian traditions, this refers to the highest function of the soul, its *understanding* of Form—in Greek, "understand" (*noein*) is the verb cognate to "intellect" (*nous*).

Intelligible: adjective designating the sort of thing that is perceived by the intellect (as "sensible" designates the sort of thing perceived by the senses).

Justify: (1) literally "to make just or set right" ("justice" and "righteousness" are alternative translations of the same Greek term), the term has been prominent in Christian theology ever since Paul used it in the New Testament used to talk about how the Gentiles may be made righteous (i.e., just) in God's sight. (2) In recent Anglo-American epistemology, the term means to give a reason for one's belief, as in the definition of knowledge as "justified true belief."

Kabbalah: literally "tradition," refers to the esoteric tradition of Jewish mysticism whose central document is the *Zohar* and whose distinctive idea is the *Sefirot* (q.v.).

Ketzer: "Crown," the name for the first of the *Sefirot* in Kabbalah; also called "Nothingness."

Legalism: a specifically Christian (and usually Protestant) term, referring to the attempt to justify oneself in God's sight by obeying God's law, without help from the grace and mercy of God.

Liberalism: in these lectures, this term refers to a tradition of Christian theology whose most important representative is Schleiermacher, and which is characterized by the effort to base religious belief on experience.

Logos: Greek term that can be translated "reason" (Latin *ratio*) or "word" (it is the term from which we get English words such as "*log*ic," "dia*log*ue," and "bio*log*y"); when used in Christian theology (capitalized) it refers to Christ as the eternal Word of God (see John 1:1-14).

Mediate: (from the Latin word for "middle") a verb that goes back to ancient logic, referring to a "middle term" or concept which links two other terms or concepts whose relation might otherwise be unclear or unknown, as (e.g.) in Neoplatonism the divine Mind mediates between the One and everything else, and the Soul mediates between the divine Mind and the visible world.

Merkabah: literally "chariot," refers to the vision of God sitting upon a chariot-like vehicle drawn by four living creatures, recorded in the first chapter of the Biblical book of Ezekiel. An esoteric tradition of Jewish mysticism grew up around attempts to see the *Merkabah* and the One who sat upon it—a tradition which contributed to the development of Kabbalah (q.v.).

Messiah: from a Hebrew word meaning "the anointed one," designating the legitimate successor to King David; translated into Greek the word is "Christ," the fundamental Christian title for Jesus of Nazareth.

Metaphysics: the subdiscipline of philosophy concerned with the nature of being (ontology) and the nature of the universe (cosmology) as well as the supreme being (theology); in continental postmodernists such as Levinas and Derrida, the term often refers to the whole of the Western philosophical tradition, considered as the project of obtaining total knowledge of the nature of being.

Middle Knowledge: knowledge (attributed especially to God) of what *would have* happened if things had been different (e.g., what someone would have chosen in situations that never actually occurred).

Midrash: Hebrew for "exegesis" (literally "seeking," as in seeking the meaning of a text); refers to the rabbinic practice of Biblical interpretation and the writings that result from it (plural *midrashim*).

Mishnah: the first and foundational document of rabbinic Judaism, a collection of rabbinic discussions and rulings concerning Jewish law (*halakhot*).

Monads: the basic constituents of the world according to Leibniz; each monad has a conscious "inside."

Monarchia: belief in only one First Principle (*arche* in Greek).

Monolatry: worship of only one thing (compare the word ido*latry*, worship of idols).

Monotheism: belief in the existence of only one God (*theos* in Greek).

Mysticism: a term invented by modern scholars to describe people having (or claiming to have) direct experiences of God.

Neo-Orthodoxy: English name for a movement in German-speaking theology initiated by Karl Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans*; originally called "crisis theology" or "dialectical theology," it came to include Rudolph Bultmann, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr.

Nestorianism: the teaching of Nestorius, 5th-century bishop of Constantinople, that the eternal *Logos* of God and the man Jesus were united merely by a kind of conjunction; rejected by the orthodox in favor of the view that the man Jesus and the *Logos* are one and the same person.

Neurosis: a psychological illness which (according to Freud) is caused by repressed instincts seeking disguised expression in symbolic form; examples include phobias, obsessive-compulsiveness, and hysteria.

Nicene: having to do with the council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) or the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity which it formulated; with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, "Nicene" and "orthodox" are equivalent terms.

Nominalism: (from the Latin *nomina*, "names") the philosophical view that universals are only names, not real things—so for example the word "human" refers only to particular human beings, not to a Form or essence of human nature, as in Platonism or Aristotelianism (both of which are forms of *realism*, q.v.).

Ontological Proof: an argument for the existence of God based on the sheer concept of God: i.e., it is argued that the mere concept of God (or its existence in our minds) is sufficient by itself to show that such a thing as God could not *not* exist. There are several versions of this kind of proof, the most famous being those by Anselm and by Descartes.

Ontology: from Greek *ontos*, "being"; the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of being or reality.

Pantheism: from the Greek for "all is God" (*pan theos*); the doctrine that everything that exists is in some sense identical with God.

Panpsychism: from Greek for "all is soul" (*pan psyche*); the doctrine that everything that exists is in some way alive or has an "inside" with some level awareness or feeling.

Patristic: from the Greek word for "fathers" (*patres*); having to do with the *Church fathers* (q.v.).

Phenomenology: a 20th-century philosophical movement founded by Edmund Husserl and devoted to a the study of the phenomena of consciousness as they appear to the ego; not to be confused with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Geist*, which is a 19th-century book about phenomena in history.

Piety: religious devotion or form of reverence; to understand Plato's discussion of the term in *Euthyphro* it is important to be aware that in older usage it is proper to have piety or reverence not only for the gods but also for parents ("filial piety").

Positivism, logical: a version of logical *empiricism* (q.v.).

Postmodernism: a word of many meanings, depending on which postmodernist you ask; for purposes of these lectures, it means any of the recent philosophies which undo the modern "turn to the subject"—e.g., Derrida's deconstructionism or the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein.

Prehensions: from the Latin for "grasping"; a term in Process Philosophy for the feeling by which one *actual occasion* (q.v.) is aware of another.

Primary Cause: God as the fundamental cause of events in this world, in contradistinction from the causal powers of creatures, which are *secondary causes* (q.v.).

Process: a sequence (or recurring pattern of sequences) of *events*, for example physiological processes (see *Substance*).

Process Philosophy: the movement of philosophy founded by Alfred North Whitehead, which sees events, processes and relations as more fundamental than things or *substances* (q.v.).

Pure: in Plato, the soul is pure when it is free from all attachment to bodily things; in Kant, our knowledge is pure when it is completely *a priori* (q.v.), free from all admixture of experience.

Rabbis: in these lectures, this term does not refer to the rabbis of today, who are leaders of local congregations, but to the sages of Israel 200-600 A.D., whose task was to study, interpret and debate the meaning of the *Torah* (q.v.). The rabbis are the authorities who took part in the discussions recorded in the *Mishnah*, the *Talmud* and *Midrash* (q.v.). "Rabbinic Judaism"—which is what we normally mean by "Judaism" today—is the form of religion originating with these rabbis.

Rationalist: refers to philosophies which emphasize reason or rationality as the basis of all our knowledge. In modern philosophy, this term is used in contrast to *empiricist* (q.v.); in religion, it is often contrasted to mysticism, *fideism* (q.v.), or a reliance on *revelation* (q.v.).

Realism: a word with a great many meanings; the only relevant one for this course is the medieval meaning—the philosophical view that universals are *real* things, not mere names (contrast *nominalism*).

Recollection: In Plato, the theory that any real learning means remembering things we saw in a previous life (see *transmigration*).

Reductio ad absurdum: (Latin for "leading back to absurdity") a form of proof which begins by assuming the opposite of what is to be proved, and then tries to show that this leads to an absurdity or self-contradiction.

Reductionism: the philosophical project (typical of logical *empiricism*) of explaining the theories of one science in terms of another—e.g., *reducing* biology to physics.

Reformation: 16th-century movement to reform the Church led by Luther, Calvin and others, resulting in the formation of the Protestant churches.

"Reformed" Epistemology: recent movement in Anglo-American philosophy of religion, which criticizes evidentialism and classical foundationalism in order to argue in support of the rationality of religious beliefs ("Reformed" refers to the tradition of the Calvinist Reformation, which provided some of the key ideas for this philosophy).

Relation: see *Substance*

Relative: from the word "relation"; refers to anything that is essentially *related* to something else.

Ressentiment: French for "resentment," Nietzsche's technical term for the vengefulness of slaves toward masters, which expresses itself not in actually taking revenge (which would be the noble and masterful thing to do) but in morality, Judaism, Christianity, and democracy.

Revelation: from the 17th century onward, this word is used, in contrast to *Reason*, to designate external sources of authoritative religious knowledge (e.g., Scripture or prophecy); hence "revealed religion" (e.g., historical religious traditions such as Biblical Christianity or Talmudic Judaism) is contrasted to "natural religion" (i.e., religious beliefs that are established by reason).

Romanticism: a movement in philosophy and literature focusing on feeling rather than reason as the means by which individuals experience the divine meaning of the universe; represented in philosophy by Schelling and in religion by Schleiermacher.

Scholasticism: the tradition of medieval Christian thought centered in the universities (rather than the monasteries) including Aquinas, Bonaventure, Scotus and Ockham.

Scriptures: from a Latin word meaning "writings," this term is used by both Jews and the New Testament to designate the sacred writings of Israel; it is used in these lectures in place of the widely-used but specifically Christian term "Old Testament" (the term "Bible" is accordingly used to designate the Christian collection containing both the Scriptures and the New Testament).

Secondary Causes: the causal powers of creatures (e.g. free will) in contrast to God, who is the *primary cause*.

Sefirot: in Kabbalah, the spheres or attributes of divine manifestation or creative activity (singular *Sefirah*) in contrast to the undifferentiated and unknowable *Ein-Sof* (q.v.).

Sensible: in Platonism, this refers to object that can be perceived by the senses (contrast *intelligible*).

Shekhinah: In rabbinic Judaism, the divine Presence; in Kabbalah, this becomes the lowest of the ten *Sefirot* (q.v.), which goes into exile along with Israel.

Solipsism: the doctrine (or more often the fear) that I am alone in the universe (especially likely to emerge if, like Descartes, one considers it possible to doubt the existence of the external world).

Stoicism: philosophical tradition originating in Athens in the generation after Aristotle and important up to the period of the Roman empire; it is characterized by belief in the lawfulness of nature, wisdom as the goal of life, materialism, and a rigorist ethics.

Subject: see *Turn to the Subject*.

Subordinationism: A version of the doctrine of the Trinity, common among Christian teachers prior to the formation of Nicene orthodoxy, according to which Christ as the eternal *Logos* is less than or subordinate to God the Father.

Substance: (translation of Greek *ousia*, literally "being") refers to independently-existing *things* (e.g., a table, a dog, a human being) in contrast to *qualities* (e.g., white, tall, wise), *relations* (e.g., "taller than," "to the left of," "is the son of" and "knows about"), or *events* (e.g., birth, death, meeting someone, falling down, hearing something).

Subsumption: translation of *Aufhebung* (q.v.).

Supernatural: in Roman Catholic theology since Aquinas, this term refers not to ghosts and spirits, but to the grace of God as it elevates human nature above itself (super-nature in the sense of "above human nature") in order to see God.

Symposium: from an ancient Greek term for "drinking party," this is also the title of a dialogue by Plato, in which a number of Athenian men at a drinking party give speeches on the nature of love.

Synoptic: term designating the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which (in contrast to the Gospel of John) share the same basic plot-structure, which can relatively easily be brought under a common *synopsis*.

Talmud: The key document of Rabbinic Judaism, consisting of the *Mishnah* (q.v.) together with its commentary, the *Gemara* (q.v.).

Teleology: from the Greek word *telos*, meaning "end" or "goal," this term is used in three different senses in these lectures. (1) In *Aristotelian physics* it refers to the notion that natural motion tends toward some definite end (not always a conscious goal, but always a final state that is natural and good for the thing): hence it is natural for stones to end up on earth where they belong, not in the sky, and it is natural for animals to seek food, and it is natural for human beings to desire knowledge and happiness. (2) *Ethical systems* are called teleological if they are based on the desire to attain some ultimate goal, such as happiness. (3) *Proofs for the existence of God* are called teleological if they are based on the apparent design or purposive order in the world.

Theodicy: (from a Greek term meaning "justification of God") a philosophical reply to the "problem of evil," trying to show it is possible that God is good, despite all the evil there is in the world.

Things-in-themselves: in Kant, a technical term designating what we cannot know about things: the way they are in themselves, apart from the way we experience them.

Tikkun: in Kabbalah, the restoration of the world and the divine realm of the *Sefirot* brought by the good deeds of humanity, and especially by Israel's obedience to Torah.

Torah: Hebrew for "Law," refers literally to the scroll containing the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible; in an expanded sense Torah includes the whole of God's revelation to Israel at Mt. Sinai, both written and oral—the latter being identified with the rabbinic interpretation of Scripture that was eventually written down in the Talmud.

Trinity: The Christian teaching that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are not identical with one another yet are one God.

Transcendence: (from a Latin verb meaning "to go beyond") the characteristic of God being beyond this world or beyond space and time.

Transmigration: the view that souls move or migrate from one body to another at death (including from animal bodies to human bodies and vice-versa).

Turn to the Subject: a phrase designating any epistemology which begins by examining the nature or powers of the self. The turn to the subject is characteristic of modernity. ("Subject" in this phrase means *epistemological* subject, referred to by the subject of sentences such as "I know this" or "I believe that." While modern philosophers tend to start by examining the subject of such sentences, ancient philosophers are more likely to start with their *object*, e.g. Platonic Forms).

Uncreated: technical term in Christian theology referring to God, who is the only thing in existence *not made* by God (see *creature*).

Via Negativa: Latin for "the negative way," the theological method of speaking about God by saying what he is not rather than what he is (see *apophaticism*).

Voluntarism: a philosophical emphasis on the will (Latin *voluntas*); divine voluntarism is the belief that any essences or laws in the universe, including moral laws, are the result of God's will and not the other way round.

Will to Power: Nietzsche's concept that all existence, down to the level of the forces of attraction and repulsion between microscopic particles, consists of a striving for mastery, expansion, and growth; all human motivation (including that of the weak and the moral) consists of will to power.

YHWH: transliteration of the Hebrew letters for the sacred name for the God of Israel; the actual pronunciation of the name is no longer known, because Jews have for many centuries regarded it as blasphemous to utter the name, and the original Hebrew script was written without vowels. However, an old Christian suggestion is "Jehovah" and a recent scholarly guess is "Yahweh" (see *Adonai*).

Zeitgeist: literally, "spirit of the age," an Hegelian term referring to the involvement of *Geist* or "Spirit" in particular historical eras (see *Geist*)

Zohar: (Aramaic for "Splendor") name of the central text of Kabbalah (*q.v.*) composed c. 1280 in Spain.

Biographical Notes

(The names appearing in this listing of Biographical Notes comprise those religious figures and philosophers covered in Part I (Lectures 1-12). A complete biographical listing appears at the end of Parts II and III)

Alexander of Aphrodisias (flourished c. 200 A.D.): Aristotelian philosopher, the leading commentator of Aristotle in antiquity, influential on Plotinus (*q.v.*).

Anselm, St. (1033-1109): archbishop of Canterbury, Christian theologian and philosopher.

Apollinarius (?-385? A.D.): Christian theologian, originator of Apollinarianism, rejected as a heresy by the orthodox Church fathers.

Aquinas, St. Thomas (1225-1274): Dominican theologian and philosopher, central figure of medieval scholasticism and the Roman Catholic tradition.

Aristotle (384 A.D.-322 A.D.): Macedonian-born Athenian philosopher, student of Plato, founder of the sciences of logic, physics and biology.

Arius (?-336 A.D.): Christian priest in Alexandria, originator of Arianism, the view against which orthodox Nicene Christianity defined itself.

Athanasius, St. (293? A.D.-373 A.D.): bishop of Alexandria and leader of the Nicene opposition to the heresy of Arius (q.v.); he is thus one of the founding figures of Christian orthodoxy.

Augustine, St. (356 A.D.-430 A.D.): bishop of Hippo in Roman North Africa, the most influential Church Father in the Latin or Western Christian tradition.

Avicenna (980-1037): Latin version of the name of Ibn Sina, Moslem Aristotelian philosopher.

Boethius, Ancius (c.480-525): Christian philosopher and Latin scholar of the late Roman empire.

Bonaventure, St. (1217-1274): Franciscan theologian and philosopher, leader of the Augustinian illuminationist tradition.

Cicero (106 B.C. – 43 B.C.): Roman orator and politician, author of numerous philosophical treatises based on the teachings of the Stoics, Plato and other Greek philosophers.

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321): Italian poet (usually known by his first name) and author of the *Divine Comedy*, an epic poem which depicted Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, and which crystallized the Christian imagination of the afterlife.

Denys or "Pseudo-Dionysius" (c. 600): pseudonymous Christian Neoplatonist author, writing in Greek and especially influential in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

Eckhart, Meister (c. 1260-1327): Dominican theologian, preacher, and founding figure of the tradition of "Rhineland" mysticism ("Meister" is medieval German for "master," in the sense of "teacher").

Maimonides (1135-1204): Jewish philosopher and Talmud scholar, author of *Guide for the Perplexed*.

Muhammad (570-632): Arabian religious leader and founding figure of Islam.

Nestorius (?-453?): bishop of Constantinople, originator of Nestorianism, rejected as a heresy by the orthodox Church fathers.

Ockham (or Occam), William of (1285?-1349): Franciscan philosopher and leading nominalist.

Origen (185 A.D.-254 A.D.): Greek-speaking Church Father of Alexandria (Egypt), extremely influential in formulating an early version of Christian Platonism and spreading the method of allegorical reading of Scripture.

Paul, St. (?-64? A.D.): Early Christian missionary and author of many of the letters in the New Testament.

Philo of Alexandria or Philo Judaeus (c.20 B.C. - 50 A.D.): Jewish Platonist philosopher and Scriptural exegete.

Plato (427? B.C.-358? B.C.): Athenian philosopher, student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle; arguably the founding figure of the Western philosophical tradition.

Plotinus (205? A.D.-270 A.D.): Greek-speaking Egyptian philosopher who spent most of his working life in Rome; founder of the Neoplatonist tradition of philosophy.

Proclus (410? A.D.-485 A.D.): Greek Neoplatonist philosopher.

Pseudo-Dionysius: see *Denys*.

Scotus, John Duns (1266-1308): Franciscan philosopher and theologian, dubbed "the subtle teacher" (*doctor subtilis*).

Socrates (470? B.C. –399B.C.): Athenian philosopher, teacher of Plato.

Timeline

410	Fall of Rome; beginning of the end for the Western Roman empire
431	Council of Ephesus officially approves the description of Mary as "Mother of God" and of Christ's body as "life-giving flesh"
451	Council of Chalcedon officially adopts the doctrine of Christ as consisting of one person in two natures, "true man and true God"
c. 500	Writings of Pseudo-Dionysius composed in the Eastern Roman Empire (by now becoming the Byzantine empire)
c. 600	Completion of Babylonian Talmud
632	Death of Mohammed, founding prophet of Islam, followed within a decade by the Moslem conquest of most of the Eastern Mediterranean, including the land of Israel
1078	Anselm writes the *Proslogion*, containing his "ontological argument" (as it was later called) for the existence of God
1195	Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* written
1274	Year of death for both Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure
1286	Composition of the *Zohar*, the central text of the Jewish mystical tradition or Kabbalah

The timeline for the late medieval period (14th century and on) appears at the end of Parts II and III.

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Philosophy and Religion in the West

Part II

Professor Phillip Cary

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Prof. Cary would like to express his gratitude to his colleagues at Villanova for years of stimulating conversations about the history of Christian thought, and to his colleagues at Eastern (especially Prof. Raymond Van Leeuwen) for instructive discussions about the relation between Biblical and philosophical traditions of wisdom.

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Part II

Philosophy and Religion in the West

Scope:

This course of lectures is an historical examination of the interaction between philosophical traditions and religious traditions in the West. We begin with the roots of the philosophical tradition in ancient Greece, examining how Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus dealt with issues concerning God, the soul, and the nature of the cosmos (Lectures One through Five). The key concepts which this tradition contributed to Western religion are the Socratic practice of critical inquiry and the Platonist theory of intelligibility: the notion that the ultimate truth about which we inquire consists in certain timeless Forms or essences which our souls perceive with the "mind's eye." From this notion come the philosophical concepts of the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, the Fall and "going to heaven" as the soul's return to its native place.

Next we turn to the two great Western religious traditions, Judaism and Christianity, which are interpreted as traditions vested in particular historical communities, their practices of worship, their sacred texts, and their allegiance to specific "places" where human beings meet God. We look at the scriptures of Israel and their rabbinic interpretation in Judaism, as well as the New Testament and its interpretation by the church fathers, who were decisive for the formation of the Christian tradition (Lectures Six through Ten).

The interaction between these two traditions and the Platonist philosophical tradition begins even before the New Testament was written, and continues through the works of medieval philosophers, both Jewish and Christian. These philosophers combined Platonist metaphysics and Biblical religion so as to formulate the intellectual system that has been called "classical theism"—a system which was taken for granted by most religious thinkers, including mystics, up through the time of the Reformation (Lectures Eleven through Sixteen).

Modernity (Lectures Seventeen through Twenty-Six) is rooted in a crisis of religious authority, which means that some philosophers became critics of religion (Hume, Marx, Nietzsche) but others tried to set it on new philosophical foundations (Locke, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel)—in the process of which they sought a deeper conception of the human self and its relation to the divine (Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard).

Many 20th-century thinkers have sought to re-conceive the synthesis between philosophy and religion that undergirded classical theism, questioning especially the Platonist metaphysics which led classical theists to suppose God was timeless and impassable (Lectures Twenty-Seven through Twenty-Nine). In recent years, the meaning and rationality of religion have been rethought in ways that make them less dependent on philosophical theories, yet leave an essential place within religion for the practice of critical inquiry (Lectures Thirty through Thirty-Two).

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of these lectures, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the historical interaction between philosophical traditions (such Platonism) and religious traditions (such Judaism and Christianity).
2. Describe the philosophical origin of certain key religious concepts, such as the immortality of the soul, the Fall, and "going to heaven."
3. Explain the attractiveness of ancient philosophy for Judaism and Christianity.
4. Summarize the synthesis of philosophy and religion that characterized the "classical theism" of the medieval period.
5. Describe the significance of modernity for the history of Western religion.
6. Discuss the most prominent philosophical criticisms of religion.
7. Describe the classic proofs that have been attempted of the existence of God.
8. Explain why many religious thinkers of the 20th century are suspicious of the alliances between philosophy and religion
9. Discuss the relation of critical rationality and religious belief.

Lecture Thirteen
Classical Theism—Proofs and Attributes of God

Scope: The view of God which was worked out by medieval theologians and philosophers has come to be called "classical theism." It emphasizes the transcendent attributes of God: his eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. The medieval thinkers also gave us the classic attempts to prove the existence of God, including Aquinas' "Five Ways" to prove God's existence and Anselm's ontological proof.

Outline

I. The Transcendence of God

    A. From Other-worldliness to Omnipresence

        1. Many religions picture God in heaven, "above" the world.

        2. Plato has a slightly more sophisticated picture: God outside the sphere of the moving cosmos.

        3. Yet the metaphor of being "outside" the universe cannot be pressed too far without becoming incoherent, for in order to be "outside" God must occupy space—and thus he would still be within the spatial world.

        4. Plotinus proposes a much more sophisticated doctrine: the divine transcends space or has a non-spatial mode of being—and therefore is present everywhere as a whole.

        5. To have a spatial mode of being means to be dependent on space in order to exist—to need to be one place rather than another.

        6. But the divine Mind, whose mode of being is non-spatial, is not tied down to any particular place, is not spread out part by part (part of it in one place and part in another) but is present in its entirety everywhere.

        7. Hence (Augustine will say) the omnipresence of God in the world is not like water filling a sponge, but like the presence of Truth, undivided but everywhere.

        8. A crucial surprise here: precisely because God transcends all space, he is present in all space (but not tied down to any one place).

    B. From Immutability to Eternity

        1. The Biblical God never came into being and will never die.

        2. Platonic Forms likewise never came into being and will never pass out of existence—but in addition they are immutable, always the same.

        3. In describing God Platonistically, we have spoken of the *Logos* existing "before creation."

        4. This metaphor cannot be pressed very far, however, because before creation there is no time—and therefore no "before."

        5. Hence, eternity is ontologically, not temporally, prior to time (i.e., time is dependent on eternity for its existence, not the other way around).

        6. That God is eternal means he is "outside" time, not bound by it—just as he is not tied down to space.

        7. One can picture time as a time line, and God outside it, able to view all of time, past, present and future, in a single glance.

        8. One can also adopt Boethius' picture of God as the still point at the center of the turning world.

    C. Omnipotence: Primary and Secondary Causality

        1. Augustine and others argue that God's omniscience or eternal seeing doesn't determine what will happen in our future.

        2. But God's eternal creating does determine what will happen; hence it is the consensus among classical theists that everything happens as it does because that's how God wants it to happen.

        3. The closest analogy is with a playwright and the characters in a drama: the author determines what happens, yet that does not interfere with the characters' choices within the drama.

        4. Modern thinkers are often dissatisfied with this, arguing that our choices cannot really be free unless we alone, not God, bring them about.

        5. But for medieval classical theists, unlike modern thinkers, there is no competition or conflict between God's power and ours, for they operate at two different levels.

6. Thus God's creative power ("primary causality") makes possible not only our existence but also our power ("secondary causality").

II. The Imperfect World Dependent on a Perfect Being
   A. Thomas Aquinas' Proofs for God's Existence
      1. Thomas's "Five Ways" to prove God's existence are all based on the idea that the changing and imperfect world must be grounded on an immovable and necessary First Principle.
      2. Thus most of them are classic examples of what is called "cosmological proofs": attempts to argue from the world to God.
   B. Thomas's version of the argument from design (teleological Proof): the fact that things get to where they need to be—even when they are inanimate objects with no knowledge of where to go—shows that there is an intelligent designer guiding their movements and getting them to go in the right direction.
   C. Thomas's Infinite Regress Arguments
      1. The most characteristic of Thomas's proofs for God's existence argue that chains of cause and effect cannot go back infinitely, but must have a beginning or First Principle.
      2. The proof Thomas develops most fully is derived from Aristotle's argument for a first mover: everything that moves is moved by something outside it, and this chain of movers cannot go back infinitely far, so there must be a first mover, which is God.
      3. There are several weak spots in this argument: Aristotle himself suggests that living things can move themselves, and even if they couldn't, why could there not be many first movers rather than just one?
      4. It's clear that Thomas is thinking of ancient astronomy, according to which each sphere in the heavens is moved by the one above it, until you reach the highest mover.
      5. Another infinite regress argument of Aquinas is less tied to ancient astronomy: the notion that everything has a cause, and the chain of causes cannot go back infinitely, so there must be a first cause, which is God.
      6. But here again, Thomas gives no reason why there cannot be many first causes.
   D. Thomas's Argument from Gradation
      1. Thomas assumes that whenever there are qualities that can be more or less (e.g., hot, bright, powerful) then there must be something that is the most hot, bright or powerful.
      2. Hence there must be something that is most good, most true, and most being—which is God.
   E. Thomas's most obscure proof for God's existence is an argument for a necessary being.
      1. If there is no necessary being, then there are only contingent beings, capable of both existence and non-existence.
      2. Thomas asserts that everything that is capable of non-existence, at one time did not exist.
      3. He gives no argument for this assertion, but he may be thinking that everything that could possibly not exist must once have come into being.
      4. He then makes a logical leap: if everything at one time did not exist, there must have been a time when nothing existed (this leap is called a "fallacy of composition," an illegitimate inference from *each* to *all*).
      5. Since there could not be a time when nothing existed (for then nothing would exist even now) Thomas concludes: it cannot be that everything is contingent.
      6. Hence there is a necessary being.
   F. On Reasoning from the Imperfect to the Perfect
      1. The fallacy in that last argument shows a primary difficulty in cosmological proofs: it is hard to reason from each to all—from the contingency of individual things in the world to the contingency of the world in general (i.e., it is hard to prove that the world as a whole is contingent and dependent on something outside it).
      2. The opposite side of the coin is the observation that there could be many first causes or first movers: i.e., that the point of origin for contingent things in this world could well be other contingent things in this world, not a necessary being outside it.
      3. Hence many philosophers have been attracted by proofs which try to show that—quite apart from the nature of the world—it is logically necessary for there to be a perfect or necessary being (called "ontological proofs").

III. Anselm's Ontological Proof

   A. The basic idea of an ontological proof is that once you understand the concept of God, you will see it is impossible for him not to exist.

   B. Anselm's ontological proof is based on the concept of God as "that than which nothing greater can be conceived."

      1. The crucial premise of Anselm's argument is that if we understand this concept, then "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" exists in our understanding.

      2. But if that is so, then we can conceive of something greater: we can conceive of this same thing existing in reality.

      3. Hence "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" cannot exist only in the understanding, but must exist in reality.

      4. The reason is that it is self-contradictory for "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" to exist only in the understanding—for in that case we can conceive something greater than "that than which nothing greater can be conceived."

   C. Anselm's proof has the look of either a cheap trick or a deep truth (depending on whom you ask).

      1. The simplest way to undermine it is to reject the notion that understanding the concept of X means that X "exists in your understanding" (B1 above).

      2. Another way of undermining it is to question the notion of "greatness" Anselm uses—a notion of greatness of being, not just greatness of quantity.

      3. Thus it seems that behind all the proofs of classical theism lies an assumption more medieval than modern: that being is inherently good.

Essential Reading:

Anselm, *Proslogion*, includes both the ontological proof and a series of meditations on the transcendent attributes of God

Aquinas, The "Five Ways" to prove the existence of God (= *Summa Theologica*, Part I, question 2, article 3) in *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 24-27

Supplemental Reading:

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, questions 1-12 (selections in *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas*, pp.3-96) for those who wish to consult the most classic statement of classical theism on the transcendent attributes of God

Augustine, *City of God* 10:12, 11:4-6 and 11:21 (on divine eternity)

———*Confessions* 11:10-13 (on divine eternity)

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you find any of the classic proofs for God's existence convincing? Why or why not?

2. Do the transcendent attributes of God make sense to you? (Another way to put this is: if there is a God, would it make sense for Him to have such attributes?)

Lecture Fourteen
Medieval Christian Theology—Nature and Grace

Scope: The universe of classical theism is inherently good—not perfect like God, but oriented towards God. However, in the Christian version of that universe human nature, which God created good, has been corrupted by the Fall and needs to be restored by grace or it will never reach its goal, which is the happiness of seeing God. In Augustine grace heals and helps sinful human nature; in Aquinas it also elevates human nature (supernaturally) so that it can understand what is beyond its natural power to understand—the essence of God. And in Augustine grace is an inner gift, but in Aquinas it comes to us by outward means, the sacraments.

Outline

I. The Optimistic Cosmos
 A. In the medieval universe, everything is by nature good.
  1. In Biblical terms, everything that exists is good because God created it (and God does not create evil).
  2. In Platonist terms, everything is by nature good because it is a reflection and offshoot of the supreme Good.
  3. In this view, evil always has the character of "non-being;" it is an absence, defect or corruption of what is by nature good.
 B. All events are also by nature meaningful.
  1. Medieval (Aristotelian) physics is teleological or purposive, in the sense that natural movement is conceived as always oriented toward a goal, which is the *good* at which it aims (stones fall to earth where they belong, fire rises, etc.).
  2. Unnatural or violent movement may go in the wrong direction, but unlike in modern physics, it is never simply meaningless.
 C. The human will, too, is inherently oriented toward its good, which is happiness.
  1. The ultimate happiness is to see God (the "beatific vision").
  2. Choices which move us in a different direction are unnatural and corrupt the will.
  3. We are free to choose the wrong direction in the same way an eye is free to be averse to light: this can happen, but it is a defect or disease, something that has gone wrong.
  4. Just as a diseased eye may go blind and be unable to see, a corrupted will may become incapable of choosing well.

II. Augustinian Grace: Fallen Human Nature Restored
 A. Adam and Eve Fallen
  1. In Romans 5:12-21, the Apostle Paul reads the Adam and Eve story as the story of the first sin.
  2. Parallel to the notion of life *in Christ*, he speaks of life—or rather death—*in Adam*.
  3. Later, Christian Platonist interpreters see the Adam and Eve story as the story of a fall from contemplation of higher things to entanglement in lower things—like the Fall of the Soul in Plato's *Phaedrus*.
  4. Although the notion that pre-existent souls fell into bodies (e.g., as taught by Origen) was eventually rejected by the orthodox, what remained was the idea that *in Adam* human nature underwent a profound change for the worse.
 B. The Grace of God Restores Our Fallen Nature
  1. In Augustine, God's grace heals and helps us: it remedies the disease of sin, and strengthens us to do good and overcome our moral weaknesses.
  2. In the Western (Augustinian) tradition, grace is an inward gift: it is God as inner teacher drawing us to himself, by inwardly revealing his beauty so we learn to love him.
  3. The experience of grace is thus like falling in love, as described in Plato in the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*.
  4. Like falling in love, grace does not exactly leave us a choice yet it does not exactly violate our will either.

> **5.** Grace overcomes the disease and weakness of sin by making it easy for us to make good choices—for it is easy to choose what we love to do.

  C. Grace and Free Will

    1. Modern theologians, both Catholic and Protestant often worry that grace conflicts with free will.

    2. The Augustinian tradition, by contrast, has always insisted that grace does not conflict with our free will but restores it—giving it back the freedom to will rightly.

    3. There are really two concepts of freedom operating here, the (Augustinian) freedom to find happiness and the (modern) freedom to choose evil; in the Augustinian view grace restores the one and corrects the other.

    4. Modern fears about grace conflicting with free will are typically based on the assumption that real freedom means autonomy or independence from God

    5. This modern assumption was foreign to medieval philosophers, for whom the will (like all things God created) found its good in dependence upon God, not in autonomy from him.

III. Aquinas on Grace as Supernatural Elevation

  A. Aquinas's Problem

    1. From Augustine, Aquinas inherited the conception of beatific vision: that happiness is seeing God with our mind's eye.

    2. From Denys, he inherited the doctrine of divine incomprehensibility: that our minds are incapable of understanding God.

    3. In terms of the Allegory of the Cave, Augustine thinks our happiness consists in gazing at the sun, while Denys thinks the sun is too bright for us to gaze at.

    4. Thus while Denys thinks God is too dazzlingly glorious for our mind's eye to see, Augustine thinks the eyes of our minds are only dazzled by the divine light if they are unhealthy or impure.

    5. Since Thomas wants to agree with both these authorities he has a problem: how can happiness consist in seeing God if God is beyond the power of the mind's eye to see?

  B. Aquinas's Solution: A New Function for Grace

    1. The solution is: created minds can see the essence of God by grace, not by nature.

    2. Hence for Thomas (as for Denys) even our uncorrupted nature does not have the power to see God.

    3. That means grace does more than just restore our fallen nature; it elevates our nature above itself, so that it can enjoy a vision that is beyond its natural powers.

    4. This is the Thomistic concept of the *supernatural*: a grace that not only heals and helps, but elevates our nature.

IV. A Soul More at Home in the World

  A. Aquinas, as an Aristotelian, has a more "earthy" sense of human nature than Augustine.

  B. For Aquinas, the natural object of the human intellect is not eternal truths in God (as for Augustine) but the essences of material things.

  C. The human mind abstracts the intelligible Form of a material thing in order to know its essence.

  D. This process of abstraction is dependent on the senses for raw material: there is nothing in the mind that isn't first in the senses (Aristotelian empiricism).

  E. Abstraction involves a "turn to the phantasms:" instead of turning away from mental images to see pure intelligible things (like Augustine) Aquinas thinks we must turn toward them in order to abstract intelligible forms from them.

  F. The part or function of the mind that performs this abstraction is called Agent Intellect.

  G. The Agent Intellect is thus part of the individual human mind, not a separate Intelligence, as in Maimonides and Avicenna.

V. Means of Grace: The New Medieval Concept of Sacrament

  A. Augustine defined a sacrament as a kind of sign: one that signifies an inner grace given by God alone.

  B. In medieval theology, beginning in the 12th century, sacraments are conceived as external signs that not only signify but also confer inner grace.

C. Hence for the medieval theologians, the channel of grace is external: we are to seek grace in outward signs—contrary to the "inward turn" consistently urged by Augustine.

D. The power of the sacrament lies not in the outward sign itself, but in the flesh of Christ, which is the foundation of all the sacraments.

E. Hence, in the Roman Catholic view of the sacraments, an external thing (Christ's flesh) is conveyed to us via another external thing (the sacrament)—and through by these external means of grace we receive the divine life of Christ.

Essential Reading:

Paul, Romans 5:12-21

Augustine, *City of God* 13:14 and 14:11-15 (on the Fall)

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Part I, question 12, articles 4 and 5 (in *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 76-80) on grace as supernatural elevation

Supplemental Reading:

Augustine, *City of God* 15:6 (a succinct statement of Augustine's doctrine of grace)

———*Confessions*, book 8 (an elaborate dramatization of Augustine's doctrine of grace)

———*Confessions* 7:11-16 (on evil as corruption in what is naturally good)

Denys, *Divine Names*, chapter 4 (on the inherent goodness of all being)

Aquinas, "Treatise on Grace," *Summa Theologica*, First Part of the Second Part, questions 109-114 (selections in *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 651-681)

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think the idea of God's grace helping us to choose him threatens our free will?

2. Do you think it is natural for us to desire to see God—or are our natural desires more earthbound than that?

Lecture Fifteen

Late Medieval Nominalism and Christian Mysticism

Scope: The beginning of the end for medieval thought is the gradual fading of belief in intellectual vision—the notion that we can see God with our mind's eye. In its place comes an increasing emphasis on knowledge of particular things in nature, (culminating in the Nominalism of William of Ockham) or else an increasing emphasis on a unity between the soul and God which goes deeper than mere intellect (as articulated most influentially by Meister Eckhart). Both emphases are harbingers of modernity.

Outline

I. The Disappearance of Intellectual Vision

  A. Aquinas and the Secularization of Human Nature
    1. In Aquinas' Aristotelian empiricism, the truths the human mind naturally knows are of this earth, not the Forms in the mind of God.
    2. Thomas thus opens the door to a secularized conception of human nature, and of a cultural world not oriented toward God.
    3. Neither Thomas nor any of his contemporaries wanted to walk through that door, but in the next century some Christian thinkers would take a further step in that direction.

  B. The End of the Augustinian Illuminationist Tradition
    1. The great 13th-century alternative to Aquinas' Aristotelian approach was the Augustinian approach represented by the Franciscan theologian Bonaventure, which centers on the notion of divine illumination—the mind seeing things in the light of God.
    2. But as Aristotelian thought spread, this Franciscan tradition was faced with tough challenges that it did not satisfactorily meet.
    3. The first challenge: the Franciscans needed to avoid saying that the human mind sees all truth in God, because given the Aristotelian identity theory of knowledge this would make union with God an inevitable side-effect of all mental activity.
    4. Bonaventure and his followers tried to say the light of God was seen only indirectly, but then had to deal with the problem of necessitarianism raised by Arab philosophers: the light of the mind operating in nature. This makes the mind passive.
    5. Two generations after Bonaventure, the Franciscan philosophical tradition which he began took a turn away from Augustinian illuminationism—a turn which culminated in William of Ockham.

II. Ockham and Nominalism

  A. The 14th-Century Context
    1. While the 13th century produced great summations (*summae*) of the whole sweep of Christian thought, the 14th century focused increasingly on subtle technical questions in metaphysics and logic.
    2. For instance, the last of the medieval scholastic philosophers to be recognized as a great Teacher of the Church is the Franciscan Duns Scotus, to whom the Roman Catholic Church officially gave the title "the subtle teacher."
    3. William of Ockham, also a Franciscan, is the last major medieval philosopher, representing the unraveling of medieval philosophy and the beginning of modernity.

  B. Nominalism vs. Platonism
    1. Ockham is the great medieval representative of Nominalism.
    2. "Nominalism," from the Latin word *nomina* (n. pl.) for "names," is the view that universals are only names, not real things.
    3. Ockham arrives at Nominalism through a principle called "Ockham's razor": don't multiply entities beyond necessity.
    4. For Nominalism, Platonic and Aristotelian forms are unnecessary entities. We don't need them to explain anything.
    5. Hence Nominalists after Ockham denied the existence of Platonic Forms or Ideas in God's mind.

  C. Divine Voluntarism

1. If God did not create the world according to a set of eternal Forms, He was free to make it up according to His own inscrutable will—the view called "divine voluntarism."
2. Ockham and later Nominalists distinguished between the absolute power of God and His ordained or ordered power.
3. The *absolute power* of God has no limits except the logical law of non-contradiction (God can't do what is self-contradictory).
4. The *ordained power* of God is the predictable way God uses His power, according to the order He chose to impose upon the world in creating it.
5. The implication is that God could have chosen to order the world in quite a different way.
6. For instance, Ockham says God *could* have ordained that adultery, stealing and hatred of God were virtuous.

D. Passage to Modernity
1. For Nominalism, as for many modern theologians, the order of nature stems not from eternal Forms or Laws but from God's will.
2. This means rejecting the Platonist conception of the divine as an unchanging Principle in favor of the Biblical conception of God as a Person who chooses—rather than trying to reconcile the two conceptions, as in Christian Platonism
3. Ockham's view of divine voluntarism undermines the stability and optimism of the medieval view of the universe, whose very being reflects the eternal goodness and wisdom of God.
4. Ockham's Nominalism leaves no place for Christian Platonist concepts like intellectual vision (seeing Forms with "the mind's eye") or related notions like the Agent Intellect.
5. Hence, for Nominalist theology, knowledge of God is not an intrinsic possibility of the human mind but a gift of divine revelation.

III. Master of the Christian Mystics: Meister Eckhart

A. On the Word "Mysticism"
1. The word "mysticism" is in many ways unfortunate, because it has so many different meanings, even among scholars.
2. The kind of mysticism we are concerned with in this lecture refers to people having (or talking about having) direct experiences of God.
3. Even so, "mysticism" covers very diverse phenomena, from intense feelings of devotion to visionary experiences to a metaphysics that sees a deep unity between God and the soul.
4. Perhaps the most important metaphysical mystic is Meister Eckhart, the 14th-century Dominican scholar and teacher who founded a tradition scholars call "Rhineland mysticism."

B. Rediscovery of the Plotinian Divinity of Soul
1. Eckhart seems to have rediscovered something like Plotinus' concept of the higher part of soul, which is always intrinsically united with the divine (even though it does not usually realize it is).
2. Accordingly, Eckhart speaks of a "spark" in the soul which is "uncreated" and eternally one with God.
3. Another very influential term he uses is the "ground of the soul," which is identical with the "ground of God."
4. It is as if Eckhart has dug below the conceptual structure of Augustinian intellectual vision and discovered the hidden foundations of Plotinian unity deep beneath it.
5. Eckhart's introduction of metaphors of depth alongside Platonist metaphors of height signals a switch from an ancient intellectualistic framework to a modern experiential framework.
6. In Eckhart's followers, who are less interested in philosophy than he is, the soul's deep inner unity with God is articulated not in terms of metaphysics but in terms of personal experience.

C. Aristotelian Identity and Plotinian Unity
1. As mentioned in earlier lectures, the backbone of Plotinus' Neoplatonism was Aristotle's theory that the mind is identical with the Forms it knows.
2. Augustine was unaware of this Aristotelian doctrine, and thus was content with the notion that our minds could see God while remaining distinct from him.
3. As we saw earlier in this lecture, the Augustinian illuminationist tradition fails in part because, in the wake of the rediscovery of Aristotle, it can't show how we could stay distinct from God while seeing things in His light.

4. Thomas Aquinas "tames" the Aristotelian identity theory of knowledge by confining it within an empiricist interpretation of Aristotle: what our minds are identical with are the forms (or "intelligible species") of earthly things we perceive through our senses.
5. Eckhart, on the contrary, is willing to make the identity of mind and what it knows central to his thought, thus reviving within Christianity a Plotinian belief in the ultimate unity of God and the soul.
6. In contrast to the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of deification (see Lecture Eleven, paragraph V.B), for Eckhart, the soul is by nature divine.

D. The Birth of the Son of God in the Soul
1. Like many Christian mystics, Eckhart thinks the soul needs to simplify itself: to free itself of the multitude of thoughts, words, and images in order to become pure and simple.
2. This is a Plotinian theme (the ascending soul goes beyond image and form to be united with the simple One above all Forms) which is picked up by Pseudo-Dionysius and thus Christianized.
3. This simplification of the soul, which Eckhart calls its "virginity," is taken by later Rhineland mystics as the way to *experience* the underlying unity between soul and God which is always there.
4. But like Mary, the soul is to become a *virgin mother*: unified with its underlying ground, the soul bears fruit, giving birth to the Son of God in the soul.
5. This birth of the Son of God in the soul is analogous to the eternal begetting of the Son of God in the Trinity, as the two births coincide in the eternal *now* of God.
6. Another way Eckhart puts this is: the just or righteous person is eternally begotten from divine Justice itself.
7. Hence at a level deeper than the Trinity, the soul is one with the ground of God's being, while at a level that coincides with the Trinity, the justice or righteousness in the soul is eternally begotten from God.
8. The desire to go deeper than the Trinity clearly means going beyond where Christian orthodoxy wants go.

Essential Reading:

Eckhart, "Selected Sermons" in *Meister Eckhart*, pp. 177-208

Supplemental Reading:

Bonaventure, "Whether Whatever is Known by us with Certitude is Known in the Eternal Reasons Themselves"

Copleston, *Late Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy*, pp. 49-57 and 103-110 (on Ockham)

Questions to Consider:

1. Which makes more sense to you: that God created the world according to his own will (i.e., however he wanted to) or that the creation followed the pattern of eternal Forms which were always part of him?
2. Do you find the notion of a deep, eternal inner unity between God and the soul attractive? Why or why not?

Lecture Sixteen
Protestantism—Problems of Grace

Scope: Protestantism inherits the Augustinian conception of grace, and wrestles with two problems that result from it. The first problem, illustrated by the young Luther, is the possibility of legalism—the project of trying to merit reward from a God who is not gracious. The second and opposite problem, illustrated most clearly by Calvin, is the implication of predestination: if we are saved by God's grace alone, and God foreknows and chooses in advance to whom He will give grace, then it is predestined who will be saved. With these problems at center stage, Protestant theology came to lose interest in the Augustinian Platonist project of intellectual vision.

Outline

I. From the Middle Ages to Modernity

   A. The loss of the Augustinian concept of intellectual vision (which Aquinas and Bonaventure both try to preserve, though in different ways) spells the end of medieval thought.

   B. Without intellectual vision, the soul must inhabit a realm beneath or beyond Platonist intellect—either mere empirical nature (nominalism) or the deep experience of divine unity (mysticism).

   C. At this point we take our leave of the Christian Platonist tradition, and look ahead to accounts of the relation between God and humans which work differently—in terms of reason as proof rather than vision (Descartes) or in terms of revelation (Luther) or in terms of deep inner experiences (Schleiermacher).

   D. Luther, for instance, starts out being trained in the Nominalist tradition, has an early enthusiasm for Rhineland mysticism, but ends up going in a new direction, which we now call Protestantism—a very modern phenomenon.

II. Luther and the Problem of Legalism

   A. The Uniquely Christian Concept of Legalism

      1. The New Testament Greek word for "grace" means "favor."

      2. Every religion in which there are deities has some notion of grace, i.e., of the possibility of a deity showing favor and being merciful to people.

      3. Augustine's conception of grace is distinctive in that its function is to overcome the corruption of our nature due to sin.

      4. The peculiar implication of this (which is quite foreign to every religion but Christianity) is that if our nature were not corrupted, it would be natural for us to live without God being gracious to us.

      5. Hence only Christians (of all the religions in the world) can imagine that someone might want to be a "legalist," trying to earn or merit rewards from an ungracious God.

   B. Luther's Early Legalism

      1. Of course, normally Christians imagine a legalistic existence only to reject it—or to accuse other people of it.

      2. But occasionally there have been Christians who propose a legalistic form of existence as the norm of Christian life, e.g., the young Luther, future founder of Protestantism.

      3. Luther began his theological career thinking that before God gave us grace, we had to earn it by loving God above all else, by our own merely natural strength.

   C. Rejection of Legalism: Justification by Faith Alone

      1. What led Luther out of legalism was the Catholic sacrament of Penance, which concludes with the priest saying to the person confessing his sins: "I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

      2. Luther came to understand this Word of Absolution as Christ's own Word: it is Christ, using the priest as a mouthpiece, who gives the grace of absolution.

      3. Thus, Luther believed, in this sacrament God himself was forgiving his sins—and all he had to do was believe it.

      4. So for Luther we are justified (set right with God) by faith alone.

5. The Word of Absolution is an example of the form of God's Word which Luther calls "Gospel," in contrast to the commands of God, which are "Law."

6. "Legalism" is then the name for the attempt to justify oneself by performing works of the Law rather than relying simply on faith in the Gospel.

D. The Gospel's Sacramental Efficacy
1. The key philosophical concept in Luther's doctrine of justification is that the Gospel is a Word of promise which has the power to give the grace and forgiveness it promises.

2. Thus for Luther the power of the Gospel is sacramental in the medieval sense: it is an external sign which confers the grace it signifies.

3. As in the sacraments, what Christ ultimately gives in His Word is nothing less than Himself, so that those who believe the Gospel have Christ in them.

4. Here lies an epistemology more Biblical than Platonist: a person can give himself to others through his external speech.

III. Calvin and the Problem of Predestination

A. Calvin on Sacraments
1. While Luther seeks salvation in the sacraments, many other Protestants see them as offering a magical or ritualistic alternative to faith.

2. The difference can be seen in Calvin, who used Augustinian inwardness to criticize medieval notions of the power of the sacraments: we must not "cling too tightly to outward signs."

3. Hence the form of Protestantism that has been most influential in modernity has been a religion of Augustinian inwardness contrasting itself with the medieval "superstition" of Rome.

B. The Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination
1. The whole Augustinian tradition, including Aquinas and Luther as well as Calvin, affirms a doctrine of predestination—for salvation is by grace and God knows eternally to whom he will give grace.

2. The religious problem this poses for Luther and Calvin is not about free will but about the assurance of salvation.

3. The problem stems from the most profoundly Biblical aspect of Augustine's doctrine of grace: God *chooses* to give grace to some and not others.

4. This is called (following Paul, Romans 11:5) the "election of grace," i.e., God's choice of whom to favor.

5. Augustine argues that this choice is inequitable but not unjust: since all are sinners, the punishment of those not chosen is deserved (and thus just) while the grace given to the chosen is undeserved (and thus merciful but not unjust).

6. Since grace cannot be earned (all are undeserving) we cannot know why God gives grace and salvation to some and not to others.

7. Thus arises the key pastoral problem concerning predestination: "what assurance have I that I am among the chosen?"

C. Diverse Responses to the Problem of Predestination
1. Luther thinks the sacrament of Baptism is sufficient to assure you that you are among God's people— but that it does not guarantee you will ultimately be saved, because it is always possible you may abandon the faith before you die.

2. In this Luther and Catholicism both follow Augustine, who argued that those who are predestined to be saved receive in addition to the grace of faith, the grace of *perseverance* in faith—but because we have a whole life ahead of us still, we cannot be sure we have this grace.

3. Calvin's major innovation in the doctrine of predestination is his teaching that we can know we are among the chosen (the "elect").

4. For Dutch Calvinism, the elect gain assurance of their election by seeing its fruits in their life: sincere faith, works of love, etc.

5. For English and American Puritans, assurance is gained through a conversion experience.

6. Hence Puritanism becomes an especially deep form of Protestant inwardness, dependent on inner experience rather than outward signs.

7. Here lies another innovation of Calvinism, which becomes the root of American revivalism: that it is through conversion, not baptism, that one is regenerated or "born again" into the life of Christ.

IV. Philosophical Developments in Protestantism

    A. As the concern with justification and salvation takes center stage, the themes of Christian Platonist spirituality recede.

    B. In Protestantism, the alliance between theology and philosophy is downplayed or repudiated, and new accounts of the knowledge of God emerge to replace the Augustinian notion of a beatific intellectual vision: first that of belief in the Word, then that of inner experience.

    C. An abiding problem: the characteristically Biblical understanding of God as a person who chooses becomes prominent, but begins to look like bad news: if grace is divine favor, then is a gracious God playing favorites?

Essential Reading:

Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" in *Martin Luther: Selections*, pp. 42-85

Supplemental Reading:

Calvin, *Institutes,* 3:21-22 (on predestination) and 4:14 (on the sacraments)

Luther, "The Sacrament of Penance" in *Luther's Works*, vol. 35, pp. 9-22

Questions to Consider:

1. Have you ever known anyone who lived a legalistic existence? What is it like?

2. How is it best to seek religious assurance: through inward experiences like conversion, through practical improvement in one's moral life, or through participation in worship, as in the Eucharist? Though all these may play a part in a religious life, does any one of them serve as foundation for the others?

Lecture Seventeen

Descartes, Locke, and the Crisis of Modernity

Scope: Modern philosophy is born in a crisis of authority, especially religious authority: in the wake of the wars of religion after the Protestant Reformation, the authoritative texts which had defined the nature of the medieval world no longer seemed to give unambiguous answers to fundamental questions about God, the world, and the self. Modern philosophy therefore begins by seeking the sources of belief and certainty in the self. This epistemological "turn to the subject" is illustrated by Descartes' method of systematic doubt and his famous starting-point of certainty: "I think, therefore I am." It is also a feature of Locke's evidentialist ethics of belief, according to which individuals are obliged to hold no belief (not even religious beliefs) unless they have adequate evidence in support of it.

Outline

I. Modern Thought and the Crisis of Authority
   A. The Meaning of "Authority"
      1. In Western religion, the word "authority" (Latin *auctoritas*) originally referred to the authority of a teacher rather than a king: it referred to educational, not political authority.
      2. In the Middle Ages, it came to refer to the authoritative texts of the Western tradition, the "authorities" whose writings one consulted to learn something (e.g., Aristotle on physics, the Church Fathers on the Bible).
      3. Hence the crisis of authority we are concerned with is a crisis of uncertainty about the meaning and value of *books*, the authoritative texts of the Western tradition.
   B. Sources of the Crisis of Authority
      1. Religious: In the wake of the Protestant Reformation, Christian Europe could not agree on the meaning of its religious authorities.
      2. Scientific: Modern Newtonian physics was based on experience and observation, rather than on reading "authorities," e.g., Aristotle's *Physics*.
      3. Social: as inherited nobility gives way to earned wealth (capitalism and then industrialism) the hierarchical universe of the Middle Ages begins to look quaint or oppressive, and individualism makes more sense.

II. Descartes and the Project of Certainty
   A. Typically regarded as the first modern philosopher, Rene Descartes (1596 – 1650) is famous as the man who said, "I think therefore I am." He is an epistemological individualist.
   B. Descartes' *project* was to find a new basis for the certainty of science.
      1. Descartes accepted the medieval Aristotelian view that scientific knowledge is certain.
      2. But he found that much of what he was taught (from ancient and medieval authorities) in his youth was false or uncertain.
      3. So he needed a new source of authority, apart from books and tradition.
      4. His aim was thus to figure everything out for himself individually: a profoundly modern stance for which Descartes is a kind of hero and symbol.
   C. Descartes' *method* was to doubt everything he had ever been taught and figure out what he could be certain of by his own reasoning.
      1. As a kind of thought-experiment he tries to doubt everything he's not sure of, including the existence of the external world and his own body.
      2. After thus doubting everything, "I think, therefore I am" is the first thing he can be certain of.
      3. Thus Descartes builds his certainty on the basis of a turn to his own individual self—his philosophical inquiry starts with "I."
      4. Though it was not his intention, Descartes' picture of the self alone in a world it is fundamentally unsure of came to resonate deeply with the modern anxieties of individualistic solipsism.
   D. Where does God fit into Descartes' project?

1. The first thing Descartes "proves" (in a type of ontological proof) after his own existence is God's existence, and on that basis he proceeds to argue that the external world is not an illusion (since God wouldn't try to mislead us).
2. Descartes' proof for God's existence is based on the idea of God "I" find in my own consciousness.
3. This is a sign of things to come: in modernity, God becomes part of "my" project to make sense of an alien universe—I turn to the self first, then make God part of the self's project (the epistemological "turn to the subject").

III. Locke and the Governance of Belief
   A. Empiricism
      1. Like Descartes, John Locke (1632 – 1704) was an epistemological individualist: what we know is an individual achievement, not based on tradition, authority or trusting what we were taught.
      2. Unlike Descartes, Locke was an empiricist: for him all knowledge begins with the experience of our own senses.
      3. In contrast to Aristotle and Aquinas, Locke thinks our sense-experience gives us no access to the essence of things: we only know the "outside" of physical things, not their hidden inner powers.
      4. Since all we know are our ideas of external things, the specter of solipsism again arises: Locke pictures each one of us alone in a private inner room, looking at the images of things projected from outside, but never seeing things or the outside world directly.
   B. An Evidentialist Ethics of Belief
      1. Unlike Descartes, Locke's main concern is not with scientific knowledge (he thinks we have very little of that) but with *belief.*
      2. In a culture where Catholics and a large variety of Protestants think that those who do not share their beliefs are justly punished in this world and the next, the question "what ought I believe?" takes on an anxious moral tone: there are *duties* about how we should believe.
      3. Locke proposes a way of governing or regulating the formation of our beliefs so that we will be doing our duty—doing our best as limited rational beings to form our beliefs properly.
      4. Hence while Descartes and Locke are both dealing with the anxiety of uncertainty, Locke deals with it not by seeking certainty, but by proposing that if we do our best, we shall not be blameworthy even if we come up with "the wrong answer."
      5. Locke's basic rule for governing our beliefs has been called *evidentialism*: we should proportion our beliefs to the strength of the evidence.
      6. The "strength" of the evidence is to be assessed in terms of the new, modern concept of probability (in the Middle Ages, "probable" meant "approved by an authority").
   C. Empiricism, Evidentialism and Religion
      1. Locke's picture of the self as a dark inner room is an historical descendant of Augustine's picture of the inner self as a place to which we turn to find God.
      2. But there is a huge difference: Augustine's inner room is like the courtyard of a palace with no roof and divine Light pouring in from above.
      3. Locke has "put the roof on" the inner space of the self—it is not natural to have an inward vision of God there, but only images of the sensible world.
      4. Hence for Locke there is no "inner evidence" of the existence and nature of God, and he rejects all claims for an Inner Light (such as were made by Quakers and other "enthusiasts") as irrational.
      5. The crucial evidence on behalf of revealed religion, for Locke, is the miracles of the Gospels, which testify to the truth of the Christian religion.
      6. Locke's evidentialist ethics of belief thus favors mainstream Christianity and militates against "enthusiasm."
      7. Once evidentialism is widely accepted, however, it came to be used in arguments against all religions, or against the existence of God in general—something Locke had not anticipated.
      8. Thus, evidentialism takes a skeptical turn.

Essential Reading:

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding* IV,xvii,24 - IV,xix,16, pp. 687-706 (on Faith and Reason)

Supplemental Reading:

Stout, *Flight from Authority*, chapters 1-8 (a fascinating philosophical account of the crisis of modernity and its effect on religion)

Wolterstorff, "Can Belief in God be Rational If It Has No Foundations?" in Plantinga and Wolterstorff (pp.135-145 contains a sketch of Locke's evidentialism, which Wolterstorff then criticizes)

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think our scientific knowledge is, can be, or should be certain?

2. Have you ever been troubled by the possibility of solipsism—the thought that maybe you are trapped alone in your own inner world, with no real certainty about the existence of the external world?

Lecture Eighteen
Leibniz and Theodicy

Scope: The world view of early modern philosophy was shaped by Newtonian physics, which was "mechanistic" in that it left no room for purposes, life or consciousness in the physical world. In Cartesian dualism, consciousness or mind is a non-physical entity. In Spinoza's pantheism, it is only the outward appearance of nature that is dead, while inwardly all of nature is divine. In Leibniz's panpsychism, every atom (or monad) of the physical world has a kind of "inner self" which is alive. Using his theory of monads, in combination with his logic of possible worlds, Leibniz constructs a theodicy (an attempt to answer "the problem of evil") whose key thesis is that God created the best of all possible worlds.

Outline

I. Metaphysics after Newtonian Physics
    A. Newton's physics, in contrast to Aristotelian physics, is mechanistic.
        1. In Newtonian physics nothing happens for a purpose.
        2. For Aristotle, living things had a different source of motion than non-living things: their souls.
        3. In Newtonian physics, all motion has the same source (which we now call energy): a living human body moves in a way that is not fundamentally different from a car or a rocket.
        4. Hence a crucial preoccupation of philosophy between Newton and Kant was to figure out where to fit life (including sensation and consciousness) back into the picture of the universe.
    B. Descartes' *dualism* illustrates the problem.
        1. Descartes in effect divided the world into inside and outside, i.e., what I am directly conscious of in myself and what I observe in the physical world.
        2. Hence in a Cartesian world, life is inward, what we feel, and the external or physical world is dead.
        3. How my physical body can interact with my consciousness and affect it (and vice versa) remains a difficult problem.
        4. Descartes concluded that animals, since they had no rationality, did not have consciousness or even feelings: they were in effect automatons.
    C. Spinoza's P*antheism* Provides a Radical Solution.
        1. In Spinoza, the universe has two aspects, an inner and an outer—in Cartesian terms, thought and extension.
        2. God, the only substance in the universe, is outwardly visible as the physical world and inwardly present as divine intellect.
        3. Hence everything exists in God as a modification of his being.
    D. Less radical but still highly speculative is Leibniz's *panpsychism*: his view that everything in the universe is alive.

II. Leibniz's Metaphysics
    A. In Leibniz's panpsychism, everything is made of individual atoms (called "monads") that have an "inside," containing something like consciousness (feelings, perceptions, etc.).
    B. Most monads have rather dull or obscure perceptions (they seem to us inert or unconscious) but we humans have alert and clear monads, i.e., minds.
    C. What is inside a monad (its perceptions, etc.) cannot be affected by outside forces (monads are "windowless").
    D. Hence Leibniz's famous thesis of pre-established harmony: God creates the universe as a set of monads whose perceptions, feelings, desires and choices are coordinated with one another from the start.
    E. That means the whole history of each monad is already determined at creation—including every free choice it will make.
    F. Think of each monad as a whole life-span, including all its free choices: what God creates is that whole life-span (just as he examines and creates the whole history of the universe, from beginning to end, from his standpoint in eternity).

G. Thus God does not compel any monad to choose X rather than Y, but rather creates a monad who freely chooses X rather than Y.

H. If Leibniz's metaphysics makes sense, then it is a very deep way to reconcile the sovereignty of God and the free will of his creatures.

III. Leibnizian Theodicy

    A. Theodicy is a response to "the problem of evil," which logically boils down to a challenge for believers in God to reconcile three statements:

        1. God is good.

        2. God is omnipotent.

        3. There is much evil in the world.

    B. Basic concepts of Augustinian theodicy: free will is the source of moral evil.

        1. Free will is the ultimate source of all moral evil (God did not create evil).

        2. Free will is a good thing (God created it) but it also makes moral evil (sin) possible.

        3. In fact, without free will both moral good and moral evil are impossible.

        4. Hence in choosing a world which contains moral good (i.e., people using free will to choose the right thing) God inevitably makes it possible for there to be freely-chosen evil as well.

        5. The basic premise of Augustinian theodicy is thus that a world containing evil may be better than a world containing no evil.

        6. For example, God could have created a universe with nothing living in it but flowers and birds: a lovely world with no moral evil, but also no moral good (no love, justice, courage, etc.).

        7. Furthermore (according to Augustinian theodicy) God allowed moral evil so that he could bring a greater good out of it.

        8. The key example of this point is that God allowed Adam and Eve to sin so that he could bring about their redemption through the suffering of Christ: "Oh happy fault, that required so great a Redeemer!"

    C. Leibniz's version of Augustinian theodicy is: this is the best of all possible worlds.

        1. God creates the whole history of the world from beginning to end, including the history of all its (pre-harmonized) monads and his plan to bring good out of evil.

        2. God always acts for the best (he has no reason not to).

        3. Hence this world, with its particular history of evil and good, is the best of all possible worlds.

IV. Responses to Leibniz's Theodicy

    A. Does this look to you like the best of all possible worlds?

        1. Thought experiment: suppose Hitler had been killed in the First World War—isn't that likely to have made a better world?

        2. Voltaire's *Candide* satirizes, in the character of Doctor Pangloss, a Leibnizian philosopher who stumbles through disaster after disaster, blithely assuring everyone that "All is for the best in this best of all possible worlds!"

    B. A logical difficulty: if worlds are ordered like numbers, then there's no best world, just as there's no highest number.

    C. Plantinga's "Free Will Defense"

        1. Alvin Plantinga (along with several other contemporary philosophers) has developed a metaphysics using a sophisticated new version of Leibniz's notion of possible worlds.

        2. Suppose God knows what someone *would have done* if things were different from what they actually are (Catholic philosophers of the 17th century called this "middle knowledge").

        3. If so (Plantinga argues) then God could not have created a world where that person did what she would not have chosen to do.

        4. Hence Plantinga concludes that God is limited in the way He may create the world: He cannot actualize a possible world in which someone does what she *would not have done* under those circumstances.

        5. The gist of Plantinga's Free Will Defense is thus that human beings' free choices to do evil set limits to how good God may make the world—and it's therefore not God's fault if the world turns out worse than God would like. This is the "incompatibilist" view.

D. A Leibnizian Criticism of Plantinga
1. It seems reasonable to suppose, *contra* Plantinga, that there's no fact of the matter about what someone *would have done* if things were different.
2. For example, suppose that if things were different, Jane could have freely chosen to do X or not to do X.
3. If so, then there are two possible worlds to consider: one in which Jane does X, and one in which she doesn't do X.
4. It seems God could actualize either of these two possible worlds (if Leibniz is right, and Plantinga is wrong).
5. In other words, God could choose which free choice Jane would actually make.
6. This scenario illustrates a key thesis of Augustinian theology: that God's choices (even his predestination) do not take away our free will.
7. In medieval terms, the thesis is that *primary causality* (God's creative power) does not compete with or interfere with *secondary causes* (our free will, etc.) but supports them and brings them into being.

E. Making Theodicy Harder
1. This Leibnizian view, however, is vulnerable to the same sort of objection that Voltaire made: it sure looks like God could often have made the world better by choosing to have people make different choices than they actually did.
2. Here the last line of defense must evidently be Augustinian (not Leibnizian or Plantingan): God in his wisdom chose that people would freely choose some moral evils, because it was his plan to bring a greater good out of them.
3. If this is so, then the ultimate difficulty about evil seems to be: given the amount of evil in the world, why should we trust that there is a God making such choices wisely and well?
4. To answer that question, we need something philosophy cannot provide us: the witness of specific religious traditions to the goodness and faithfulness of God.

Essential Reading:

Leibniz, *Monadology*

Supplemental Reading:

Plantinga, "The Free Will Defense"

Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*

Spinoza, *Ethics*, Book 1 (pp. 45-81)

Questions to Consider:
1. How do you think the phenomenon of life (or the phenomenon of consciousness) fits into the physical universe? Are you more attracted to materialism, dualism, panpsychism, or pantheism?
2. Do you think it is possible to believe in God, in view of the amount of suffering and evil in the world. If so, how?

Lecture Nineteen
Hume's Critique of Religion

Scope: David Hume was perhaps the most astute critic of religion in the highly critical period of Western history known as the Enlightenment. He was an empiricist who took a skeptical approach to both reason and religion, arguing, for instance, that we have no notion of the hidden underlying causes of events in nature. Our empirical knowledge is limited to the regular patterns of events we can observe with our senses—and hence we have no good reason to believe in the existence of events that violate those patterns (miracles). In his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, he argued that our empirical knowledge gives us no strong reason to believe in a God, defined in any of the ways Plotinus defined it: as incomprehensible First Principle, as divine creative Mind, or as indwelling World Soul.

Outline

I.   Historical Context: The Enlightenment

    A. The Distinction between Natural and Revealed Religion
   1. The Enlightenment originated in criticism of religious authoritarianism and dogma, in favor of individual freedom of thought.
   2. Hence the Enlightenment favored a liberal, tolerant, respectable and rather inoffensive religion.
   3. Enlightenment thinkers distinguished revealed religion (the religion of dogma and authority) from natural religion (the religion of morality and reason).
   4. One of the profound surprises of the Enlightenment took place when reason and natural religion itself came in for critique.
   5. David Hume is perhaps the greatest example of skeptical Enlightenment criticism of the claims of reason and religion.

II. Hume's Empiricism: Analysis of the Concepts of Cause and Effect

    A. Hume stood in the tradition of British empiricism begun by Locke, but took its critique of rationalism in a skeptical direction.

    B. Most famously, Hume was skeptical of traditional notions of causality, for he noted that our senses gave us no idea of what causal power was like.

    C. What our sense-observations show us, according to Hume, is only a repeated pattern of "constant conjunction": "an object followed by another, and . . . all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second."

    D. Hume argued that this repeated and predictable pattern of constant conjunction is the real empirical meaning of our talk about cause and effect.

    E. Hence Hume's skepticism: we don't have real knowledge of the forces that operate in nature (e.g., "elasticity, gravity, cohesion of parts, and communication of motion by impulse").

    F. But Hume proposes a "skeptical solution": our habits of expectation, our mental "customs," give us the knowledge of causal patterns we need to live our daily lives.

III. Hume's Critique of Revealed Religion: "On Miracles"

    A. Locke had used the miracles of the Gospels as the prime evidence for the truth of revealed religion.

    B. Hume undermined Locke's defense of revealed religion by arguing that even if miracles actually happened, we would not be rationally justified in believing them.

    C. His argument is that any event which violates the most unalterable patterns of "constant conjunction" in our experience is something we cannot have any good reason to believe.

    D. Hence Hume concludes that reports of miracles are always less believable than the patterns of experience that we have never found to be violated (i.e., the laws of nature).

    E. We can put the point in terms of probability: the probability of the report of a miracle being true (e.g., in the Gospels) is always less than the probability that the document which reports the miracle is in error.

F. Hume's argument fits the way modern historiography is done, and is still a key argument against conservative or literalist readings of the Bible.

IV. Hume's Critique of Natural Religion

    A. The Cast of Characters in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

        1. Demea, the dogmatist of revealed religion—the weakest character, almost a caricature.

        2. Cleanthes, the Lockean liberal and champion of natural religion—the position Hume is concerned to refute.

        3. Philo, the urbane skeptic—Hume's (frequently ironic) mouthpiece.

    B. In the *Dialogues*, Hume deals with arguments for the three Plotinian hypostases in order: incomprehensible One, divine Mind, and World-soul or animating life force of the world.

    C. An Incomprehensible God?

        1. Demea sees an alliance between firm religious belief and philosophical skepticism: despairing of reason and the possibility of scientific knowledge, we flee to faith.

        2. Philo ironically agrees: there really is nothing we can know about God.

        3. Hume's logical point here is that a religious emphasis on the vast distance between us and a lofty, unknowable God plays into the hands of those who are skeptical of religion.

    D. A Divine Mind Giving Order to the World?

        1. Cleanthes proposes a version of the teleological argument (or "argument from design"): the purposive order we see in the world is evidence that there is a divine Mind which made it.

        2. The argument from design is based on analogy between two different kinds of cause-effect relationship: e.g., as the design of a watch is evidence of the watchmaker, so the purposive functioning of an eye is evidence for the existence of an intelligent designer.

        3. Again ironically agreeing with Demea, Philo protests that this argument likens God to us.

        4. For instance, from imperfections in a watch we could infer the imperfection of the watchmaker—so shouldn't breakdowns in nature (destruction, suffering and evil) lead us by analogy to infer similar imperfections in God?

        5. The key logical question is thus: how close is the analogy between the apparent design of the natural world and the design of a machine?

        6. A related logical point is Hume's criticism of singular causal claims: our reasoning about cause and effect is based on observing many cases of the same pattern of cause-and-effect, but God only created the world once, and there's nothing else quite like that.

    E. A Life-Force Animating the World and Organizing It from Within?

        1. Suppose the world is like a natural organism rather than a work of art: does that not show it must have a kind of organizing and animating principle within it—a World-soul for which the universe is its body?

        2. Hume (through Philo) makes another general point about causality here: we know no more about the causal powers of minds or souls than we do of physical objects, so we have no compelling reason to suppose that the order in the physical world must go back to the order in a mind or soul.

        3. Hence Philo's positive suggestion is that, for all we know, the material world could organize itself without a superior mind or inner soul to guide it—a suggestion that, of course, becomes immensely more plausible with the rise of Darwin's theory of evolution a century later.

        4. Therefore, Hume leads to the conclusion that there is no rational basis for religion (natural or revealed), thus posing an on-going challenge to the philosophy of religion in the modern era.

Essential Reading:

Hume, "Of Miracles," chapter 10 of *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*

Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*

Supplemental Reading:

Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, chapters 4-7 (on causality)

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think it is reasonable to believe in miracles? Why or why not?

2. Do you think there is such order in the natural world as to show that it has an intelligent Designer? Why or why not?

Lecture Twenty
Kant—Reason Limited to Experience

Scope: This lecture examines the theoretical philosophy of Kant, which represents a key turning point in modern conceptions of the nature of reason. In Kant the modern "turn to the subject" initiated by Descartes reaches a new level of depth and completeness. Kant argues that the very possibility of experience (and hence of the empirical knowledge which is the basis of the natural sciences) is based on subjective conditions. There cannot be objects of experience, Kant argues, unless we conceptualize or represent them as such. The world of experience is in part constituted by our conceptualizing activity, and that is why we can be certain about basic principles (such as the law of cause-and-effect) in advance of all actual experience (*a priori*, as Kant puts it). But by the same token, our Reason cannot gain knowledge of what lies beyond the bounds of possible experience. Therefore it cannot have the kind of knowledge promised by traditional metaphysics—knowledge of God and the soul and the essence of things in themselves.

Outline

I. How Empirical Knowledge Is Possible

    A. Kant's "Copernican Revolution": The Turn to the Subject

        1. Kant is writing in the wake of the Newtonian revolution in physics: the old Aristotelian physics, and with it metaphysics, has fallen into disrepute.

        2. Kant uses the language of revolution to describe key advances in science (such as Copernicus' astronomy) and he presents his own philosophy as a scientific revolution of this sort—the first to establish metaphysics as a real science.

        3. Kant's "Copernican Revolution" involves a "turn to the subject": i.e., looking for the subjective basis of the possibility of objective knowledge.

        4. The question is: what does the subject (our mind or consciousness) do to make experience of physical objects possible?

        5. The shape of the question: we start with unorganized sense-data and we end up observing physical objects and making scientific discoveries—how does that happen?

        6. Imagine a baby and its "rhapsody of sensations," patches of color, unrelated sounds, etc. Before it can recognize objects it must learn to "conceptualize" them in order to "objectify" them.

        7. Thus there is a subjective basis (a basis in the *subject* or mind) for the possibility of *objects* of experience—a *subjective* ground of the *objectivity* of empirical knowledge.

    B. Principles of "Conceptualization": Cause-and-Effect

        1. One of the subjective bases or conditions which make it possible for us to have experience of objects is the law of cause-and-effect.

        2. We can never observe or discover this law through the natural sciences, because all empirical research has to assume this law from the start (*a priori*).

        3. Hence we must know in advance that the law of cause-and-effect applies to the physical world (i.e., the world of experience) in order to do science at all.

        4. Kant tries to show that we do know the law of cause-and-effect in advance (*a priori*) precisely because it is a condition which makes it possible for there to be a world of experience in the first place.

    C. Kant's Transcendental Idealism

        1. Kant identifies the physical world (the world investigated by the empirical sciences) with the world of experience, which is dependent on our conceptualization.

        2. This means that we do not know things as they are in themselves, apart from our experience and the conceptualization that underlies it.

        3. Kant thus secures the possibility of real knowledge in the natural sciences ("empirical realism") at the cost of denying us knowledge of the essence of things as they are in themselves (Kant calls this "transcendental idealism").

        4. What Kant denies, in effect, is what Aristotle and Aquinas affirmed: that we can know the essence of material objects, and that this knowledge is the basis of science.

5. In Kant's terms, we have no "intellectual intuition," no capacity for direct intellectual vision or seeing things with the mind's eye—i.e., the sort of vision that for Plato or Augustine was the essential function of the mind.

II. Kant on the Limits of Reason
   A. Why Reason Needs to Discover Its Own Limits
      1. Kant's account of how knowledge is possible for us sets severe limits on the ambitions of metaphysics, which for Kant are the ambitions of Reason itself.
      2. The history of metaphysics shows that Reason aims for more knowledge than it can reasonably have—knowledge that goes beyond the bounds of all possible experience.
      3. Hence Reason stands in need of critique—actually a self-critique, in which Reason demonstrates to itself its own limits—and Kant sets out to provide it in his book *Critique of Pure Reason*.
   B. Beyond the Limits of Reason: God and the Soul
      1. What is beyond the bounds of possible experience cannot be an object of our knowledge, e.g., the essence of things, the soul and God (i.e., precisely the things with which Platonist metaphysics was primarily concerned).
      2. Kant rejected proofs for the immortality of soul and for free will (which is not an object of possible experience).
   C. Kant's Critique of Metaphysical Proofs of the Existence of God
      1. For example, the Aristotelian argument for the existence of a First Cause fails, because we cannot know that the law of cause and effect applies beyond the bounds of possible experience.
      2. Kant claims that there are only three possible types of proof for God's existence: ontological (arguing on the basis of the mere concept of God), cosmological (arguing on the basis of the *existence* of the world) and teleological (arguing on the basis of the *order* or apparent design of the world).
      3. The latter two proofs begin with matters of experience and arrive at the *concept* of God as supreme reality, but then must rely on the ontological proof to argue that this concept actually corresponds to something real.
      4. The crucial step in all three arguments is thus one beyond all possible experience: the step from the concept of a supreme reality to its actual existence.
      5. The ontological argument tries to show that the supreme reality must exist because reality or existence is part of the very concept of the supreme reality.
      6. Kant's classic reply is that "existence is not a real predicate," i.e., it is not a real quality in an object (such as "white", "great" "intelligent" etc.).
      7. Since concepts of objects only include real predicates, existence cannot be part of any concept, even the concept of God.
      8. Thus the ontological proof fails, along with the other two proofs of God's existence which are dependent on it.
      9. One way to grasp the concept is to state the argument in terms of modern formal logic.
   D. Kant is thus turning his back on the philosophical world of Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas and others.

Essential Reading:

Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Parts II, III, and Conclusion (pp. 38-104)

Supplemental Reading:

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 500-524.

Scruton, *Kant*

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think it is true that all we can know about the world is what we can conceptualize about it? Why or why not?

2. Does religion gain or lose if metaphysical proofs for God's existence turn out to be untenable?

Lecture Twenty-One
Kant—Morality as the Basis of Religion

Scope: Kant set limits to theoretical Reason, critiquing its attempts to prove the existence of God, in order to make room for practical Reason, i.e., for morality and a moral faith. He argues that popular moral notions such as "duty" point toward a purely rational (*a priori*) foundation for morality, grounded in what he calls a categorical imperative: a principle of conduct which all rational beings recognize they ought to follow, regardless of their inclinations. If it is really possible for us to follow such a principle, out of sheer respect for the moral law, then we must have free will, and we may also hope for a life after death in which moral behavior, which so often goes unrewarded in this life, meets with due happiness.

Outline

I. Kant's Critique of Reason Sets Limits on Metaphysics, Not Religion

    A. Kant's claim is that we cannot have metaphysical knowledge of God and the soul, not that they don't exist or that we shouldn't believe in them.

    B. In fact, Kant says he is limiting reason in order to make room for faith.

    C. For Kant the basis of faith is not theoretical metaphysics but moral hope.

II. Kant on Morality

    A. For Kant, the basis of morality must be a pure *a priori* principle.

        1. Morality should not be based on empirical principles like "getting what I want" or the pursuit of happiness, but rather the pure rational consideration of "what ought I to do?"

        2. In this respect the metaphysics of morals is like the metaphysics of nature (discussed in previous lecture): it is concerned with principles established entirely *a priori*, in advance of experience.

        3. The difference is that metaphysics of morals is concerned with *ought* rather than *is*: what I ought to do rather than what objects there are in the world of experience.

    B. Concepts of "Popular" Morality: Will, Duty and Law

        1. The only thing that is truly good (in the moral sense of the word) is a good will—i.e., the will that chooses the right thing for the right reason.

        2. Our will is good not when we succeed in getting what we want, but only when we choose to do our duty for duty's sake.

        3. We are doing our duty when we obey the moral law (regardless of the consequences).

        4. An ethics based on duty is called "deontological" (from Greek for "ought") whereas the ancient form of ethics based on seeking happiness is called "eudaimonistic" or "teleological" (from Greek words for "happiness" and "goal").

        5. Kant aims to provide a metaphysical foundation for a rigorously deontological ethics (which he calls simply "morality").

        6. Kantian morality, being prior to all empirical considerations, thus means doing your duty regardless of the consequences, with no thought of reward, not out of inclination but out of duty, and not because anyone else told you to do it.

    C. The Basic Principle of the Metaphysics of Morals: The Categorical Imperative

        1. A general principle on the basis of which the will acts or chooses is called an Imperative.

        2. Non-moral principles take the form of a Hypothetical Imperative, an if-then statement such as "if you want to get along in life, be nice to people."

        3. Moral principles take the form of a Categorical Imperative: "this is the kind of thing you ought to do," period.

    D. First Formulation of Categorical Imperative (A Simplified Version)

        1. Act so that your action could become the basis of a law that you could want to be universally applied.

        2. Why? The good will is concerned not with satisfying our inclinations but with obeying law as such, which applies universally to all rational beings regardless of inclination.

3. Implication of Autonomy: we rational beings are *autonomous*, i.e. we legislate the moral law for ourselves.

E. Second Formulation of Categorical Imperative
  1. Act so as to respect other persons as ends in themselves.
  2. Why? Other persons ought not to be used as means to satisfy your inclinations, but treated as rational beings who are capable of legislating for themselves.
  3. Implication of Dignity: rational beings have no price, only a priceless *dignity*.

F. Third Formulation of Categorical Imperative
  1. Act so as to promote a kingdom of ends, in which all rational beings are respected as ends in themselves.
  2. Why? Even though this kingdom cannot exist in the world of nature, it is the goal toward which our moral actions tend.
  3. Implication of Ideality: Morality is governed by ideas that go beyond what is possible in our experience.

III. How Is an *A Priori* Morality Possible?

A. The Idea of Law
  1. All nature (the world of possible experience) is governed by law, but only rational beings can govern themselves by the *idea* of law.
  2. Hence the dignity of rational beings as self-legislators.
  3. The moral law is based on autonomy (Greek for "self-legislation") rather than heteronomy ("other-legislation"): that means it is based on respect for law as such, not on our inclinations, our desire for happiness or hope of reward.

B. The Idea of Freedom
  1. All our empirical motivations are based on inclinations (our desire to satisfy various felt needs).
  2. We have no experience of acting purely according to idea of law: we cannot know that we have ever actually done our duty simply because it is our duty—all we know is that we *ought* to.
  3. Hence a key question arises: how is it possible for pure reason to provide motivation for action?
  4. Since moral action is motivated by respect for law as such, it is possible only if we have freedom from natural necessity and inclination.
  5. To act morally is therefore to act under the idea of freedom.

C. Kant on Free Will
  1. For Kant freedom (i.e., free will) is precisely the capacity to obey the moral law.
  2. Therefore, even though our freedom can never be an object of experience, we do well to *believe* in it.
  3. This is how faith goes beyond reason, whose knowledge is limited to the world of possible experience.
  4. This is Kant's solution to the problem of free will and determinism: the world of experience which we can *know* (nature) appears determined (for that is how we must objectify it according to natural laws) but we can *believe* that our actions (considered as things in themselves) may be the result of our moral freedom.

IV. Morality as the Basis of Religion

A. Kant's Moral Argument for Belief in God
  1. Morality requires the idea of a highest good (*summum bonum*): a state of ultimate justice in which evil does not triumph and good has its reward.
  2. This idea cannot be realized in the world of experience as we know it, nor can it be the basis of morality (that would be heteronomy—being moral for the sake of reward) but it is a necessary and therefore permissible hope of morality.
  3. The only way this hope could become real is if there is a God, who can combine the aims of morality (i.e., people doing their duty) and of nature (i.e., happiness) by giving happiness to those who morally deserve it.
  4. Therefore it is reasonable, even necessary, to believe that God exists (Kant calls this a "postulate" of pure practical reason).
  5. Another and related postulate is the immortality of the soul, which makes possible the hope of unending moral progress.

B. Religion within the Bounds of Reason
  1. Based on the standard Enlightenment distinction between revealed and natural religion, Kant proposes an account of religion within the limits of pure moral reason.
  2. Kant's religion is rigorously moralistic, based on rational duties, moral hope, and moral faith (as described above).
  3. It contains a philosophical version of the Christian doctrine of original sin (human nature is originally good but has inexplicably become corrupt and radically evil).
  4. It contains a philosophical version of the Christian doctrine of atonement (no one else can atone for my evils, but in repenting and turning to good I make up for the evils of my past).
  5. It contains a philosophical version of the Christian doctrine of the Son of God (which is the idea of a morally perfect man).
  6. We will see the notion of a philosophical version of Christian doctrines again in Hegel.

V. Some Words of Assessment
  A. Pro
  1. Kant's morality is perhaps the most powerful articulation ever of an ethics of respect for the dignity of all persons.
  2. Imagine doing the right thing, even though it is futile and all the world is against you (including your own inclinations): if that is possible, then a certain kind of holiness has entered the world, which is of ultimate importance, even if it is never rewarded.
  B. Con
  1. On the other hand, there seems to be something missing in Kant's notion that only doing your duty for duty's sake counts as truly moral: consider the example of a mother who delights in caring for her children—isn't this morally good?
  2. Likewise, many theologians find that a view of religion where everything goes back ultimately and solely to morality is too narrow.

Essential Reading:

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

Supplemental Reading:

Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think doing the right thing, simply because it is the right thing, is what morality is all about?

2. Do you think the possibility of doing the right thing, simply because it is the right thing, shows us anything about the nature of free will or the reality of God?

Lecture Twenty-Two
Schleiermacher—Feeling as the Basis of Religion

Scope: Religious thinkers after Kant wanted to find an approach to God which was based neither on theoretical Reason (metaphysical proofs for God, etc.) nor pure morality. What they found was feeling—and this finding lies at root of the Romantic movement and the tradition of liberal theology. Schleiermacher, the founding figure of liberal theology, based religion on the feeling of utter dependence, which for him is the basis of God-consciousness. Christianity is the religion that tries to spread the impression of Christ's perfect God-consciousness throughout humanity.

Outline

I. German Thinking about Religion in the Wake of Kant

   A. If religion were to remain within the limits of reason as Kant defined them, it would be rigorously moralistic, containing little that is specifically religious.

   B. The limits of reason are most fundamentally set by Kant's assumption that we human beings do not have intellectual intuition, i.e., the kind of intellectual vision of "the mind's eye" familiar from Plato, Augustine, etc.

   C. Idealists and Romantics after Kant tried to restore intellectual intuition.
      1. The central figures here are Fichte and especially Schelling, who insisted on a kind of "intellectual intuition" which was much less intellectual than Plato, and more like a kind of immediate feeling (Romanticism).
      2. This completes a fundamental movement of Western philosophical history, as the sort of insight which was originally attributed to the mind finally becomes the property of the feelings or an experience that is too deep for mere reason.
      3. An American version of this Romantic philosophy can be found in Emerson's notion of the human mind resonating with the creative mind behind Nature.
      4. Compare Wordsworth's Ode on "Intimations of Immortality," which presents the Platonist doctrine of recollection less as an intellectual insight than as a deep hint hidden at the bottom of all our conscious experience.

   D. In Romanticism, the perception of the formative power of God in creation, which had once been the province of philosophical science or monastic meditation, is regarded as the secret beyond reason that is hidden in the depth of every consciousness.

   E. The founding figure of this Romantic approach to religion—and with it of the tradition of Liberal Theology—is Friedrich Schleiermacher.

II. Schleiermacher on God-Consciousness

   A. Piety as a Feeling
      1. For Schleiermacher, the three basic elements in human life are Knowing, Doing and Feeling.
      2. Knowing and Doing, both active elements of the self, correspond to Kant's theoretical and practical reason, respectively.
      3. Feeling (or more precisely, immediate self-consciousness) is receptive rather than active.
      4. Feeling is the link between moments of Knowing and moments of Doing.
      5. Though there is pious knowing and doing (faith and good works) piety itself belongs essentially to feeling—to the fundamental moment of receptivity called "the feeling of utter dependence."

   B. The Feeling of Utter Dependence
      1. In our activities (knowing and doing) we have a feeling of freedom or spontaneity.
      2. In our receptivity, we have a feeling of dependence on an other (e.g., in order to actively conceptualize an object so as to know it, we must first receive that which is given in sensation).
      3. We can never feel utterly free, because our knowing and doing is always partially dependent on such receptivity.
      4. But we can feel utterly dependent, because without receptivity we could not do anything.

C. The Feeling of Utter Dependence as God-Consciousness
  1. The feeling of utter dependence is not related to particular objects (for in knowing particular objects we are both active and receptive).
  2. The feeling of utter dependence is our consciousness that all of our spontaneous activity and receptivity is dependent on some (unobjectifiable, unconceptualizable) source beyond us.
  3. This feeling of utter dependence is our relation to God, our God-consciousness.
  4. Hence Schleiermacher says God is "the WHENCE of our receptive and active existence" as implied in the consciousness of our utter dependence—a WHENCE not to be identified with any particular object of consciousness.
  5. Thus there is a deep sense in which God cannot be objectified but He can be felt—prior to all our knowing and doing.
  6. Our utter dependence on God is the fact that we are created by God, so our feeling of utter dependence is our consciousness of ourselves as created beings.

III. Schleiermacher on Christian Consciousness
  A. Consciousness of sin is consciousness of turning away from God-consciousness to other things.
  B. Christ is sinless, in that He is a man with uniquely perfect God-consciousness.
  C. Redemption means that the impression of Christ's personality spreads in the Church through preaching, thus purifying and strengthening the God-consciousness of its members.
  D. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ as the shared Spirit of the Church, the presence of Christ's God-consciousness communicated to all its members.

IV. Some Assessments
  A. Schleiermacher's Achievement
    1. He gave an account of revealed religion after Kant that still had a substantial role for the content of a specific religious traditions, rather than making all historical religions just exemplifications (of varying purity) of morality.
    2. He widened the concept of experience so that we could have consciousness of God without conceptualizing God as a mere object.
  B. Schleiermacher Remained in Kant's Shadow
    1. Like Kant, he defines the limits and shape of our experience in advance (so that what doesn't fit into that preconceived notion of the limits of our experience is rejected as unintelligible).
    2. Despite a rich account of the activities of the Christian Church, he aids and abets the modern tendency to privatize religion.
  C. What Schleiermacher Leaves out of Traditional Christian Doctrine
    1. He finds it hard to say much about the significance of specific events that play a crucial role in the story of Christ, such as the Crucifixion and Resurrection; what matters is only Christ's *consciousness*.
    2. He had no place for the pre-existence of Christ in eternal Trinity.
    3. He conveys little sense of God acting or speaking: God is not someone we meet but rather the creative causality of which we are conscious.
  D. Schleiermacher's Influence
    1. Since (following Kant) God cannot be conceptualized as an object of knowledge, religious experience takes center stage as the foundation of faith in liberal theology after Schleiermacher.
    2. Christ fits into this theology of religious experience as a personality whose consciousness leaves an impression on our consciousness and thus transforms it.

Essential Reading:

Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, sections 3-4 (pp.5-18), 100-101 (pp.425-438) and 113-115 (pp.525-536)

Supplemental Reading:

Emerson, "Nature," "The Divinity School Address" and "The Oversoul"

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think that religious experience lies deep down in a feeling at the basis of all your consciousness?
2. In your judgment, does Schleiermacher give an adequate account of what Christianity is all about?

Glossary

Adonai: Hebrew for "Lord," this word is pronounced by Jews in place of the sacred name for God, YHWH (*q.v.*)

A priori: Latin for "in advance"; in Kantian philosophy this term refers to knowledge we can have "in advance of experience" or (in other words) without having to make any observations—e.g. mathematics is an *a priori* science, but physics is not.

Absolute: not relative (q.v.).

Active Intellect (called by medieval philosophers, "Agent Intellect"): in Aristotelian philosophy, the part or aspect of the intellect which makes Forms in material objects (which are potentially understandable) actually understood.

Actual Occasions: in Whitehead's process philosophy, this refers to the events which are the basic constituents of reality.

Actualism: the view, characteristic of both Barth and Bultmann, that revelation, faith or the knowledge of God are always *events* (due to the *act* of God) rather than things we can possess.

Agent Intellect: see Active Intellect.

Allegory: method of interpretation in which persons, events or characteristics in a narrative are read as symbols of a higher reality; allegory is specially characteristic of Platonist readings of the Bible "according to the spirit rather than the letter."

"Allegory of the Cave": name given by scholars to a particularly important passage from Plato's *Republic*, book 7.

Anthropomorphism: from the Greek words *anthropos* ("human") and *morphe* ("form"), this refers to the tendency to describe God in ways that make him look human; thus the descriptions of God in the Bible are more anthropomorphic than the concept of the divine in Platonism.

Apollinarianism: the Christological teaching of Apollinarius, who held that in Jesus the divine *Logos* replaced the human soul; rejected by the orthodox because it would mean that Jesus, having no human soul, was not truly human.

Apophaticism: from the Greek term for negation or denial; the characteristically Eastern Christian approach to speaking about God by saying what he is not rather than what he is; called in the West *via negativa*.

Arianism: the view of the Trinity taught by Arius (early 4th century) according to which Christ as *Logos* is the first of all the things God created; known to orthodox or *Nicene* theologians as "the Arian heresy."

Asceticism: from the Greek *askesis*, meaning "discipline"; refers to religious or spiritual disciplines such as fasting and celibacy, which are associated in the Christian Platonist tradition with efforts to give the soul control over or freedom from the body.

Aufhebung: German term (from a verb meaning literally "to pick up") translated in these lectures as "subsumption" (but elsewhere "sublation," "sublimation," supercession," "cancellation," or "abolition"); Hegel uses this term to describe the completion of the dialectical movement from opposition to unification, which involves both canceling and preserving the opposition, and resolving it at a higher level of consciousness.

Autonomy: from a Greek term for "self-legislation"; in Kant, this refers to the fact that rational beings legislate the moral law for themselves—it is not imposed on them from outside (not even by God). Contrast *heteronomy*.

Beatific Vision: literally, "the seeing that makes [us] happy"; in the Augustinian tradition, this means seeing God, which is the goal of human life and the source of our ultimate happiness or beatitude.

Bible: see *Scriptures*.

Binah: Hebrew for "Thought", the name for the third *Sefirah* in Kabbalah, also called "Palace" and "Womb"; emanates from and is paired with *Hokhmah* ("Wisdom" or "Point") the second *Sefirah*.

Canon: a standard collection, in these lectures specifically the *Scriptures* (q.v.) and the Bible, which consist of collections of Jewish or Christian writings, with some texts definitely included and the rest definitely excluded.

Cartesian: adjective formed from the name "Descartes" (originally *Des Cartes*); hence the *Cartesian philosophy* is the philosophy of Descartes.

Categorical: in Kant, a principle which takes the logical form "All X is Y."

Causality: the relation of cause and effect.

Chalcedon: site of a Church council in 451, where the orthodox Christology was formulated, which teaches that Christ is one person in two natures: both truly God and truly man.

Christology: Christian doctrine concerning the person of Christ, and particularly the relation of his humanity to his divinity.

Church fathers: the theologians of the early Christian tradition c. 150-500 A.D. (e.g. Origen, Athanasius, Augustine) who formulated the basic teachings of Christian orthodoxy, including the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology.

Classical Theism: the view of God combining Biblical concepts with metaphysical concepts from the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions (emphasizing the eternity and absoluteness of God) developed by the Christian Church fathers and systematized in the middle ages by Islamic thinkers such as Avicenna, Jewish thinkers such as Maimonides, and Christian thinkers such as Anselm and Aquinas.

Contemplation: from a Greek word for "beholding", this is a technical term in Plato and Aristotle for the act of intellectual vision or seeing the Forms (i.e. actually looking at them with our mind's eye, not just having them in our knowledge or memory).

Contingent: the opposite of necessary; hence while a necessary being cannot not exist, a contingent being may exist or not.

Contrition: in medieval penitential theology, the proper state of mind for a penitent (i.e. repentant person), consisting in sincere hatred of one's sins.

Cosmological Proof: an argument for the existence of God which reasons from the existence (or contingency) of the world (*cosmos*) to the existence of a necessary first principle from which the world originates. See the *ontological proof* and the argument from *design*.

Creature: a thing created by God; i.e. (according to orthodox Christian theology) everything that exists other than God (see *uncreated*).

Deconstruction: a strategy of reading devised (or at least named) by Jacques Derrida, which is concerned (among other things) to observe how philosophical texts undermine their own attempts to formulate a comprehensive or totalizing theory of the nature of being (see *metaphysics*).

Demiurge: Greek for craftsman or artificer, Plato's term for the divine being who forms the world—the Platonic version of God the Creator.

Demythologization: in Bultmann, the project of re-interpreting mythological concepts (in the New Testament) in terms of more adequate modern concepts, such as those of existentialism.

Deontological: from the Greek word for "ought", this refers to an ethics based on the concept of duty, i.e. what we *ought* to do, rather than what will make us ultimately happy (see *eudaimnonism*).

Design, Argument from: a proof for the existence of God based on the inference that the order or apparent purposiveness of the world requires an intelligent Designer.

Dialectic: originally Greek for "conversation" (similar to our word "dialogue"), this word came to refer to the art of debate or logical argument (in Plato and afterwards), then was used by Hegel to describe the logical development of *Geist* or reason in history.

Dignity: in Kant, a technical term for the value of rational beings, which is beyond price.

Dogmatics: from German *Dogmatik*, a term for "systematic theology," as in the title of Karl Barth's systematic theology, the *Church Dogmatics* (*Kirchliche Dogmatik*); unlike the English word "dogmatic," the term is not pejorative.

Dualism: this term has many philosophical meanings, but in these lectures it refers only to the Platonist tradition's tendency to divide the human self neatly into two parts, soul and body.

Ecstasy: (from a Greek word meaning "to stand outside"), in Denys, the natural tendency of all intellectual beings to be drawn out of themselves by love.

Ein-Sof: "the Infinite," a designation of the hidden and unknowable God in Kabbalah.

Elect: old way of saying "chosen," used in Calvinist theology to describe those predestined by God for salvation; the usage goes back to Paul's phrase "the election of grace" (i.e. literally God's "choice of favorites") in Romans 11:5.

Enlightenment: self-description of a movement in 18th-century thought which was critical of revealed religion and its dogmas and insisted on the primacy of the individual and his own reason; it arose in Britain (represented by Locke and Hume), flourished in France (among philosophers like Voltaire, whose critical thought contributed to the French Revolution) and found its last great champion in Germany, with Kant. It was succeeded by Romanticism.

Empirical: from the Greek word for "experience," this adjective refers to knowledge that is based on sense-experience or observation: e.g. physics and biology are empirical sciences, but mathematics and metaphysics are not.

Empiricism: refers to philosophies which place a decisive emphasis on sense-experience as the source of all our knowledge (contrast *rationalist*); *logical empiricism* is a 20th century version of this philosophy which makes extensive use of the mathematical logic developed by Russell and Whitehead in *Principia Mathematica* (1910-12).

Enthusiasm: from a Greek term meaning "God within," a pejorative term used by Locke and other 18th-century mainstream Protestants to refer to religious sects that based their beliefs on claims of direct inward inspiration.

Ephesus: site of a Church council in 431, where the orthodox officially adopted the description of Mary as "mother of God" and Christ body as "life-giving flesh."

Epistemology: from the Greek *episteme*, meaning "knowledge," this is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and possibility of human knowledge.

Eschatology: from the Greek *eschaton*, meaning "last thing", this is any account of the end or goal or ultimate future of history and humanity; giving such an account is typical of Jewish and Christian views of history rather than Greek philosophical views.

Essence: a word that can have many meanings (the root sense of the original Greek term is "being") but in Platonic and Aristotelian usage it is typically identified with Form. For Christian usage, see *hypostasis*.

Eternal Recurrence: a theory in 19th-century physics that every physical state of the universe will eventually recur, so that all events will repeat themselves forever; for Nietzsche the highest test of life-affirmation is whether someone loves life enough to say "Yes" to this.

Eudaimonism: from the Greek term for "happiness" (q.v.), an ethics based on the pursuit of happiness as the ultimate goal of human life.

Event: see *Substance*.

Evidentialism: the epistemological view that it is irrational for a person to believe something without evidence.

Existentialism: a philosophical movement concerned with problems of human existence, originated by Kierkegaard and developed by (among others) Heidegger in *Being and Time*.

ex nihilo: Latin for "out of nothing"; used in the phrase "creation *ex nihilo*" to describe the distinctively Christian and Jewish conception of creation. In contrast to the Platonist view (e.g. in Plato's *Timaeus*) that the creator or demiurge formed the world out of pre-existing matter, orthodox Christians and Jews believe that God created matter as well—hence the process of creation began with nothing but God.

Experience: in modern philosophy up to Kant, this term refers mainly to sense-experience, and especially to the kind of observation which takes place in the physical sciences. Beginning with Schleiermacher, the word takes on a broader meaning which includes every sort of consciousness and feeling, including religious experience.

Externalism: the epistemological view that a belief may be rationally justified by factors outside (i.e. *external* to) the believer's own knowledge.

Fallacy of Composition: an illogical inference from *each* to *all*, as for example the inference from the premise "in the long run each of us will be dead" to the conclusion "there will come a time when everyone is dead"—for clearly, even

though each one of us will die, the human race could continue reproducing, so that there would never come a time when everyone is dead.

Fideism: from *fides*, Latin for "faith," this refers to an emphasis on religious faith to the exclusion of reason.

Form: for Plato, the eternal essence of things, separate from this world (also called *idea*); for Aristotle, the essence of a material thing (also called "species") which is inseparable from the thing—embodied in it, as it were. For Aristotle, material things are composed of matter plus form.

Foundationalism: the epistemological view that a belief is rationally justified only if it is based on the proper foundations; according to "classical" foundationalism this foundation must be absolutely certain.

Geist: German term (cognate to English "ghost") central to Hegel's philosophy, which can be translated either Spirit or Mind; historically a descendent of the Platonist concept of the divine Mind.

Gentiles: Jewish term for non-Jews.

Gemara: Talmudic commentary on the *Mishnah* (q.v.).

Given: as in sense-data (from Latin *data*, given); from Kant onwards this refers to the starting point of a person's empirical knowledge, prior to conceptualization or objectification.

Gnosticism: from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge," this refers to a variety of early Christian movements that sought to escape from the material world (regarded as evil) and return to live among heavenly beings by means of special or secret knowledge.

Grace: in many religions, this means simply the favor of a god; in Augustinian Christianity, it means the inner help of God healing the disease of sin and strengthening the soul to do good. In Thomas Aquinas and subsequent Roman Catholic theology, grace not only heals and helps our nature, but raises it to a supernatural level where it may see God.

Ground of the Soul (or "bottom of the soul"): translation of Meister Eckhart's old German term, *Grunt der Seele*, referring to the aspect of the soul that is uncreated, eternally united with the "ground of God."

Haggadot (or *Aggadot*): Hebrew for lore or legends; refers to all rabbinic discourse other than *Halakhot* (*q.v.*).

Halakhot (or *Halachot*): Rabbinic legal rulings or interpretations of Jewish Law.

Happiness: translation of a Greek term (*eudaimonia*) which means whatever makes a person's life a success; hence for ancient and medieval philosophers, happiness is not necessarily a feeling (see *hedonism*).

Hedonism: the ancient philosophical view that happiness is a good feeling (i.e. some version of the feeling of pleasure, Greek *hedone*); Plato and Aristotle rejected this view in favor of the view that happiness consists in a life of wisdom or contemplation.

Hellenistic: the Greek culture of the Eastern Mediterranean in the era from the conquests of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) to the establishment of the Roman Empire (30 B.C.).

Hermeneutics: (from *Hermes*, who as the divine messenger was the god of interpreters) the theory, method, or style of interpretation.

Heteronomy: Greek for "other-legislation"; in Kant, this refers to any sort of law imposed on us by outside sources, in contrast to the moral law, which we legislate for ourselves (see *autonomy*).

Hokhmah: See *Binah*.

Holism: label for any theory which derives parts from wholes rather than building up wholes from pre-existent parts: e.g. the theory that words get their meaning from their place in a whole language (and could not have a meaning if there were no language to be part of).

Homo-ousios: Greek for "the same essence," a key phrase in the Nicene Creed, where Christ is confessed as having the same essence as God the Father (sometimes translated as "of one substance" or "of one being" or "consubstantial").

Hypothetical: in Kant, a principle taking the logical form of an "if-then" sentence.

Hypostasis: Greek term that in the course of theological discussion by the orthodox Church fathers came to mean particular or individual being, as opposed to essence: e.g. human nature is an essence, but Socrates is a *hypostasis*. Thus in the Trinity there are three *hypostases* but only one essence, while Christ is one *hypostasis* with two essences (divine and human).

Hypostatic Union: The orthodox Christian doctrine that in Christ divine nature and human nature are united in one person or *hypostasis*.

Idea: originally a Greek word meaning "something seen"; Plato uses it to mean something seen *with the mind's eye*—hence the equivalent of *Form* (q.v.). In Plotinus and in Christian Platonism, Ideas are located in the divine Mind. Descartes introduced the modern habit of talking about ideas as belonging within the *human* mind.

Idealism: any philosophy which makes reality dependent on the mind; Kant's "transcendental" idealism is the doctrine that we only know how things appear to us in experience, not how they are in themselves.

Impassability: God's freedom from suffering and emotion, both of which were thought of (in ancient and medieval philosophy) as passive states (from Latin *passio*, suffering or emotion, whence come both "passivity" and "passion" in English).

Imperative: in Kant's ethics, a general principle guiding the will in its choices; the appropriate imperative for moral choices is categorical rather than hypothetical.

Incarnation: (from the Latin word for "flesh") the Christian doctrine that the Son of God took on flesh or was embodied as the man Jesus.

Intellect: in the Platonist and Aristotelian traditions, this refers to the highest function of the soul, its *understanding* of Form—in Greek, "understand" (*noein*) is the verb cognate to "intellect" (*nous*).

Intelligible: adjective designating the sort of thing which is perceived by the intellect (as "sensible" designates the sort of thing perceived by the senses).

Justify: (1) literally "to make just or set right" ("justice" and "righteousness" are alternative translations of the same Greek term), the term has been prominent in Christian theology ever since Paul used it in the New Testament used to talk about how the Gentiles may be made righteous (i.e. just) in God's sight. (2) In recent Anglo-American epistemology, the term means to give a reason for one's belief, as in the definition of knowledge as "justified true belief."

Kabbalah: literally "tradition," refers to the esoteric tradition of Jewish mysticism whose central document is the *Zohar* and whose distinctive idea is the *Sefirot* (q.v.).

Ketzer: "Crown," the name for the first of the *Sefirot* in Kabbalah; also called "Nothingness."

Legalism: a specifically Christian (and usually Protestant) term, referring to the attempt to justify oneself in God's sight by obeying God's law, without help from the grace and mercy of God.

Liberalism: in these lectures, this term refers to a tradition of Christian theology whose most important representative is Schleiermacher, and which is characterized by the effort to base religious belief on experience.

Logos: Greek term that can be translated "reason" (Latin *ratio*) or "word" (it is the term from which we get English words such as "*log*ic," "dia*log*ue," and "bio*log*y"); when used in Christian theology (capitalized) it refers to Christ as the eternal Word of God (see John 1:1-14).

Mediate: (from the Latin word for "middle") a verb that goes back to ancient logic, referring to a "middle term" or concept which links two other terms or concepts whose relation might otherwise be unclear or unknown, as (e.g.) in neoplatonism the divine Mind mediates between the One and everything else, and the Soul mediates between the divine Mind and the visible world.

Merkabah: literally "chariot," refers to the vision of God sitting upon a chariot-like vehicle drawn by four living creatures, recorded in the first chapter of the Biblical book of Ezekiel. An esoteric tradition of Jewish mysticism grew up around attempts to see the *Merkabah* and the One who sat upon it—a tradition which contributed to the development of Kabbalah (q.v.).

Messiah: from a Hebrew word meaning "the anointed one," designating the legitimate successor to King David; translated into Greek the word is "Christ," the fundamental Christian title for Jesus of Nazareth.

Metaphysics: the subdiscipline of philosophy concerned with the nature of being (ontology) and the nature of the universe (cosmology) as well as the supreme being (theology); in continental postmodernists such as Levinas and Derrida, the term often refers to the whole of the Western philosophical tradition, considered as the project of obtaining total knowledge of the nature of being.

Middle Knowledge: knowledge (attributed especially to God) of what *would have* happened if things had been different (e.g. what someone would have chosen in situations that never actually occurred).

Midrash: Hebrew for "exegesis" (literally "seeking," as in seeking the meaning of a text); refers to the rabbinic practice of Biblical interpretation and the writings that result from it (plural *midrashim*).

Mishnah: the first and foundational document of rabbinic Judaism, a collection of rabbinic discussions and rulings concerning Jewish law (*halakhot*).

Monads: the basic constituents of the world according to Leibniz; each monad has a conscious "inside."

Monarchia: belief in only one First Principle (*arche* in Greek).

Monolatry: worship of only one thing (compare the word ido*latry*, worship of idols).

Monotheism: belief in the existence of only one God (*theos* in Greek).

Mysticism: a term invented by modern scholars to describe people having (or claiming to have) direct experiences of God.

Neo-Orthodoxy: English name for a movement in German-speaking theology initiated by Karl Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans*; originally called "crisis theology" or "dialectical theology," it came to include Rudolph Bultmann, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr.

Nestorianism: the teaching of Nestorius, 5th-century bishop of Constantinople, that the eternal *Logos* of God and the man Jesus were united merely by a kind of conjunction; rejected by the orthodox in favor of the view that the man Jesus and the *Logos* are one and the same person.

Neurosis: a psychological illness which (according to Freud) is caused by repressed instincts seeking disguised expression in symbolic form; examples include phobias, obsessive-compulsiveness, and hysteria.

Nicene: having to do with the council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) or the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity which it formulated; with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, "Nicene" and "orthodox" are equivalent terms.

Nominalism: (from the Latin *nomina*, "names") the philosophical view that universals are only names, not real things— so for example the word "human" refers only to particular human beings, not to a Form or essence of human nature, as in Platonism or Aristotelianism (both of which are forms of *realism*, q.v.).

Ontological Proof: an argument for the existence of God based on the sheer concept of God: i.e. it is argued that the mere concept of God (or its existence in our minds) is sufficient by itself to show that such a thing as God could not *not* exist. There are several versions of this kind of proof, the most famous being those by Anselm and by Descartes.

Ontology: from Greek *ontos*, "being"; the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of being or reality.

Pantheism: from the Greek for "all is God" (*pan theos*); the doctrine that everything that exists is in some sense identical with God.

Panpsychism: from Greek for "all is soul" (*pan psyche*); the doctrine that everything that exists is in some way alive or has an "inside" with some level awareness or feeling.

Patristic: from the Greek word for "fathers" (*patres*); having to do with the *Church fathers* (q.v.).

Phenomenology: a 20th-century philosophical movement founded by Edmund Husserl and devoted to a the study of the phenomena of consciousness as they appear to the ego; not to be confused with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Geist*, which is a 19th-century book about phenomena in history.

Piety: religious devotion or form of reverence; to understand Plato's discussion of the term in *Euthyphro* it is important to be aware that in older usage it is proper to have piety or reverence not only for the gods but also for parents ("filial piety").

Positivism, logical: a version of logical *empiricism* (q.v.).

Postmodernism: a word of many meanings, depending on which postmodernist you ask; for purposes of these lectures, it means any of the recent philosophies which undo the modern "turn to the subject"—e.g. Derrida's deconstructionism or the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein.

Prehensions: from the Latin for "grasping"; a term in Process Philosophy for the feeling by which one *actual occasion* (q.v.) is aware of another.

Primary Cause: God as the fundamental cause of events in this world, in contradistinction from the causal powers of creatures, which are *secondary causes* (q.v.).

Process: a sequence (or recurring pattern of sequences) of *events*, for example physiological processes (see *Substance*).

Process Philosophy: the movement of philosophy founded by Alfred North Whitehead, which sees events, processes and relations as more fundamental than things or *substances* (q.v.).

Pure: in Plato, the soul is pure when it is free from all attachment to bodily things; in Kant, our knowledge is pure when it is completely *a priori* (q.v.), free from all admixture of experience.

Rabbis: in these lectures, this term does not refer to the rabbis of today, who are leaders of local congregations, but to the sages of Israel 200-600 A.D., whose task was to study, interpret and debate the meaning of the *Torah* (q.v.). The rabbis are the authorities who took part in the discussions recorded in the *Mishnah*, the *Talmud* and *Midrash* (q.v.). "Rabbinic Judaism"—which is what we normally mean by "Judaism" today—is the form of religion originating with these rabbis.

Rationalist: refers to philosophies which emphasize reason or rationality as the basis of all our knowledge. In modern philosophy, this term is used in contrast to *empiricist* (q.v.); in religion, it is often contrasted to mysticism, *fideism* (q.v.), or a reliance on *revelation* (q.v.).

Realism: a word with a great many meanings; the only relevant one for this course is the medieval meaning—the philosophical view that universals are *real* things, not mere names (contrast *nominalism*).

Recollection: In Plato, the theory that any real learning means remembering things we saw in a previous life (see *transmigration*).

Reductio ad absurdum: (Latin for "leading back to absurdity") a form of proof which begins by assuming the opposite of what is to be proved, and then tries to show that this leads to an absurdity or self-contradiction.

Reductionism: the philosophical project (typical of logical *empiricism*) of explaining the theories of one science in terms of another—e.g. *reducing* biology to physics.

Reformation: 16th-century movement to reform the Church led by Luther, Calvin and others, resulting in the formation of the Protestant churches.

"Reformed" Epistemology: recent movement in Anglo-American philosophy of religion, which criticizes evidentialism and classical foundationalism in order to argue in support of the rationality of religious beliefs ("Reformed" refers to the tradition of the Calvinist Reformation, which provided some of the key ideas for this philosophy).

Relation: see *Substance*

Relative: from the word "relation"; refers to anything that is essentially *related* to something else.

Ressentiment: French for "resentment," Nietzsche's technical term for the vengefulness of slaves toward masters, which expresses itself not in actually taking revenge (which would be the noble and masterful thing to do) but in morality, Judaism, Christianity, and democracy.

Revelation: from the 17th century onward, this word is used, in contrast to *Reason*, to designate external sources of authoritative religious knowledge (e.g. Scripture or prophecy); hence "revealed religion" (e.g. historical religious traditions such as Biblical Christianity or Talmudic Judaism) is contrasted to "natural religion" (i.e. religious beliefs that are established by reason).

Romanticism: a movement in philosophy and literature focusing on feeling rather than reason as the means by which individuals experience the divine meaning of the universe; represented in philosophy by Schelling and in religion by Schleiermacher.

Scholasticism: the tradition of medieval Christian thought centered in the universities (rather than the monasteries) including Aquinas, Bonaventure, Scotus and Ockham.

Scriptures: from a Latin word meaning "writings," this term is used by both Jews and the New Testament to designate the sacred writings of Israel; it is used in these lectures in place of the widely-used but specifically Christian term "Old Testament" (the term "Bible" is accordingly used to designate the Christian collection containing both the Scriptures and the New Testament).

Secondary Causes: the causal powers of creatures (e.g. free will) in contrast to God, who is the *primary cause*.

Sefirot: in Kabbalah, the spheres or attributes of divine manifestation or creative activity (singular *Sefirah*) in contrast to the undifferentiated and unknowable *Ein-Sof* (q.v.).

Sensible: in Platonism, this refers to object which can be perceived by the senses (contrast *intelligible*).

Shekhinah: In rabbinic Judaism, the divine Presence; in Kabbalah, this becomes the lowest of the ten *Sefirot* (q.v.), which goes into exile along with Israel.

Solipsism: the doctrine (or more often the fear) that I am alone in the universe (especially likely to emerge if, like Descartes, one considers it possible to doubt the existence of the external world).

Stoicism: philosophical tradition originating in Athens in the generation after Aristotle and important up to the period of the Roman empire; it is characterized by belief in the lawfulness of nature, wisdom as the goal of life, materialism, and a rigorist ethics.

Subject: see *Turn to the Subject*.

Subordinationism: A version of the doctrine of the Trinity, common among Christian teachers prior to the formation of Nicene orthodoxy, according to which Christ as the eternal *Logos* is less than or subordinate to God the Father.

Substance: (translation of Greek *ousia*, literally "being") refers to independently-existing *things* (e.g. a table, a dog, a human being) in contrast to *qualities* (e.g. white, tall, wise), *relations* (e.g. "taller than," "to the left of," "is the son of" and "knows about"), or *events* (e.g. birth, death, meeting someone, falling down, hearing something).

Subsumption: translation of *Aufhebung* (q.v.).

Supernatural: in Roman Catholic theology since Aquinas, this term refers not to ghosts and spirits, but to the grace of God as it elevates human nature above itself (super-nature in the sense of "above human nature") in order to see God.

Symposium: from an ancient Greek term for "drinking party," this is also the title of a dialogue by Plato, in which a number of Athenian men at a drinking party give speeches on the nature of love.

Synoptic: term designating the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which (in contrast to the Gospel of John) share the same basic plot-structure, which can relatively easily be brought under a common *synopsis*.

Talmud: The key document of Rabbinic Judaism, consisting of the *Mishnah* (q.v.) together with its commentary, the *Gemara* (q.v.).

Teleology: from the Greek word *telos*, meaning "end" or "goal," this term is used in three different senses in these lectures. (1) In *Aristotelian physics* it refers to the notion that natural motion tends toward some definite end (not always a conscious goal, but always a final state that is natural and good for the thing): hence it is natural for stones to end up on earth where they belong, not in the sky, and it is natural for animals to seek food, and it is natural for human beings to desire knowledge and happiness. (2) *Ethical systems* are called teleological if they are based on the desire to attain some ultimate goal, such as happiness. (3) *Proofs for the existence of God* are called teleological if they are based on the apparent design or purposive order in the world.

Theodicy: (from a Greek term meaning "justification of God") a philosophical reply to the "problem of evil," trying to show it is possible that God is good, despite all the evil there is in the world.

Things-in-themselves: in Kant, a technical term designating what we cannot know about things: the way they are in themselves, apart from the way we experience them.

Tikkun: in Kabbalah, the restoration of the world and the divine realm of the *Sefirot* brought by the good deeds of humanity, and especially by Israel's obedience to Torah.

Torah: Hebrew for "Law," refers literally to the scroll containing the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible; in an expanded sense Torah includes the whole of God's revelation to Israel at Mt. Sinai, both written and oral—the latter being identified with the rabbinic interpretation of Scripture that was eventually written down in the Talmud.

Trinity: The Christian teaching that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are not identical with one another yet are one God.

Transcendence: (from a Latin verb meaning "to go beyond") the characteristic of God being beyond this world or beyond space and time.

Transmigration: the view that souls move or migrate from one body to another at death (including from animal bodies to human bodies and vice-versa).

Turn to the Subject: a phrase designating any epistemology which begins by examining the nature or powers of the self. The turn to the subject is characteristic of modernity. ("Subject" in this phrase means *epistemological* subject, referred to by the subject of sentences such as "I know this" or "I believe that." While modern philosophers tend to start by examining the subject of such sentences, ancient philosophers are more likely to start with their *object*, e.g. Platonic Forms).

Uncreated: technical term in Christian theology referring to God, who is the only thing in existence *not made* by God (see *creature*).

Via Negativa: Latin for "the negative way," the theological method of speaking about God by saying what he is not rather than what he is (see *apophaticism*).

Voluntarism: a philosophical emphasis on the will (Latin *voluntas*); divine voluntarism is the belief that any essences or laws in the universe, including moral laws, are the result of God's will and not the other way round.

Will to Power: Nietzsche's concept that all existence, down to the level of the forces of attraction and repulsion between microscopic particles, consists of a striving for mastery, expansion, and growth; all human motivation (including that of the weak and the moral) consists of will to power.

YHWH: transliteration of the Hebrew letters for the sacred name for the God of Israel; the actual pronunciation of the name is no longer known, because Jews have for many centuries regarded it as blasphemous to utter the name, and the original Hebrew script was written without vowels. However, an old Christian suggestion is "Jehovah" and a recent scholarly guess is "Yahweh" (see *Adonai*).

Zeitgeist: literally, "spirit of the age," an Hegelian term referring to the involvement of *Geist* or "Spirit" in particular historical eras (see *Geist*)

Zohar: (Aramaic for "Splendor") name of the central text of Kabbalah (*q.v.*) composed c. 1280 in Spain.

Biographical Notes

Alexander of Aphrodisias (flourished c. 200 A.D.): Aristotelian philosopher, the leading commentator of Aristotle in antiquity, influential on Plotinus (*q.v.*).

Alston, William (1921-): American philosopher, contributor to "Reformed" epistemology.

Anselm, St. (1033-1109): archbishop of Canterbury, Christian theologian and philosopher.

Apollinarius (?-385? A.D.): Christian theologian, originator of Apollinarianism, rejected as a heresy by the orthodox Church fathers.

Aquinas, St. Thomas (1225-1274): Dominican theologian and philosopher, central figure of medieval scholasticism and the Roman Catholic tradition.

Aristotle (384 A.D.-322 A.D.): Macedonian-born Athenian philosopher, student of Plato, founder of the sciences of logic, physics and biology.

Arius (?-336 A.D.): Christian priest in Alexandria, originator of Arianism, the view against which orthodox Nicene Christianity defined itself.

Athanasius, St. (293? A.D.-373 A.D.): bishop of Alexandria and leader of the Nicene opposition to the heresy of Arius (q.v.); he is thus one of the founding figures of Christian orthodoxy.

Augustine, St. (356 A.D.-430 A.D.): bishop of Hippo in Roman North Africa, the most influential Church Father in the Latin or Western Christian tradition.

Avicenna (980-1037): Latin version of the name of Ibn Sina, Moslem Aristotelian philosopher.

Barth, Karl (1886-1968): Swiss "neo-orthodox" theologian.

Biel, Gabriel (c. 1415-1495): German theologian of the nominalist tradition, a major influence upon the early Luther, who later vehemently rejected his position.

Boethius, Ancius (c.480-525): Christian philosopher and Latin scholar of the late Roman empire.

Bonaventure, St. (1217-1274): Franciscan theologian and philosopher, leader of the Augustinian illuminationist tradition.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich (1906-1945): German theologian, conspirator against Hitler, executed by the Nazis.

Buber, Martin (1878-1965): German philosopher and scholar of the Jewish tradition.

Bultmann, Rudolf (1884-1976): German New Testament scholar and neo-orthodox theologian.

Calvin, John (1509-1564): French theologian and reformer, who lived most of his life in Geneva, where he led the reformation of the church (i.e. its re-organization along Protestant rather than Roman Catholic lines) and wrote the most influential text of Protestantism, the *Institutes*.

Cicero (106-43): Roman orator and politician, author of numerous philosophical treatises based on the teachings of the Stoics, Plato and other Greek philosophers.

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321): Italian poet (usually known by his first name) and author of the *Divine Comedy*, an epic poem which depicted Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, and which crystallized the Christian imagination of the afterlife.

Darwin, Charles (1809-1882): English biologist, founder of the modern theory of biological evolution.

Denys or "Pseudo-Dionysius" (c. 600): pseudonymous Christian neoplatonist author, writing in Greek and especially influential in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

Derrida, Jacques (1930-): Algerian-born French philosopher, founder of deconstructionism and a leading post-modernist.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor (1821-1881): Russian novelist, passionate Eastern Orthodox Christian, often classified as an existentialist.

Durkheim, Emile (1858-1917): French sociologist and theorist of religion.

Eckhart, Meister (c. 1260-1327): Dominican theologian, preacher, and founding figure of the tradition of "Rhineland" mysticism ("Meister" is medieval German for "master," in the sense of "teacher").

Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1803-1883): American essayist and popularizer of the philosophy of Romanticism.

Engels, Friedrich (1820-1895): German political and social writer, friend and collaborator with Karl Marx.

Feuerbach, Ludwig (1804-1872): German philosopher and critic of religion.

Fichte, J.G. (1762-1814): German idealist philosopher of the generation after Kant.

Flew, Anthony (1923-): British philosopher and critic of religious belief.

Freud, Sigmund (1856-1939): Austrian physician and psychologist, founder of psychoanalysis.

Hartshorne, Charles (1897-): American process philosopher.

Hegel, G.F.W. (1770-1831): German philosopher; theorist of the rationality of history.

Heidegger, Martin (1889-1976): German philosopher; in the early stage of his career (which influenced neo-orthodox theology) he was an existentialist.

Hick, John (1922-): British philosopher and theorist of religious pluralism.

Hume, David (1711-1776): Scottish empiricist philosopher, skeptical critic of religion and rationalism.

Husserl, Edmund (1859-1938): German philosopher, founder of phenomenology.

Jacobi, Friedrich (1743-1819): German philosopher.

James, William (1842-1910): American psychologist and philosopher, author of *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1875-1961): Swiss psychiatrist who broke off from Freud to found a distinctive form of psychoanalysis that was more receptive to religious belief.

Kant, Immanuel (1724-1804): German philosopher, founder of the tradition of modern German philosophy.

Kierkegaard (1813-1855): Danish philosopher, Christian critic of Christendom, and founding figure of existentialism.

Leibniz, Baron Gottfried Wilhelm von (1646-1716): German philosopher and mathematician.

Lessing, Gotthold (1729-1781): German literary critic and playwright.

Levinas, Emmanuel (1906-): born in Lithuania of Jewish parents, a leading French philosopher in the phenomenologist tradition.

Locke, John (1632-1704): English philosopher, founder of the British empiricist tradition in philosophy.

Luther, Martin (1483-1546): German theologian who initiated the church reform later called "Protestantism."

Maimonides (1135-1204): Jewish philosopher and Talmud scholar, author of *Guide for the Perplexed*.

Marx, Karl (1818-1883): German political philosopher and economist, founder with Engels of modern communism.

Muhammad (570-632): Arabian religious leader and founding figure of Islam.

Nestorius (?-453?): bishop of Constantinople, originator of Nestorianism, rejected as a heresy by the orthodox Church fathers.

Newton, Isaac (1642-1727): English mathematician and scientist, founder of modern physics.

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1844-1900): German philosopher, critic of Christianity and morality, as well as of the metaphysical tradition of philosophy stemming from Plato.

Ockham (or Occam), William of (1285?-1349): Franciscan philosopher and leading nominalist.

Origen (185 A.D.-254 A.D.): Greek-speaking Church Father of Alexandria (Egypt), extremely influential in formulating an early version of Christian Platonism and spreading the method of allegorical reading of Scripture.

Paul, St. (?-64? A.D.): Early Christian missionary and author of many of the letters in the New Testament.

Philo of Alexandria or Philo Judaeus (c.20 B.C. - 50 A.D.): Jewish Platonist philosopher and Scriptural exegete.

Plantinga (1932-): American philosopher, contributor to "Reformed" epistemology.

Plato (427? B.C.-358? B.C.): Athenian philosopher, student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle; arguably the founding figure of the Western philosophical tradition.

Plotinus (205? A.D.-270 A.D.): Greek-speaking Egyptian philosopher who spent most of his working life in Rome; founder of the neo-Platonist tradition of philosophy.

Proclus (410? A.D.-485 A.D.): Greek neoplatonist philosopher.

Pseudo-Dionysius: see *Denys*.

Quine, W.V.O. (1908-): American philosopher and logician, critic of logical empiricism.

Russell, Bertrand (1872-1870): English philosopher and logician, founding figure of logical empiricism.

Schelling, F.W.J. (1775-1854): German idealist philosopher in the generation after Kant, influential in Romanticism.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich (1768-1834): German theologian, founding figure of liberal Protestant theology.

Schopenhauer, Arthur (1788-1860): German pessimist philosopher.

Scotus, John Duns (1266-1308): Franciscan philosopher and theologian, dubbed "the subtle teacher" (*doctor subtilis*).

Socrates (470?-399): Athenian philosopher, teacher of Plato.

Spinoza (1632-1677): Dutch philosopher (of Jewish background), devised a system of metaphysical pantheism that became highly influential in the period of German idealism after Kant.

Voltaire (1694-1798): pseudonym of Francois Marie Arouet, French Enlightenment philosopher, critic of dogmatic religion, and author of *Candide,* a satirical novel directed against Leibniz's view that "this is the best of all possible worlds."

Whitehead, Alfred North (1861-1947): English mathematician and philosopher, founder of process philosophy.

Wittgenstein (1889-1951): Austrian philosopher, who spent much of his career in England; his early work (the *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus*) played a founding role in logical positivism, while his later work is one of the landmarks of post-modernism.

Wolterstorff (1932-): American philosopher, contributor to "Reformed" epistemology.

Wordsworth, William (1770-1850): English romantic poet.

Timeline

c.1000 B.C.	Beginning of reign of David, king of Israel
c.950	Beginning of reign of Solomon, son of David, builder of the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem
586	The Babylonians conquer Jerusalem, destroy the temple, and take Israelite leaders into exile in Babylon
538	After the fall of Babylon, leading Israelites return to their land and begin rebuilding the temple—thus marking the beginning of the "second temple" period
399	Death of Socrates in Athens
c. 358	Death of Plato, follower of Socrates
334-331	Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquers most of the Eastern Mediterranean including Israel, which results in the spread of Greek culture and philosophy throughout the region for the next three centuries (the Hellenistic era)
322	Death of Aristotle, Plato's student and Alexander's tutor
63 B.C.	The Roman general Pompey intervenes in a civil war in Jerusalem, establishing Roman dominance over the land of Israel that was to endure for the next several centuries
c. 52 B.C.	Cicero composes "Scipio's Dream," the first Western account of the soul literally going to heaven
c. 25 A.D.-50 A.D.	Writing career of Philo of Alexandria
c. 30 A.D.	Crucifixion of Jesus
50-64	Composition of the letters of Paul the apostle (earliest writings in the New Testament)
65	About the earliest date suggested for the composition of Mark, the first of the four Gospels to be written (other scholars argue for a date after the destruction of the temple)
70	The temple in Jerusalem is destroyed by the Romans at the culmination of the Great Jewish Revolt; end of "second temple" period
80-100	Most scholars date the composition of the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John to these decades
135	All Jews are expelled from Jerusalem by the Romans after the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt
c. 200	Completion of the text of the *Mishnah*
204	Origen begins his career as a Christian teacher in Alexandria
270	Death of Plotinus, founder of Neoplatonism
c. 300	Completion of Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud
325	The Council of Nicaea repudiates the teaching of Arius, laying the groundwork for the orthodox Christian doctrine of the Trinity
381	The Council of Constantinople adopts an expanded version of the Creed of Nicaea, which becomes the cornerstone of orthodox Trinitarian faith
387	Baptism of Augustine and beginning of his writing career

410	Fall of Rome; beginning of the end for the Western Roman empire
431	Council of Ephesus officially approves the description of Mary as "Mother of God" and of Christ's body as "life-giving flesh"
451	Council of Chalcedon officially adopts the doctrine of Christ as consisting of one person in two natures, "true man and true God"
c. 500	Writings of Pseudo-Dionysius composed in the Eastern Roman Empire (by now becoming the Byzantine empire)
c. 600	Completion of Babylonian Talmud
632	Death of Mohammed, founding prophet of Islam, followed within a decade by the Moslem conquest of most of the Eastern Mediterranean, including the land of Israel
1078	Anselm writes the *Proslogion*, containing his "ontological argument" (as it was later called) for the existence of God
1195	Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* written
1274	Year of death for both Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure
1286	Composition of the *Zohar*, the central text of the Jewish mystical tradition or Kabbalah
c. 1300	Beginning of the philosophical career of Duns Scotus
c. 1320	Beginning of the philosophical career of William of Ockham
1328	Death of Meister Eckhart, while under investigation for heresy
1517	Luther's "95 Theses" precipitate Protestant Reformation
1536	Calvin begins work as Reformer (religious leader) in Geneva, shortly after publishing the first edition of his *Institutes*
1641	Publication of Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*.
1687	Publication of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, the founding document of modern ("Newtonian") physics
1689	Publication of Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*
1779	Publication of Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*
1781	Publication of Kant's first great philosophical work, the *Critique of Pure Reason*
1789	Beginning of the French Revolution
1793	Publication of Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, his last major philosophical work
1807	Publication of *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel's first great philosophical work
1821	Publication of Schleiermacher's systematic theology, *The Christian Faith* (often referred to by the German title, *Glaubenslehre*)
1841	Publication of Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*
1848	Publication of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*
1859	Publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, the founding document of modern evolutionary biology
1887	Publication of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*

1899 .... Freud publishes *The Interpretation of Dreams*, his first major work on psychoanalysis and the theory of the unconscious

1902 .... Publication of William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*

1910 .... Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead begin publication of their multivolume treatise on the logical foundations of mathematics, *Principica Mathematica*

1912 .... Publication of Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

1914-1918...................................... World War I

1918 .... Publication of Karl Barth's commentary, *The Epistle to the Romans*, inaugurating the movement known initially as "dialectical theology" but later as "neo-orthodoxy"

1921 .... Publication of the great work of the "early" Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, using Russell and Whitehead's mathematical logic to lay the foundation for logical empiricism

1923 .... Publication of Martin Buber's *I and Thou*

1925 .... Publication of Rudolph Bultmann's early essay, "What Does It Mean to Speak of God?"

1927 .... Publication of Martin Heidegger's major philosophical work, *Being and Time*

1929 .... Publication of Whitehead's major philosophical work, *Process and Reality*

1932-1961...................................... Publication of Barth's multi-volume systematic theology, *Church Dogmatics*

1939-1945...................................... World War II

1941 .... Publication of Rudolf Bultmann's fundamental essay on demythologization, "New Testament and Mythology" (*Offenbarung und Heilsgeschehen*)

1953 .... Publication of the major work of Wittgenstein's later period, *Philosophical Investigations*, perhaps the earliest work of philosophical "post-modernism"

1961 .... Publication of Emanuel Levinas' major work, *Totality and Infinity*

1967 .... Publication of Jacques Derrida's early work, *Of Grammatology*, one of the seminal volumes of deconstructionism

Bibliography

The Bible. I recommend an older translation, the Revised Standard Version (RSV), which maintains continuity with the classic 17th-century King James translation (and thus resonates more clearly with long-standing theological and liturgical traditions) but is at the same time historically more accurate than recent "inclusive language" translations (such as the New Revised Standard Version, NRSV). The RSV can be found in various editions by a number of publishers; one worth having is the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University, 1973)—but note, there is also an edition of the NRSV by the same title!

Anslem. *St. Anslem: Basic Writings*. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1962. Includes the *Proslogion* and other works, as well as an introduction by Charles Hartshorne defending a modified version of Anselm's ontological proof. (The *Proslogion* is short and found in many anthologies, including Fairweather, below.)

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———, *Summa Theologica*. 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 the Roman Catholic tradition.

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Eckhart, Meister. *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises and Defense*. Ed. E. Colledge and B. McGinn. New York: Paulist, 1981. Classics of Western Spirituality series.

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Evans, C. Stephen. *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith: The Incarnational Narrative as History*. New York: Oxford University, 1996. An Anglo-American philosopher looks at the epistemological issues connected with critical investigations of "the historical Jesus."

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Fairweather, Eugene (ed). *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press. Library of Christian Classics series. Contains Anselm's *Proslogion* as well as Bonaventure's "Whether Whatever is Known by us with Certitude is Known in the Eternal Reasons Themselves"

Feuerbach, Ludwig. *The Essence of Christianity*. Trans. G. Eliot. New York: Harper & Row, 1957.

Flew, Anthony, Hare, R. M. and Mitchell, Basil. "Theology and Falsification" in Mitchell (below) pp. 13-22.

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Hegel, G.F.W. *Phenomenology of Spirit.* Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University, 1977. The older translation, by Baillie, is unreadable and should be avoided.

Hick, John. *Problems of Religious Pluralism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.

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Philosophy and Religion in the West

Part III

Professor Phillip Cary

Phillip Cary, Ph.D.

Professor of Philosophy, Eastern College

Prof. Phillip Cary is Director of the Philosophy Program at Eastern College, as well as Scholar in Residence at the Templeton Honors College at Eastern College in St. Davids, Pennsylvania. He received his undergraduate training in Philosophy at Washington University (MO) and earned his Master's degree and Ph.D. in Religion at Yale University, where he studied under Professor George Lindbeck. He has previously taught at Yale University, the University of Hartford and the University of Connecticut. He was the George Ennis Post-Doctoral Fellow at Villanova University, where he taught in Villanova's nationally acclaimed Core Humanities program. He has published several scholarly articles on Augustine, the doctrine of the Trinity and interpersonal knowledge. His book, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self* is due to be published by Oxford University Press in 2000. Professor Cary produced the popular Teaching Company course, *Augustine: Philosopher and Saint.*

Prof. Cary would like to express his gratitude to his colleagues at Villanova for years of stimulating conversations about the history of Christian thought, and to his colleagues at Eastern (especially Prof. Raymond Van Leeuwen) for instructive discussions about the relation between Biblical and philosophical traditions of wisdom.

Table of Contents

Philosophy and Religion in the West
Part III

Philosophy and Religion in the West

Scope:

This course of lectures is an historical examination of the interaction between philosophical traditions and religious traditions in the West. We begin with the roots of the philosophical tradition in ancient Greece, examining how Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus dealt with issues concerning God, the soul, and the nature of the cosmos (Lectures One through Five). The key concepts which this tradition contributed to Western religion are the Socratic practice of critical inquiry and the Platonist theory of intelligibility: the notion that the ultimate truth about which we inquire consists in certain timeless Forms or essences which our souls perceive with the "mind's eye." From this notion come the philosophical concepts of the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, the Fall and "going to heaven" as the soul's return to its native place.

Next we turn to the two great Western religious traditions, Judaism and Christianity, which are interpreted as traditions vested in particular historical communities, their practices of worship, their sacred texts, and their allegiance to specific "places" where human beings meet God. We look at the scriptures of Israel and their rabbinic interpretation in Judaism, as well as the New Testament and its interpretation by the church fathers, who were decisive for the formation of the Christian tradition (Lectures Six through Ten).

The interaction between these two traditions and the Platonist philosophical tradition begins even before the New Testament was written, and continues through the works of medieval philosophers, both Jewish and Christian. These philosophers combined Platonist metaphysics and Biblical religion so as to formulate the intellectual system that has been called "classical theism"—a system which was taken for granted by most religious thinkers, including mystics, up through the time of the Reformation (Lectures Eleven through Sixteen).

Modernity (Lectures Seventeen through Twenty-Six) is rooted in a crisis of religious authority, which means that some philosophers became critics of religion (Hume, Marx, Nietzsche) but others tried to set it on new philosophical foundations (Locke, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel)—in the process of which they sought a deeper conception of the human self and its relation to the divine (Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard).

Many 20th-century thinkers have sought to re-conceive the synthesis between philosophy and religion that undergirded classical theism, questioning especially the Platonist metaphysics which led classical theists to suppose God was timeless and impassable (Lectures Twenty-Seven through Twenty-Nine). In recent years, the meaning and rationality of religion have been rethought in ways that make them less dependent on philosophical theories, yet leave an essential place within religion for the practice of critical inquiry (Lectures Thirty through Thirty-Two).

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of these lectures, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the historical interaction between philosophical traditions (such Platonism) and religious traditions (such Judaism and Christianity).
2. Describe the philosophical origin of certain key religious concepts, such as the immortality of the soul, the Fall, and "going to heaven."
3. Explain the attractiveness of ancient philosophy for Judaism and Christianity.
4. Summarize the synthesis of philosophy and religion that characterized the "classical theism" of the medieval period.
5. Describe the significance of modernity for the history of Western religion.
6. Discuss the most prominent philosophical criticisms of religion.
7. Describe the classic proofs that have been attempted of the existence of God.
8. Explain why many religious thinkers of the 20th century are suspicious of the alliances between philosophy and religion
9. Discuss the relation of critical rationality and religious belief.

Lecture Twenty-Three
Hegel—A Philosophical History of Religion

Scope: Hegel contended that the whole of world history unfolds according to a divine and necessary logic. History unfolds dialectically, i.e., according to a logic in which every conflict is subsumed in a higher unity. This unfolding is the process by which *Geist*, the universal Mind or divine Spirit, alienates itself in the external world, but eventually comes back to itself in self-knowledge. The Christian religion represents this self-alienation and self-knowledge of the Divine in a powerful but mythological way, and Hegel thinks his own philosophy is the subsumption of this mythological representation into a philosophical concept, through which the divine Spirit becomes fully conscious of itself for the first time.

Outline

I. Context: The New Historical Consciousness of the 19th Century

    A. The 19th century was the great era of philosophy of history, as many historians shifted their focus from histories in the plural to world-history in the singular.

    B. "History" came to mean not just stories of the past, but the matrix in which to understand human nature and destiny, as well as the meaning of civilization and religion.

    C. This new historical consciousness was nowhere more intense than in Germany, and had no more ambitious representative than the German philosopher Hegel.

    D. Hegel's project was to show the rational basis of all of history, by uncovering the logic that produced it.

II. Spirit (*Geist*) in History

    A. Hegel's Great Early Work: *The Phenomenology of Spirit*

        1. The key term, *Geist*, means both Mind and Spirit (like French *esprit*).

        2. Behind this double meaning is the tendency in Christian Platonism to compare the Platonist sensible/intelligible distinction to the Biblical flesh/spirit distinction (so that an intellectual being is a spiritual, i.e., non-bodily, being).

        3. Indeed, Hegel's *Geist* is quite a bit like Plotinus' *Nous* or divine Intellect.

        4. The difference is that Plotinus' *Nous* is unchanging, separate from the visible world, and rich in intellectual content from the beginning, while Hegel's *Geist* acquires its content only by getting involved in history—by becoming a *Zeitgeist*, a spirit of the age.

        5. History is in fact the externalization of *Geist*—a little like Spinoza, for whom the visible world is the external aspect of the substance of God, except that (once again) Hegel's *Geist* is in motion.

        6. Phenomenology is a word Hegel made up meaning study of phenomena (Greek for "appearance"): his book is the study of how *Geist* makes its appearance in the phenomena of history.

    B. The Dialectic of History

        1. The whole of world-history unfolds logically: "the real is the rational, the rational is the real."

        2. Hegel's name for this logical process of *Geist* unfolding in history is "dialectic"—Plato and Aristotle's word for a logical argument or debate.

        3. Thus for Hegel history is like an argument: not the kind where one side defeats the other, but where the opposition between the two sides is *subsumed* in an agreement at a higher level.

        4. "Subsumption" (*Aufhebung*) means literally "picking up," but this can be in the sense of "removing" (hence canceling or abolishing) or "raising to a higher level" (and hence preserving).

        5. In Hegel's dialectic, subsumption overcomes the opposition between the two previous "moments" of history by incorporating them into a higher unity, so that the opposition is in one sense canceled, in another sense preserved, and in any case resolved at a higher level.

        6. Hence the basic movement of history is triadic: an original position is negated, then both the original position and the negation are subsumed in a higher unity (a later Hegelian labeled these three moments Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis).

        7. Each moment of resolution is the beginning for another triadic movement—the dialectic, like history itself, keeps on going.

C. Through Negation to Unity
    1. Through this repeated triadic process all the oppositions of history are subsumed in the unity of *Geist*.
    2. Because negation is at the root of all conflict, division and limitation, the dialectic is also a process of overcoming division, moving from self-identity to self-alienation to reconciliation, or from self to other to self-consciousness (recognizing the self in the other).
    3. Hence the overall dialectic of history: *Geist* externalizes itself in the world, then comes back to itself, recognizing itself in the development of historical self-consciousness.
    4. Thus philosophy, which appears to start out treating *Geist* as object, is revealed in the end as the expression of *Geist* as subject: philosophical knowledge is *Geist* as subject coming to know itself as object (Hegel calls this "absolute knowledge").

III. Hegel on Religion and Philosophy

    A. The Difference between God and *Geist*
        1. As in Spinoza, *Geist* is not ultimately other than the World, and as in Plotinus, it is not ultimately other than the human mind.
        2. Yet in contrast to Spinoza and Plotinus, Hegel sets *Geist* in motion in history. Why?
        3. The key here seems to be in the last moment in the dialectic of *Phenomenology of Spirit* before Absolute Knowledge: "the Revealed Religion."
        4. The key idea of the Revealed Religion (which for Hegel is clearly Christianity) is Incarnation.
        5. The Principle of Incarnation, as philosophically understood, means that *Geist* enters the world of history, with all its alienation, division, negativity—and suffering.

    B. Philosophy as Subsumption of Religion
        1. Hegel's concept of Incarnation is clearly not that of orthodox Christianity, which was the incarnation of God in a particular man, Jesus.
        2. Rather, Hegel has taken up or subsumed the orthodox doctrine of incarnation in a purely conceptual understanding of it.
        3. In Hegel's language, philosophy subsumes a religious representation (*Vorstellung*) into a speculative concept (*Begriff*)—thus preserving its true content while abolishing its mythological form.

    C. The Theological Interest of Hegel
        1. You might think that orthodox theologians would be put off by Hegel's subsumption of orthodox doctrine—and often they are—yet there is something extremely interesting and new going on in Hegel's thought, which draws the attention of both Christian and Jewish theologians.
        2. In one sense, Hegel's philosophical subsumption of religion sounds like a variation on an old familiar theme: it's one more way of combining Platonist metaphysics and Judaeo-Christian religion.
        3. But in contrast to the Church Fathers, who combined the Bible and Platonism and got an unchanging God, Hegel combines them and gets a God who is historical, in and of the world, yet not a finite being (not merely a pagan god like a Zeus or Apollo).

Essential Reading:

Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, "Introduction," "Revealed Religion" and "Absolute Knowledge" (pp. 46-57, 458-478, 479-493). Extremely difficult reading for those who want a taste of the real Hegel—otherwise try Fackenheim, who is lucid and interesting

Supplemental Reading:

Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension of Hegel's Thought*, chapters 5 and 6

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think there is a logic to history? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. How might God be involved in the unfolding of history? Could what happens in the course of history enrich God's own being?

Lecture Twenty-Four
Marx and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion

Scope: Karl Marx, the founding figure of communism, began his career as a follower of the "left-wing" Hegelian, Ludwig Feuerbach, who believed that philosophical subsumption of religion revealed the latter as a form of alienated consciousness: religion "projects" everything that is essential to humanity onto an unreal eternal God. Marx proposed a materialist version of the Hegelian dialectic, in which the logic of history was driven by conflicts between social classes rather than ideas. Religion, law, politics and philosophy belong to a cultural "superstructure" built on a fundamental "base" of socio-economic exploitation and alienated labor. Thus Marx formulates a *hermeneutics of suspicion*, interpreting cultural phenomena (including religion) in terms of the hidden social and economic interests they serve. Freud devised a psychological version of a hermeneutics of suspicion, according to which religion gives distorted expression to instinctual needs and unconscious conflicts.

Outline

I. Feuerbach: Religion as Alienation and Projection

   A. Left-wing Hegelians

      1. The philosophical successors of Hegel split on the issue of the philosophical status of religion: when philosophy subsumes religion, does it cancel Christianity (the left-wing view) or preserve it (the right-wing view)?

      2. The "left-wing" Hegelians were critics of religion, who thought religion was a form of unfreedom from which philosophy should criticize in order to liberate humanity.

   B. Feuerbach's Projection Theory of Religion

      1. Ludwig Feuerbach was a left-wing Hegelian who argued that the idea of God as an Other is really an alienation of what is essential to humanity.

      2. Hence Feuerbach's "projection theory" of religion: the concept of God is really an imaginary projection of the human essence into heaven (we make God in our own image).

II. Marx's Critique of Religion

   A. The Materialist Dialectic of History

      1. Marx began as a Feuerbachian who wanted not just to theorize about alienation in history, but to do something to change it.

      2. He proposed a materialist version of Hegel's dialectic ("dialectical materialism") where the motive force in history is not opposition between ideas but conflict between social classes (e.g., between masters and slaves, landowners and peasants, factory-owners and workers).

      3. Marx's "materialism" focuses not on material objects (which most materialists merely theorize about) but on practical human activity such as labor and production.

      4. Law, politics, philosophy and religion are thus merely the ideological "superstructure" of society, built on top of the material "base" of the productive economic life of human beings.

      5. Classes for Marx are defined (e.g., the bourgeoisie own the factories and the proletariat own nothing but their own bodies).

      6. For Marx, the alienated labor of the oppressed classes that do not own the means of production (e.g., slaves, serfs, or the proletariat) is the equivalent of the negative moment of Hegel's dialectic.

      7. The communist revolution of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is thus the Marxist equivalent of Hegel's "negation of the negation," which overcomes alienation by "expropriating the expropriators" (e.g., workers taking over the factories where they work).

   B. Marx on Religion

      1. In alienated labor, a worker's humanity (his creative labor power) confronts him as an alien power, in the form of a product owned and sold by the capitalist.

      2. Marx sees this as analogous to Feuerbach's analysis of religious concepts as alienated forms of the human essence: the workers' loss of humanity in wage slavery is attributed to unchangeable abstract forces (the market, private property, money, etc.) rather than real human activity, just as in religion

real human qualities (e.g., justice and love) are in the possession of an omnipotent inhuman power (God).

    3. Hence the "commodity fetishism" of capitalism: commodities and money are abstract forces which have more social power than the starving worker or even the capitalist who serves as their "priest."

    4. Because religion is the first form of alienated humanity, "critique of religion is the basis of all critique."

    5. But Marx recognizes that religion provides a kind of consolation for real suffering, as "the opium of the people."

    6. Both critique of religion and critique of capitalism aim at a revolution which will undo human alienation, so that man will come "to revolve around himself as his own true sun."

  C. Marx's Hermeneutics of Suspicion

    1. In contrast to Feuerbach's focus on alienated human *consciousness*, Marx's critique of religion is materialist, focusing on the socio-economic forces that shape religion.

    2. This is an example of what has come to be called "the hermeneutics of suspicion": an interpretation of some aspect of culture (in this case, religion) which looks suspiciously at its hidden meaning and asks what interests it actually serves.

    3. "Hermeneutics" means theory of interpretation: hence a hermeneutics of suspicion focuses on the *meaning* of religion.

    4. The key feature of a hermeneutics of suspicion is that it takes the meaning of religion to be hidden from the consciousness of the individual believer.

III. Freud's Psychological Hermeneutics of Suspicion

  A. Sigmund Freud is the founder of psychoanalysis, whose psychological theory is based on the notion that mental illnesses such as neurosis are disguised expressions of repressed instinctual drives toward sex and violence.

  B. For Freud, religion is like a "universal obsessional neurosis of humanity" generated by repression of instinctual drives at a primitive stage of cultural life.

  C. Like individual neurosis, religion gives expression to instinctual wishes, but in disguised and censored form.

  D. Hence for Freud, as for Marx, the real meaning of religion is to be found in forces hidden from the individual believer's consciousness.

IV. An Evaluation of the Hermeneutics of Suspicion

  A. Its Philosophical Attraction

    1. The hermeneutics of suspicion tends to be practiced by sociologists and psychologists rather than philosophers.

    2. Its attraction to recent (especially postmodern) philosophers is that it rejects the epistemological individualism common to modern philosophers like Descartes and Locke: the view that one's beliefs and their meaning can be determined by the individual alone.

  B. Its Limitations

    1. Religion has many meanings, and the way it serves hidden interests is only one of them.

    2. Moreover, the interests religion serves include more than the status quo: sometimes it gives people reasons for revolution or moral strength to resist oppression.

    3. On the other hand, many sociologists approve its function of supporting social stability—precisely the sort of thing for which Marxists criticize it!

    4. A similar variety is evident in psychological interpretations of religion: for every critic like Freud, there is a supporter like Jung, who thinks religion performs an invaluable symbolic function in psychic life.

  C. Its Continuing Importance

    1. Even sociologists and psychologists who are supportive of religion often interpret the meaning of religious beliefs differently than the people who believe in it.

    2. So, for instance, Durkheim's appreciation of religion is based on the (Feuerbachian) view that the real object of religious worship is the human essence (which for Durkheim means the power of society).

3. Though Marx or Freud clearly do not have the whole story about religion, "suspicious" interpretations of religion remain a live option not easily to be dismissed.

Essential Reading:

Marx, "Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (in Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 3-7)

———"Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction" (Tucker, pp. 53-65)

———"Manuscript on Alienated Labor" (Tucker translates this as "Estranged Labor," pp. 70-93)

———"Theses on Feuerbach" (Tucker, pp. 143-145)

Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*

Supplemental Reading:

Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, chapter 1

Jung, "Psychotherapists or the Clergy"

Durkheim, selections from *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* in *Readings from Emile Durkheim*, pp. 117-135

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think it is possible that your own religious beliefs serve hidden interests that you are not aware of? What might those interests be?

2. Socially and psychologically, is religion good for us or bad for us?

Lecture Twenty-Five
Kierkegaard—Existentialism and the Leap of Faith

Scope: Soren Kierkegaard, the 19th-century Danish Christian famous for speaking of the "leap of faith," is also widely regarded as the first existentialist. He satirized Hegelian philosophers for being so wrapped up in the course of world history that they forgot their own individual *existence*. In a similar vein, he tried to make Danish Christians uncomfortable about their desire to rely on philosophical proofs, the success of Christendom, or any other substitute for authentic individual faith in the paradox of Christ, the man who was God. In his attempts to evoke this discomfort, Kierkegaard became one of the great analysts of the hidden anxieties and despair of modern life.

Outline

I. Right-wing Hegelianism and Kierkegaard's Reaction

    A. Hegelian Christianity in Denmark

        1. The history of religion, as told by Hegelians and other scholars in Northern Europe, was a steady progress from paganism to Christianity, the highest religion.

        2. Within this history, ordinary Christians could get the complacent feeling that just by being citizens of Christian Denmark they were triumphantly riding the wave of world history.

    B. Kierkegaard the Original Existentialist

        1. What Hegelian world history leaves out is the existence of the individual.

        2. Kierkegaard's insistence on remembering one's own *existence* as an individual makes him the founder of existentialism.

        3. Kierkegaard's final literary work was a series of articles comprising an "Attack on Christendom," urging the Danish to consider that living in Christendom (even if it is the culmination of world-history) is no substitute for existing as a Christian.

II. Kierkegaard's Leap of Faith

    A. Existential Faith against Proof

        1. Consider the difference between relying on a proof and seeing for yourself.

        2. Recall that in Protestantism the Platonist notion of seeing with your mind's eye has dropped out.

        3. Hence, for most Protestants, Faith plays the role once played by inner vision: it is the fundamental means of access to God.

        4. Kierkegaard gives what is perhaps the deepest philosophical and psychological portrait of such faith.

        5. Part of this portrait is his ongoing polemic against relying on proofs (including Hegelian proofs from the course of world-history) rather than "believing for yourself."

        6. None of this means that faith is, for Kierkegaard, simply irrational.

        7. What has happened, in effect, is the reversal of the Augustinian-Catholic view of faith and reason: for Augustine, Faith was secondhand belief in authority, while Reason meant seeing for yourself.

        8. For Kierkegaard, in effect, Reason has become the secondhand form of life (relying on some professor's "proofs") while faith—real faith—means "believing for oneself."

    B. Lessing's "Broad, Ugly Ditch" (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*)

        1. Lessing points out that all the contingent facts of history cannot add up to a proof about "the necessary truths of reason" (e.g., concerning God and eternal happiness). He calls this "the broad ugly ditch I cannot get over, no matter how often and seriously I've tried the leap."

        2. Kierkegaard satirizes the Romantic philosopher Jacobi, who tries by his arguments and eloquence to help Lessing take the leap.

        3. For the point of the leap of faith, for Kierkegaard, is that it is a decision that no one can make for you—especially not by arguments.

    C. Contemporaneousness with Christ (*Philosophical Fragments* and *Training in Christianity*)

        1. Believing that Christ is God is an example of the leap of faith: here is a contingent fact of history that Christians believe is the key to eternal happiness.

2. One might think it is harder to believe in Christ today since we can't see him, but Kierkegaard argues that the disciples who were his contemporaries faced the same paradox as anyone else: the difficulty of believing that the man they saw in front of them was God.

3. What makes such faith so difficult (and therefore makes real faith possible) is precisely the particularity of the Incarnation: the fact that this one man claims to be God.

4. Hence for Kierkegaard, unlike Hegel, there is no subsumption of religion by philosophy: the incarnation is not a general truth established by the course of world history, but a particular individual who says, "Blessed is whoever is not offended by me."

5. Faith for Kierkegaard means facing the possibility of offense and choosing to believe, rather than to be offended.

6. In 19th century Christendom, Kierkegaard complains, most people don't even get to the point of the possibility of offense. They simply imagine that they believe. They believe in an imaginary Christ Who is directly recognizable as God.

III. Kierkegaardian Inwardness

A. The Lutheran Background

1. For Luther, a certain kind of despair—giving up hope in oneself and one's own works—prepared a sinner for faith in the Gospel.

2. The point of preaching Law (rather than Gospel) is to bring sinners to the point of despairing in themselves and fleeing to the grace of the Gospel.

3. People who have never been brought to that despair and yet believe they are "OK with God" are, in Luther's terms, "smug."

B. Despair and Becoming a Self (*The Sickness Unto Death*)

1. Much of Kierkegaard's energy is devoted to analyzing the dynamics of despair and smugness (which he calls "spiritlessness").

2. Kierkegaard sees a hidden or incipient despair even in the life of smugness—the despair of someone who is avoiding the task of becoming a self.

3. For Kierkegaard, faith doesn't just save you from the wrath of God; it is the way you become a self—coming to be related to yourself in the right way by being related to God in the right way.

4. Much of Kierkegaard's writing is aimed at awakening the individual to his or her own level of anxiety and despair, in order to deepen individual inwardness.

C. Kierkegaard as Psychologist, Philosopher and Poet

1. Kierkegaard gives a rich array of analyses of the various levels of inwardness as people move from smugness and immaturity to ethical seriousness to Christian faith—from the "aesthetic" to the "ethical" to the "religious" stage of life.

2. The analyses make use of Hegelian dialectical categories, not to uncover the unity toward which all history tends (as in Hegel) but to trace the deepening inwardness of the individual.

3. But unlike Hegel, Kierkegaard is a great writer, and his analyses are illustrated by thought-provoking and poetic parables.

D. Kierkegaard as Religious Communicator

1. Because religion for Kierkegaard is a matter of inwardness and infinite passion, religious communication must respect the inalienable task of the solitary individual, who must make the leap of faith for himself or herself.

2. Hence direct talk about religious inwardness (e.g., the lectures of a Hegel or the preachings of a Jacobi) are a sort of twaddle or idle chatter.

3. Kierkegaard prefers the ironic and indirect strategy of communication typified by Lessing and above all by Socrates.

4. Kierkegaard's own writing is not only ironic in style (alternating from pathos to comedy) but pseudonymous, as if to make the author disappear and leave the reader alone.

5. Even God cannot communicate the Christian religion directly, but comes closest to us precisely in His "incognito" as a mere man—disguising Himself so deeply that He becomes His disguise.

Essential Reading:

Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, selections from *Philosophical Fragments*, *Concluding Scientific Postscript*, *Sickness unto Death*, *Training in Christianity*, and *The Attack upon Christendom*

Supplemental Reading:

Lowrie, *A Short Life of Kierkegaard*

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think proof gets in the way of authentic religious faith?

2. Do you share Kierkegaard's suspicion that behind a life of smugness and complacency is a secret despair?

Lecture Twenty-Six
Nietzsche—Critic of Christian Morality

Scope: Friedrich Nietzsche is one of the few critics of Christianity bold enough to criticize its morality. He thinks morality as we know it is sick and life-denying. Healthy values mean a willingness to suffer and give pain, without getting wrapped up in who is to blame. Hence Nietzsche is interested in explaining how the historical phenomenon of morality and "the guilty conscience" arose, through attempts by sick and vengeful people to repress and control their will to power. The ultimate health is to realize not only that "God is dead" but that "we have killed him," and to be glad for the opportunities this offers for a creative life lived without pre-established meanings.

Outline

I.   A Preliminary Word about Nietzsche's Reputation

    A.   Nietzsche and Nazism

        1.   The Nazis found a lot to like in Nietzsche, but Nietzsche would not have found so much to like in the Nazis.

        2.   The caretaker of the Nietzsche legacy for decades after his death was his sister, a leader in the anti-Semitic movement, who got along well with Hitler.

        3.   But Nietzsche himself despised anti-Semites, especially the German sort represented by his sister and her husband.

    B.   Nietzsche's Background

        1.   Nietzsche was a parson's son who grew up in a house full of pious "Victorian" women.

        2.   To get the hang of Nietzsche's tone, imagine the mischievous glint in his eye as he says something that scandalizes the propriety of the pious women who want him to be a good little boy.

        3.   His boldness as critic of religion is that he's willing to criticize not just religion but morality.

II. Nietzsche's Philosophy of Life-Affirmation

    A.   Sickness and Health as Basic Values

        1.   Nietzsche was the first important philosopher to talk about "values" (a term whose original home was in economics, not philosophy).

        2.   Not all values are moral: sickness and health, for instance, are physiological values.

        3.   Nietzsche in fact thinks Christian moral values are sick, and he would rather be healthy.

        4.   The sick attitude involves merely response to stimuli, trying to minimize pain and maximize utility—calculating and cowardly.

        5.   The healthy attitude is that of an adventurer or conqueror—spontaneous expansive growth, affirming life in both its pains and pleasures, willing both to cause and to endure pain, dedicated to self-overcoming, wasteful, careless, cheerful and exhilarating.

    B.   Philosophy as a Function of the Philosopher's State of Health

        1.   The "pessimist" philosopher (such as Schopenhauer) takes the sick view that the suffering in life is an objection against it: life is bad because there's so much suffering involved.

        2.   Nietzsche admires Greek tragedy for taking the opposite attitude: affirming life in all its dreadful suffering and cruelty (*The Birth of Tragedy*).

        3.   Beginning with Socrates, Greek philosophy took a sick, decadent turn, condemning the suffering of life and positing in its place the unchanging, deathless intelligible world as the reality behind the appearances of life (*Twilight of the Idols*).

        4.   Against this life-denying philosophy, Nietzsche insists on the "innocence of becoming," refusing to judge the changing world of life (with its suffering and danger) by the sick values of Platonist metaphysics—or of Judaeo-Christian morality.

    C.   Eternal Recurrence as Test of Life-Affirmation

        1.   Some physicists of Nietzsche's time thought that the history of the world would repeat itself over and over again forever.

2. Nietzsche used this theory as a test of life affirmation: can you say YES to the universe repeating itself like this, bringing back inescapably all your life's pain (*The Gay Science*, section 341)?

3. Contrast the "pessimistic" answer of the oriental religions so admired by Schopenhauer, with their desire for tranquillity and escape from the cycle of rebirth, life and death.

    D. The Will to Power

        1. Nietzsche was a physical determinist: things happen by necessity, for no ultimate reason.

        2. Hence there is no design or meaning in nature, nor is there free will or personal responsibility for anything that happens. (Nietzsche finds a certain kind of liberation in this.)

        3. For Nietzsche the basic element of all life, even of all reality, is "Will to Power."

        4. Hence it is not surprising if someone blames someone else for something: it's a lie, but it expresses the will to power.

        5. The interesting puzzle is: why did anyone come to blame *him or her self*?

        6. In other words, Nietzsche needs to find an explanation for the historical origin of that profoundly un-natural phenomenon: morality.

III. Morality: The History of an Illness (*On the Genealogy of Morals*)

    A. Master Morality and Slave Morality

        1. Master morality is based on the value-pair: *good* ("we masters, we noble ones") and *bad* ("those lousy worthless peasants")—it is healthy, active, expansive, unself-conscious.

        2. Slave morality (or simply "morality," in the ordinary and Kantian senses) is based on the values *good* ("we nice and harmless ones") and *evil* ("those cruel and violent conquerors").

        3. Both master morality and slave morality are forms of will to power, but slave morality is sick, subtle and vengeful, since it dare not express itself by actually taking revenge.

        4. Nietzsche appreciates the healthy power of the masters, and approves of their love of rank and of social distance, as opposed to the life-denying timidity and intimacy of the slave morality.

        5. Far from criticizing religion for being useful to the masters (as in Marx) Nietzsche sees Christianity and Judaism as expressions of slave-morality and its *ressentiment* toward the powerful.

        6. *Ressentiment* is the repressed vengefulness of the slaves, which becomes a source of values in "the slave revolt in morality" which produces Christianity.

    B. The Origin of Bad Conscience

        1. Nietzsche thinks guilt-feelings are a relatively recent phenomenon whose historical origin needs to be explained.

        2. He begins by noting the predominance of the vocabulary of debt and obligation in our moral language.

        3. But ancient peoples collected their debts and punished their debtors *a*-morally, without attributing a moral meaning to the punishment or moral guilt to the debtors.

        4. The crucial development was internalization: in civilized society, the instinct of vengefulness and violence was turned upon the self.

        5. This internalization first took place in religion—in the sinner's relation to the God to whom he was indebted.

        6. The resulting guilt-consciousness is a form of illness—but as pregnancy is an illness, for it is full of new possibilities.

    C. The Meaning of Asceticism

        1. The internalization of *ressentiment* was the work of the priestly caste.

        2. Judaism is the priestly religion par excellence, and its priestly values of *ressentiment* and guilt came to dominate European civilization through Christianity.

        3. The mechanism of internalization was to blame oneself for one's own suffering ("I am being punished because I am guilty").

        4. This intensified suffering, but also gave it a meaning and made it bearable (a subtle trick of the will to power turning against itself in order to preserve itself).

IV. The Death of God

    A. Asceticism and Truth

        1. For Nietzsche, the most valuable result of the ascetic ideal was the will to truth that animates modern scholarship.

  2. As Nietzsche observes, scholars are historically the successors of priests.
  3. Scholarship is ascetic not only in that it demands long hours devoted to thought rather than sensual satisfaction, but more fundamentally in that it prefers to find the truth even if that contradicts one's deepest wishes.
  4. So for example it was the honesty of 19th-century Protestant Biblical scholarship that undermined the authority of belief in the Biblical God.
 B. Why Announce that God Is Dead?
  1. Nietzsche's famous saying, "God is dead," means "the Christian God is no longer believable."
  2. But that is not news; for Nietzsche the real news is "we have killed him."
  3. The real challenge is: are we ready to live with what we have done?
  4. The scholars and intellectuals who killed the Christian God (i.e., made him unbelievable) still want to keep Judaeo-Christian morality.
  5. Nietzsche want to overcome Judaeo-Christian morality and go on to ask the next question: what is the value of the will to truth?
 C. The Value of Truth after the Death of God
  1. Lies (e.g., art, morality, religion) have always been necessary for life.
  2. Art has the advantage that it tells lies in good conscience.
  3. Nietzsche is also interested in the possibility of a "gay science," i.e., scholarship that is like tragic art—daring, dangerous, dancing, unascetic.

Essential Reading:

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (in *Basic Writings*, below)

———*The Gay Science*, sections 125 (the famous "God is Dead" passage) and 341 (on eternal recurrence), found in *The Portable Nietzsche* (below)

Supplemental Reading:

Much of Nietzsche's most influential philosophical writing is contained in the two volumes: *The Portable Nietzsche* and *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (see Bibliography). Nietzsche is one of the few philosophers who are fun to read. Anyone who likes the fun might want to try the complete edition of *The Gay Science* as well.

Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, AntiChrist*

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you ever have the feeling that morality (or perhaps certain kinds of morality) is *sick*?
2. Could it be that life without belief in God is an exhilarating and creative adventure?

Lecture Twenty-Seven
Neo-orthodoxy—The Subject and Object of Faith

Scope: Neo-orthodoxy, a Protestant movement initiated by Swiss theologian Karl Barth shortly after the end of World War I, reacted against the liberal Protestant attempt to base theology on religious experience. Rudolph Bultmann, a New Testament scholar took the movement in a radically subjective direction with his project of "demythologization," arguing that an existentialist conception of the human self provided the most adequate interpretation of the true meaning of the mythological world-view of the New Testament. Meanwhile Barth himself took a radically "objective" turn, insisting that God could indeed be an object of our knowledge, but only by his grace, which is rooted in the objectivity of his Triune being, his choice to be God incarnate for us in Christ.

Outline

I. The Early Barth

   A. The Origin of "Neo-orthodoxy"

      1. The most influential Protestant theologian of the 20ᵗʰ century, Karl Barth, began his career as a critic of religion (in his highly polemical commentary on *The Epistle to the Romans*).

      2. His fundamental target was liberal theology and its attempt to base theology on religious experience.

      3. His criticism was that liberal theology (as exemplified by Schleiermacher) led inevitably to Feuerbach: if you start by finding God in your experience, you will end by identifying your experience with God.

   B. The Early Barth's Critique of Religion

      1. Thus for Barth, *religion* means putting human experience in the place of God—as opposed to *faith*, which is "a perception .. .which proceeds from God outwards."

      2. To put Barth's point in Kantian terms, God is not a phenomenon or object of our experience, but a *noumenon* or reality beyond all the categories of our understanding

      3. To put the point in Hegelian terms, God's grace is the subsumption (*Aufhebung*) of man and his religion, both dissolving our humanity in judgment or "crisis," and also lifting it up above itself to a perception of God.

      4. This grace is always an *event* that happens to us, not a piece of knowledge we possess (this is Barth's "actualism," his insistence that the knowledge of God is always an *act* of God).

II. Bultmann: Existentialist Theology

   A. The Aftermath of Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans*

      1. *The Epistle to the Romans* raises the question: if God cannot be objectified as one more object in the world, then how can we speak about him?

      2. In an early essay, "What Does It Mean to Speak of God?" Rudolph Bultmann pursues this question, arguing that all speaking about God—every attempt to see God from outside our relationship to Him— is false and sinful.

      3. This involves a problem in speaking about ourselves as well: we "mistake the truth of our own existence" when we "look at ourselves from outside as the object of scientific investigation."

      4. Hence an adequate way of conceiving our own existence "from inside" might lead to an adequate way of conceiving our relation to God.

   B. Existentialism as a Non-Objectifying Conceptuality

      1. For Kant, conceptualizing means objectifying; but Bultmann thought a non-objectifying conceptualization of the relation between us and God could be found in existentialism.

      2. In formulating this existentialist conceptuality Bultmann drew heavily on the German existentialist philosopher Heidegger, who in turn drew heavily on Kierkegaard and other Christian sources.

      3. In existentialist conceptuality, human existence is not observed from outside as an object but as a task, burden or anxiety that is "always my own."

   C. Existentialist Theology and Demythologization

1. Bultmann describes faith as the event (never a possession) of authentic existence, in which instead of objectifying ourselves we realize that our own existence is a call for authentic decision (this is Bultmann's version of "actualism").
2. But then Bultmann faces a conceptual problem: if that is what faith is, what does it need Christ for?
3. The irony here is that existential conceptuality was originally developed (by Kierkegaard) to deal with the paradox of faith in Christ, but now Bultmann must find a way to re-connect the concept of existential authenticity to Christian faith.
4. Bultmann's project as a New Testament scholar was to demythologize the New Testament proclamation of Christ, i.e., to find the true existential meaning of such "mythological" concepts as resurrection and the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
5. For Bultmann, the proclamation of Christ's resurrection becomes the occasion of faith and authentic existence, but there is no necessary connection with the "historical Jesus" (about whom there is little we can know).

III. Barth's Mature Theology: The Objective Ground of Faith

A. *Objective* Conditions of the Possibility of Knowing God
1. Like Bultmann, Barth rejects every human attempt to objectify God.
2. But in contrast to Bultmann, this does not mean that God cannot be an object of human knowledge.
3. For the mature Barth, we cannot objectify God, but God can objectify Himself for us, making Himself an object of our knowledge through revelation.
4. Hence Barth rejects the Kantian tendency to seek the conditions which make knowledge possible in the *subject* (i.e., the knower) and his or her experience.
5. Rather, the conditions which make knowledge of God possible are found in the *object*—in the known rather than the knower—so that an account of how we know God must concentrate on God's doings, not ours.

B. Trinity: God's Being as the Basis of Revelation
1. For Barth, the Trinity is the very being of God as Revealer, Revelation and Revealedness (i.e., Father, Son and Holy Spirit, respectively).
2. This constitutes God's *primary objectivity*: His freedom to be an object of knowledge for Himself.
3. God's primary objectivity in turn makes possible His *secondary objectivity*—His revealing Himself as an object of knowledge for us.
4. This secondary objectivity encounters us in Christ as the Word of God in whom God addresses Himself to us in grace, through Bible and preaching.

C. Election: God's Choice to Be Christ
1. For Barth, the being of God is not a static essence; rather God is a person who "possesses His being in His acts."
2. The first of all God's actions is the choice to be God in the man Jesus.
3. The Incarnation is thus God defining His own being.
4. God's choice to create the world follows and subserves this choice to be God in Jesus.
5. This is Barth's version of the Calvinist doctrine of Election (i.e., divine choice), which he conceives as good news: God's most fundamental choice is not Jacob to the exclusion of Esau, but Christ for the sake of the whole world.

D. Humanity: Objects of Christ's Love
1. Our place in the drama of creation and redemption is determined not by our choices but by God's—and God's choice is that we are those for whose sake He is Christ the Redeemer.
2. We human beings come into the story first as objects of God's love, and only secondarily as subjects who believe and know, choose and love.
3. Thus human knowledge of God is a response, in obedience and gratitude, to what God has already done and revealed in Christ.
4. Even the subjective possibility of human knowledge (our human capacity to know) is defined not in terms of a turn to the subject but by looking at the man Jesus Christ as the model of what humanity is created to be: covenant partners with God.
5. For in choosing the man Jesus, God defined not only his own being but ours—human beings are created to be covenant partners with God in Christ, who is the most truly human of us all.

V. Some Critical Perspectives

    A. Bultmann was criticized for being radically subjectivistic: he can only talk about God by talking about human existence.

    B. Critics of Barth argue that he is too "objectivistic," too exclusively focused on God as the object of faith, and that he needs to give *us* a more prominent role in our own knowledge of God.

    C. A criticism that affects both Barth and Bultmann is that their actualism prevents them from appreciating the reliability and continuity of the means by which God speaks to us (e.g., the Bible) and the place in which God meets us (i.e., the Church).

Essential Reading:

Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (a brief summary of Barth's mature theology by Barth himself)

Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology" (the key programmatic essay for Bultmann's project of demythologization and his commitment to existentialist conceptuality)

Supplemental Reading:

Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Barth's "bombshell")

Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. I/1 (the place to start for those who are seriously interested in the theology of the mature Barth)

Bultmann, "What Does It Mean to Speak of God?"

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you (like Bultmann) feel the need for a "non-objectifying conceptuality" for describing our selves and God and the relationship between them?

2. Do you (like Barth) find it satisfactory to explain the possibility of knowing God by referring to God's doings rather than our own?

Lecture Twenty-Eight

Encountering the Biblical Other—Buber and Levinas

Scope: In this lecture we examine Jewish thinkers who, drawing upon concepts implicit in the Hebrew Bible, conceive of human relationships in ways that elude the Greek and German philosophical traditions. Martin Buber develops a philosophy of dialogue based on a "non-objectifying" concept of the relationship between I and You. Emanuel Levinas develops a philosophy of the infinity of the Other, in which the other person is always greater than my mind's project of gaining a total understanding of the world, and my ethical relation to the Other takes precedence over any metaphysics of being, including my own being. The postmodernist philosophy of Jacques Derrida can be seen as an attempt to keep the world of knowledge open to the intrusion and surprise of the Other.

Outline

I. Martin Buber on Dialogue

    A. Relationship vs. Objectification

        1. The project of finding a non-objectifying conceptuality was common to philosophers and theologians in the inter-war years (e.g., Bultmann).

        2. Buber criticized the existentialist version of non-objectifying conceptuality because of its tendency to treat human existence as fundamentally solitary.

        3. He therefore developed a philosophy of dialogue, where one person meets another not as object bumps into object, or subject knows object, but as I meet You (as captured in the title of his 1923 book, *Ich und Du*, or "*I and Thou*").

        4. The relation between I and You is not something I can look at "from outside"—when I am in the relationship all I can see is You.

    B. I-It vs. I-You

        1. Buber distinguishes two basic human attitudes toward the world, corresponding to the word-pairs "I-It" and "I-You."

        2. There is no "I" apart from "I-It" or "I-You," and the "I" of "I-It" is different from the "I" of "I-You."

        3. "It" is the object of my experience (or "objectification" in the Kantian sense) but "You" cannot be experienced or be made an object of experience in the Kantian sense, but can only be encountered or related to.

        4. I can treat another human being as an "It," an object to be thought about rather than a person to be encountered ("He" and "She" belong to the "It-world").

        5. The "I-You" relation is more than a feeling (though it can be called "love").

        6. One cannot hate, use, think about, experience, want, or perceive a You, but only an It.

    C. The Event of Relation

        1. The "It-world" is the world of space and time as we ordinarily experience it.

        2. The "I-You" relation does not add or subtract any objects or experiences from the "It-world" but rather establishes a relation between "I" and "You."

        3. When I genuinely say "You," I am not thinking of one He or She next to others but to a You who "has no borders" and "fills the sky."

        4. True presence means being in the presence of a You, whereas an It is known only as something past.

        5. The event of relation, when I genuinely say "You," is transitory, and soon "You" fades into the "It world" as one more object, with a measurement and a boundary.

        6. But on the other hand, every It can become a You, again and again, in the event of relation.

        7. I can say "You" not only to other human beings, but to beings in nature and to works of art (especially those which I am trying to create—they call to me).

        8. I cannot plan or choose to make the event of relation happen; it comes to me by grace, as a kind of gift (like the "event of grace" in Barth).

    D. The Eternal You

        1. Every time I truly say "You," I address an eternal You.

2. The It-world coheres in space and time, but the world of You coheres in the eternal You, the center "in which the lines of relationship, though parallel, intersect."
3. The event of relation is not a mystical escape from this world, nor does it unite us with the eternal You: I and You are not one, but remain "over-against" one another, acting on one another, encountering one another.
4. God cannot be sought, for there is nowhere He cannot be found.
5. Encounter with the eternal You is revelation; it always sends us out to the world in mission.
6. To be interested in God as object (even to try to return to the original source of revelation) is idolatry—trying to experience as It what can only be You.
7. When I am sent forth in mission by my encounter with God, God remains present before me.

II. Levinas on the Infinity of the Other
   A. Postmodern Critics of Western philosophy Seen as a "Totalizing" Project that Obliterates Difference
      1. Where Buber contrasts the I-You relation to Kantian objectification, Levinas contrasts the ethical relation to the Other with the whole tradition of classical metaphysics since the ancient Greeks.
      2. Hegel's *Geist* aims for Absolute Knowledge, subsuming all difference and otherness in a rich and diversified unity.
      3. Plotinus's Soul aims to be reunited to the unity of Mind from which it has fallen.
      4. Aristotle interprets intellectual knowledge as identity between knower and known.
      5. Derrida, following Heidegger, sees in Western philosophy a pervasive "metaphysics of presence," in which being is interpreted as the presence before my mind of a form which I can know.

   B. Responsibility for the Other as the Original Ethical Relation
      1. For Levinas, the Other is not present (as it is in Buber) but future, "always beyond me," never simply present before me in a totality I could grasp.
      2. The Other is an infinity that keeps exceeding my attempts to achieve total knowledge—I can approach the Other but never get to the end of him.
      3. Thus there is no Hegelian synthesis or subsumption of self and other, but rather a togetherness face-to-face.
      4. For Levinas, my being is a secondary matter: what comes first is my responsibility for the Other (which he calls "the original ethical relation").
      5. It is my unshirkable ethical responsibility that makes me a unique self, an unsubstitutable "I."
      6. Hence ethics (concerned with the Good) takes priority over ontology (concerned with Being), and my right to exist shrinks to nothing before my responsibility for the Other.
      7. This is revealed in my bad conscience—my sense of usurpation, Levinas calls it—about continuing to live while others die (Samuel in 1 Sam. 3, Isaiah in Isa. 6).

   C. The Face
      1. For Levinas, I meet the Other as Face.
      2. The Face is not a matter of perception but signification (in the sense of both "meaning" and "giving orders"—French *signifier*).
      3. The Face meets me from a dimension of height, giving me orders: You shall not kill.
      4. The Face is my master precisely in its destitution, nakedness and vulnerability—making me responsible for the Other in need or in danger of death.
      5. Hence in contrast to Buber my relation to the Other is unequal and asymmetrical: I am constituted by my responsibility for the Other, and I do not constitute the Other's responsibility for me.

   D. The Third Person, Justice and Knowledge
      1. The Face of the Other is incomparable, infinitely more valuable than anything of mine.
      2. But when a third person appears, I must begin to compare the incomparable, weighing my responsibilities to the one and to the other.
      3. At this point there arise issues of justice and morality, social and political equality.
      4. Likewise, in discourse with the Other what matters is not what is *said*, but the *saying*, which exposes me to the Other.
      5. But in society, beginning with the third person, what is said (i.e., the truth or falsehood of this or that piece of knowledge) becomes prominent.
      6. But for Levinas it is always the ethical relation with an incomparable Other that takes precedence.

E. The Biblical Other
  1. Levinas finds this ethical understanding in the discourse of the Bible, which has been partially—but only partially—incorporated into the realm of Western metaphysics stemming from the Greeks.
  2. The Bible's language for the ethical relation is found when the self is defined by its testimony before the Other: "Here I am" (Abraham in Gen 22, Samuel in 1 Sam. 3, Isaiah in Isa. 6).

Essential Reading:

Buber, *I and Thou*

Levinas, "Ethics of the Infinite"

Supplemental Reading:

Derrida, "Deconstruction and the Other"

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think our relations to other people something fundamentally different from our experience of objects in space and time?
2. Are a person's relations with other persons more important than anything else in the universe?

Lecture Twenty-Nine
Process Philosophy—God in Time

Scope: Process philosophy expresses the pervasive 20th-century dissatisfaction with the metaphysics of an unchanging God. As initially formulated by Alfred North Whitehead, it was based on an ontology of events (where "what happens" is more basic to reality than "what is"). Whitehead proposed a dual conception of God as having a primordial nature (rather like the Platonist divine Mind) but also a consequent nature (which is affected by events in the changing world). Charles Hartshorne, a student of Whitehead's, argues that this "process" conception of God is logically more consistent, more Biblical, and closer to ordinary people's conceptions of God than is the classical theism of theologians like Thomas Aquinas.

Outline

I. Introduction: Imagining an Ontology of Events
   A. The commonsense view of reality is an ontology of substance.
      1. Most of us think of the basic form of reality as a thing in space (which Aristotle called a "substance").
      2. In this view, events or processes are what happen to things.
      3. Hence events are logically secondary to substances: we imagine *things* first, then *events* involving things.
      4. This also means time is logically secondary to space.
   B. But we can imagine an ontology in which events are the primary realities.
      1. For example, we can consider a living organism as a substance constituted by physiological processes (so that the processes are more fundamental than the substance).
      2. As another example, sub-atomic particles are substances defined by the roles they play in events in which they interact with other particles.
   C. The most elaborate attempt to develop a systematic ontology of events is Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy (or the "philosophy of organism").

II. Whitehead: God in Time
   A. Leibnizian Starting Point: The "Inside" of Physical Events
      1. Whitehead is thinking in the tradition of Leibniz's panpsychism: even at the microscopic level, the physical world has an "inside" with feelings.
      2. But in contrast to Leibniz, what has "insides" is not a set of *substances* (Leibniz's "windowless monads") but a set of inter-related *events*.
      3. For Whitehead, these events (called "actual occasions" or "actual entities") are the basic constituents of reality: "enduring objects" such as electrons and human beings are serially-ordered "societies" of actual occasions.
   B. Jamesian Model
      1. "Actual occasions" are related to one another as thoughts are related to one another in William James' concept of "the stream of consciousness."
      2. James observed that the ideas in our minds are not like substances in a box, but rather are momentary phenomena, quickly fading and being replaced by new thoughts *which are aware of their predecessors*.
      3. Process philosophy proposes something like a whole universe of Jamesian thoughts: each event has a feeling or grasp (called "prehension") of other events.
   C. Whitehead's Concept of God
      1. Most events have only limited consciousness of other events, but God has full knowledge of all previous events.
      2. This is God's "physical feeling" of the world, which constitutes His "consequent nature," His response to the world's effect on Him.
      3. God also has a "primordial nature" which consists of "conceptual feelings" about "eternal objects" (roughly analogous to Plotinus' Divine Mind) which can enter into the conceptual feelings of actual

occasions (here God is like Plotinus' World Soul mediating the Intelligible World of Platonic Forms to the changing world of nature).

    4. God's primordial nature is eternal and unchanging—abstract and absolute—but His consequent nature is continually evolving in response to the changes in the world.

III. Hartshorne: God in Relation

    A. Charles Hartshorne, a process philosopher specializing in philosophy of religion, developed a concept of God that was inspired by Whitehead but much more detailed.

    B. Hartshorne contrasts his view with the "classical theism" of such thinkers as Thomas Aquinas.

    C. In classical theism, God is not *really related* to us, in the sense that His relations to the world do not affect His essence.

    D. According to Hartshorne God *is* really related us, because His knowledge of the world changes as the world changes.

    E. Likewise, according to Hartshorne, God's love is not merely an immutable and impassable benevolence toward us but a sympathetic sorrowing with our sorrows and rejoicing in our happiness.

    F. Thus the fact that God changes appropriately in response to the world's changes makes Him in Hartshorne's view more perfect, not less (in contrast to classical theism, which assumes that because God is perfect, any change in Him could only be change for the worse).

    G. Hence in process philosophy God is not only essentially temporal and changing, but also essentially related (hence relative, not absolute) and even dependent on the world for the content of His own being, knowing, and loving.

    H. According to Hartshorne, God does not stand outside the flow of history in an eternal present, knowing and determining everything that happens: God makes new things possible, including new things that He does not control, such as the actions of our free will.

IV. Assessment and Comparison

    A. Strengths of a Process Conception of God
        1. It provides an alternative ontology for those who are dissatisfied with the metaphysics of timeless essences or substances which dominated the Western tradition since Plato.
        2. It can be accepted (in the form proposed by Hartshorne) even if one does not accept the elaborate event ontology of Whitehead.
        3. It avoids many conceptual problems (or perhaps contradictions) of classical theism (such as divine simplicity, the immutability of a God who is nonetheless supposed to be a person, etc.).
        4. It makes sense of ordinary people's concepts of God as a sympathetic person rather than an immutable essence—and thus may also be closer to Biblical conceptions of God than is classical theism.

    B. Comparison with Barth
        1. Both Barth and Process Theology insist (*contra* Plotinus) that God turns toward the world in love.
        2. Process Theology emphasizes God's receptivity, responsiveness and sympathy, Barth his actions and choices.
        3. In contrast to Process Theology, for Barth God is related to the world not as being affected by it, but as choosing Himself as its Creator and Redeemer.
        4. Barth thus is closer to the classical theism of orthodox Christian tradition and its affirmation of divine impassability.
        5. Barth has something that Process Philosophy lacks: a rich account of God as someone who takes particular actions.
        6. Process Theology has something Barth lacks: an account of God sympathizing with us, feeling our sorrows and joys.

Essential Reading:

"Basic Concepts of Process Philosophy," chapter 1 of Cobb and Griffin, *Process Theology: an Introductory Exposition*

Supplemental Reading:

Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity*, pp. 18-59.

Whitehead, *Process and Reality*. Readings for those interested in a quick dip into a difficult but great work of philosophy: II,i,1-5, pp. 39-51 (a brief sketch of Whitehead's ontology) III,ii,1, pp.236-239 (prehensions as physical feelings) and V,ii, pp. 342-351 (Whitehead's most detailed presentation of his concept of God)

Questions to Consider:

1. Does an ontology of events make sense to you? Do you think it makes more sense than an ontology of substances?

2. Do you think God feels what we feel—sympathetically rejoicing in our joy and sorrowing in our sorrow? (Does such a conception of God undermine the notion that God is eternal—and does that bother you?)

Lecture Thirty
Logical Empiricism and the Meaning of Religion

Scope: The modern "turn to the subject" reached a point of special intensity in early 20th-century philosophy, with logical empiricism in the English speaking countries and phenomenology on the continent—only to unravel into various forms of "post-modernism," which emphasized that social and cultural meanings give shape to the lives and experience of individuals. In this context, as George Lindbeck points out, religions look less like expressions of religious experience and more like social practices which give shape to individual experience.

Outline

I. Post-modernism as Turn *away from* the Subject

   A. Two radical forms of the modern "turn to the subject" emerged in the early 20th century.
      1. Anglo-American version: logical empiricism (aka logical positivism or logical atomism).
      2. Continental (French and German) version: phenomenology (especially Edmund Husserl).
      3. Both versions look to inner experience as the foundation for knowledge of the external world.
      4. Hence both wrestle seriously with the problem of solipsism: how do I get from my private inner world to knowledge of the external world? This is an example of the secularization of religious thought.
      5. The problem of solipsism assumes that each of us lives in an inner world—and therefore it no longer looks so formidable if one does not take for granted that there *is* an inner world.

   B. Two versions of postmodernism undo these two "turns to the subject."
      1. Continental version: The phenomenological turn to the subject, founded by Husserl, was unraveled by Derrida's deconstructionism.
      2. Anglo-American version: Wittgenstein, who helped found logical empiricism also helped unravel it in his later works, when he questioned key premises of the Augustinian inner world.

II. Logical Empiricism

   A. Its Reductionist Program
      1. Reductionism is the project of explaining one science in terms of another, more basic science: e.g., the more ambitious forms of behaviorism attempted to reduce psychology to biology.
      2. The reductionist program of logical empiricism aimed to reduce all empirical sciences to physics.
      3. The mathematical component of physics was to be reduced to logic.
      4. The empirical component of physics was to be reduced to observation of pure sense data.
      5. Hence knowledge of external world is built up out of "atoms" of pure sense data (e.g., "red here now") combined by logic, mathematics, physics etc. into a theory of the world (e.g., the early Wittgenstein of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*).

   B. Its Critique of the Meaning of Metaphysics and Religion
      1. Logical Positivism (an early form of logical empiricism) took a "turn to the subject" like Kant, but with a crucial difference: it rejected claims for *a priori* (non-empirical) knowledge of nature, because apart from empirical observation it saw no source of knowledge besides logic, which (*contra* Kant) cannot tell us anything in advance about the way the world is.
      2. Logic is used to connect observation statements ("atoms" of sense data) into a theory, but does not determine the shape of that theory in advance.
      3. Hence the "empiricist criterion of meaning": any meaningful statement about the world must be verifiable by observation (thus, A.J. Ayer).
      4. By this criterion not only Kantian metaphysics of nature, but all forms of metaphysics, including statements about God, are meaningless.
      5. The empiricist criterion of meaning is no longer accepted by philosophers, for it is self-referentially incoherent—if you apply the criterion to itself, you must conclude that the empiricist criterion of meaning is meaningless.

   C. The Falsificationist Challenge

1. A less ambitious (and therefore more seriously threatening) challenge to the meaning of religious discourse is Anthony Flew's "falsificationist challenge": can religious believers show how a statement like "God exists" might turn out to be false?

2. The idea behind this challenge is that any theory that cannot possibly be falsified is totally indifferent to the evidence, and thus ultimately meaningless or irrational.

3. One possible answer: a whole religious tradition (and possibly holistic networks of meaning in other areas) may be falsifiable (e.g., science, which even in its most basic observations depends on a complicated web of theories, language, etc.).

4. Extending this insight, the later Wittgenstein argued that experience in general is dependent on language (i.e., the social/historical resource known as language makes insight by an individual possible in the first place).

III. Anglo-American Post-modernism

  A. Holism vs. Reductionism

    1. Answering the falsificationist challenge is easy if what needs to be falsifiable is not a lone sentence like "God exists" but a whole religion like Christianity or Judaism.

    2. But whole webs of belief are confirmed or falsified "holistically."

    3. This implies that our individual observations are not theory-independent—not "pure" sense data.

    4. Consider how observation actually works in science: observing a neutrino is impossible without a great deal of equipment and extensive background-knowledge of the theories of modern physics.

  B. The Influence of the Later Wittgenstein

    1. Wittgenstein, in his later works, pointed out how logical empiricism had neglected to notice the deep way human understanding is dependent on language and culture.

    2. Wittgenstein's arguments against the possibility of a private language have convinced most philosophers that we could not even make statements like "red here now" without having learned a common language.

    3. Hence for many Wittgensteinian philosophers, it is language that gives shape to consciousness, rather than consciousness which gives rise to language.

  C. Lindbeck's Cultural-Linguistic Approach (*Nature of Doctrine*, 1984)

    1. George Lindbeck proposes a Wittgensteinian approach to understanding Christian doctrine, which he calls a "cultural-linguistic" approach, as opposed to the "experiential-expressivist" approach typical of liberal theology.

    2. The experiential-expressivist (e.g., Schleiermacher) conceives of Christian doctrine as outward expressions of a fundamental religious experience.

    3. Lindbeck proposes on the contrary that doctrines function as "second-order" language, rules that describe and govern first-order Christian discourse and practice (e.g., in liturgy and prayer).

    4. The underlying idea of the cultural-linguistic approach is that the discursive practices of a tradition shape individual experience.

    5. From this perspective, religions largely consist in distinctive sets of discursive practices, i.e., doing things with words (e.g., rituals and liturgies, practices of reading and interpreting sacred texts, etc.).

  D. The Intelligibility of Religious Beliefs

    1. For Lindbeck, understanding a religion is like what a cultural anthropologist does when she gives a "thick description" of the cultural practices of a tribe in New Guinea.

    2. A cultural-linguistic approach therefore answers the "question of intelligibility" differently than liberal theologians.

    3. For experiential-expressivists, ancient Christian doctrines are unintelligible to modern people unless they express or are correlated with our experience.

    4. For Lindbeck, on the contrary, intelligibility is a function of skill: e.g., Christianity is like a language which becomes understandable only when you have acquired proficiency in speaking it.

    5. Hence the standard way to understand Christianity (or any other religion) is to become a member of the tribe and learn its language and cultural practices.

  E. Critical Issues

    1. For many theologians, Lindbeck's theory of religions provides an attractive alternative to the individualism and privatization of the experiential-expressive model favored by liberal theologians.

2. But theologians who adopt Lindbeck's model to describe their own religion must face critical challenges such as, "shouldn't your tribe be able to give an account to other tribes of the *truth* of their religion?"
3. Another way to phrase this is to ask: doesn't this postmodern hermeneutics of religion still need to take a critical turn? In fact, the tradition of critical inquiry has become a part of certain religious traditions, e.g., both Christianity and Judaism, our subjects in this course.

Essential Reading:

Flew et al., "Theology and Falsification"

Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, chapters 2 and 6

Supplemental Reading:

Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in Quine, pp. 20-46

Questions to Consider:

1. Have you ever been worried by the fear of solipsism, i.e., the possibility that you are alone in your own private inner world? Do you think this worry makes sense?
2. Do you think religion is based on individual experience or on the discursive practices of a religious community? How do these two sides of religion relate to one another?

Lecture Thirty-One
"Reformed" Epistemology and the Rationality of Belief

Scope: "Reformed" epistemology is a recent philosophical movement which defends the rationality of religious beliefs. For instance, Nicholas Wolterstorff criticizes the "evidentialist" view that it is irrational to believe something without evidence or proof. Alvin Plantinga criticizes the epistemology of "classical foundationalism" (which assumes that all beliefs must be based on a narrow foundation of certainty) and argues that religious beliefs are "properly basic," i.e., need not be based on (or proved by) more certain beliefs. William Alston argues that the religious experiences people have within particular traditions are analogous to basic perceptual beliefs—they do not need to be based on other beliefs, but rather provide a basis for other beliefs.

Outline

I. Rationality and Religious Beliefs

    A. Rational Beliefs

        1. In contemporary Anglo-American philosophy, reason and faith—or rather, "rationality" and "belief"—are not opposites: there are such things as "rational beliefs" (*contra* Descartes, Locke and Kant).

        2. Indeed most of our beliefs are rational, i.e., they make rational sense given what else we believe.

        3. For Anglo-American epistemology, knowledge is in fact one form of rational belief: it is defined roughly as *a true belief that is rationally justified or warranted*.

        4. "Rational" does not mean the same thing as "true": a belief may be untrue yet still rational.

        5. "Rational" does not mean the same thing as "proved": one may rationally believe things on the basis of reasons that fall short of demonstrative proof.

    B. "Reformed" Epistemology vs. Evidentialism

        1. At a minimum, a rational belief is one that is reasonable for you to hold, given what else you know or believe, i.e., it coheres with your other beliefs.

        2. At a maximum, a rational belief requires evidence (or "proof") in its favor.

        3. This maximal view (that it is irrational to believe something without evidence) has been given the label *evidentialism* (as in Locke).

        4. "Reformed" epistemology is a development within Anglo-American philosophy which rejects evidentialism, arguing that many of our beliefs (including religious beliefs) are rational even if we cannot offer evidence for them.

        5. As philosopher of religion Nicholas Wolterstorff puts it: when it comes to judging whether a belief is rational or irrational, the criterion is "innocent until proven guilty."

    C. Rationality and Traditional Beliefs

        1. Wolterstorff's criterion is concerned not with when it is rational to adopt a new belief, but with when it is rational to continue to hold beliefs one already has.

        2. "Reformed" epistemologists in general are not arguing in favor of their religious beliefs, but reflecting on why it is reasonable for ordinary people to continue to hold their beliefs even when they cannot give arguments for them.

        3. Thus Wolterstorff's criterion is particularly relevant to traditional beliefs—beliefs one is raised with as a child.

        4. By Wolterstorff's criterion, a child's belief in Santa Claus may well be rational (given what little he knows) until critical questions arise—but then the very same belief becomes irrational if (s)he holds onto it in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary ("innocent until proven guilty").

    D. Inquiry vs. Taken-for-Grantedness

        1. Beliefs that are taught to a child long before she has the ability to think critically about them typically have the force of "taken-for-grantedness": the practices of a particular tradition are accepted uncritically as "the way things are" (e.g., "*of course* we go to church on Sunday").

        2. When a traditional belief is challenged by contrary evidence, rational criticism, or encounters with other traditions, the appropriate response is not immediate abandonment of the belief but critical inquiry.

3. Critical inquiry may leave traditional beliefs standing, but it inevitably undermines their taken-for-grantedness.

E. Religious Traditions and Critical Rationality
1. In many cultures, divine sanctions reinforce the taken-for-grantedness of some traditional beliefs by affirming, in effect, that they are the rules of the world.
2. Irrationality typically arises when there are attempts to protect traditional beliefs from critical inquiry.
3. Thus religious traditions which are unable to tolerate critical inquiry either become untenable or are driven by irrational prejudice.
4. The great religious traditions of the world, on the other hand, have all incorporated practices of critical inquiry.
5. In the West this has occurred largely through the interaction of the major religious traditions with the philosophical tradition stemming from Socrates.
6. Thus critical reflection on religion in the West typically was framed in terms of questions about the relation between philosophy and theology or between faith and reason.
7. Now that religious traditions deal with critical questions not only from philosophy, but from history, sociology and psychology as well, it would be less misleading to frame the issue as an inquiry into the place of critical inquiry within religious traditions.
8. Religious inquiry, like scientific inquiry, is a *communal* enterprise; individual thinkers need not answer every question.

II. A Critique of Classical Foundationalism

A. Plantinga vs. Classical Foundationalism
1. Perhaps the reason why evidentialism used to be the taken-for-granted position in philosophy of religion was the unquestioned assumptions of "classical foundationalism," the typical epistemology of modernity since Descartes and Locke.
2. Foundationalism is an epistemological theory which holds that beliefs are rationally justified only if they are based upon the proper foundations.
3. The "foundation" means beliefs that are "properly basic"—beliefs that can support other beliefs but are not supported by them.
4. For "classical" foundationalism, the proper foundations are absolutely certain (e.g., "I seem to be seeing red here now").

B. Plantinga's Criticisms of Classical Foundationalism
1. Alvin Plantinga points out that this is self-referentially incoherent (like the empiricist criterion of meaning): if you apply it to itself, classical foundationalism must be judged an irrational belief.
2. Moreover (Plantinga adds) by this criterion most of our actual beliefs are irrational—which shows the criterion is unrealistically narrow.

C. Plantinga's Alternative: Belief in God as Properly Basic
1. Plantinga thinks many of our "properly basic" beliefs are built into our mental constitution and are operative whenever it is functioning properly: e.g., "there was a past," "other minds exist" and "God exists."
2. Plantinga accepts Calvin's view that all human beings have an innate "awareness of divinity" implanted in us by God, though most of us (sinfully) suppress it.

III. Religious Experience and Epistemological Externalism

A. Non-classical Foundationalism
1. In classical foundationalism, a proper belief system was like a skyscraper: an immense weight of belief supported by a narrow but rock-hard foundation.
2. Plantinga argues for a non-classical foundationalism that is more like a pyramid: the foundations of belief are very broad, and no one piece of it is absolutely invulnerable or certain.
3. Non-classical foundationalism tends to go with epistemological *externalism*, i.e., the view that our beliefs may be justified by circumstances outside our own knowledge.
4. For example, my belief that I'm seeing a chair is justified by the fact that my eyes are functioning properly—but I don't know enough physiology to explain that functioning.

B. Alston on Religious Experience

1. William Alston, another Reformed Epistemologist, proposes an analogy between perceptual beliefs and mystical experience: both can be seen as products of belief-forming practices which yield rationally justified beliefs.
2. Thus mystical perceptions of God would be (in Plantinga's terms) "properly basic" for those who had them, and would serve rationally to justify their other religious beliefs.
3. Alston emphasizes that religious experiences are produced by the "belief-forming practices" of particular religious traditions.
4. This means that religious experiences provide rational justification for believers in particular religious traditions, but are not likely to be persuasive to people outside them.

Essential Reading:

Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God," Parts I, III, and IV, in Plantinga and Wolterstorff, pp. 16-39 and 63-93

Supplemental Reading:

Alston, "Christian Experience and Christian Belief" in Plantinga and Wolterstorff, pp. 103-134

Wolterstorff, "Can Belief in God be Rational If It Has No Foundations?" in Plantinga and Wolterstorff, pp. 135-186

Berger, *The Heretical Imperative*, chapter 1 (an examination of the social dynamics of the "taken for granted")

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think religious believers should have evidence (or proof) before they believe?
2. Does it make sense to say our beliefs can be rational even if they are not based on a foundation of absolute certainty?

Lecture Thirty-Two
Conclusion—Philosophy and Religion Today

Scope: Philosophy has often criticized religion, but also has often supported it; my suggestion is that religions should be more grateful to the tradition of philosophical criticism for teaching them how to be self-critical, and more suspicious of philosophical support which offers to replace the original views of a religious tradition with philosophical concepts (such as the immortality of the soul supplanting the doctrine of resurrection). What religious traditions offer that philosophy does not is specific "places" outside one's own mind where God may be met. It is thus within the authority of particular religious traditions (I argue) that one should address such issues as theodicy (raised by Leibniz), critical historiography (raised by Hume), and religious pluralism (raised by John Hick).

Outline

I.   The Uses of Philosophy of Religion
   A.   Philosophy Supporting Religion
      1.   Except for some devoted advocates of the ontological proof, most philosophers find the traditional arguments for the existence of God inconclusive.
      2.   Moreover, people who come to adopt a particular religion seldom do so primarily because of proofs.
      3.   One should distinguish the rationality of religious belief from the rationality of coming to believe: if Reformed epistemology is any indication, philosophy is likely to help us understand the former rather than the latter.
      4.   Another way that philosophy has often supported religion has been by providing theologians with a conceptual vocabulary to use in tackling difficult questions (e.g., in the doctrine of Trinity).
      5.   On the other hand, many theologians today worry that philosophical concepts (e.g., of Platonist spirituality) have sometimes replaced the native beliefs of their religious traditions.
   B.   Philosophy Criticizing Religion
      1.   Like proofs for God, disproofs of religion have persuaded very few philosophers.
      2.   Much more widely accepted are arguments like Hume's, to the effect that religion has no strong philosophical basis.
      3.   Probably the most challenging criticisms of the religious traditions now come from disciplines other than philosophy, such as sociology, psychology and especially history.
      4.   Where philosophy has been most helpful to the religious traditions (in my view) is in providing a tradition of critical inquiry which religions can adopt so as to maintain themselves in the face of such challenges as self-critical traditions rather than forms of irrational prejudice.

II.   Religious Traditions and the Experience of Meeting God
   A.   An Externalist Approach to Religious Experience
      1.   William James tried to find aspects of religious experience that eluded psychological explanations, and thus could serve as evidence for the existence of God or "something More" beyond ordinary experience.
      2.   One of the great virtues of epistemological externalism, on the contrary, is that it suggests how the religious experience of ordinary people rationally supports their beliefs—even if these experiences are non-mystical and psychologically explainable.
      3.   Hence, instead of James' examples of mystical perception, suppose we focus on the experiences of ordinary believers: e.g., at a church or synagogue service.
      4.   According to Reformed epistemology, an individual's feelings of devotion and gratitude at such times does provide rational support for her religious beliefs.
      5.   For according to epistemological externalism, if religious traditions accurately point out the "places" to meet God, then an individual's experience of meeting God in those places leads to rational beliefs, even if she can give no arguments in their support—and even if the experience was not miraculous or mystical.

6. But such experiences are unlikely to persuade people outside the particular religious tradition in which they arise: their truth is dependent on whether God actually did choose to meet people at such "places."

B. God as a Person Known at the Place He Has Chosen

1. Consider the example of a Christian "place" to meet God—the body of Christ in the Eucharist.

2. According to Luther's interpretation, the words "This is my body given for you" are Gospel, i.e., Christ giving himself to believers through His Word of promise.

3. Assuming Christ is actually doing this, then belief in what He says is a form of knowledge: i.e., a rationally justified true belief (for it is belief in the promise of a person who keeps his word).

4. Within the Jewish tradition, a parallel argument could be made about knowing the God of Israel through Torah study and obedience.

C. Place, Authority and Religious Traditions

1. In both Judaism and Christianity, the authority of a tradition is vested in a particular "place" where (it is claimed) the person called God chooses to make Himself known through human speech.

2. The places of religious traditions are the particular means by which (religious traditions believe) God has chosen to speak for Himself.

3. Authority (I argue) is a necessary basis of all knowledge of persons: we cannot know other persons without respecting their authority to speak for themselves.

4. Thus, authority is a mark of otherness (see Levinas).

5. Hence, belief in religious authority of some kind will be essential to any religion where God is to be known primarily as a person rather than as a First Principle.

6. Persons reveal themselves in love through the authority of their word or promise (cf., the marriage bond).

III. Three Problems and a Proposal for the Religious Traditions

A. Theodicy Made More Difficult (see Leibniz lecture)

1. To return to the question raised against Leibniz: why did God not have Hitler be killed rather than wounded in World War I?

2. The traditional answer is: only God knows, His wisdom is beyond our knowledge, but He has promised justice for the oppressed and mercy for the afflicted.

3. This puts the religious communities in the position of believing in a person's promise despite apparent evidence that the promise is not being kept (a situation familiar from both Scripture and ordinary life).

4. Religious faith from this perspective is a matter of confidence in a particular person's trustworthiness.

B. The Problem of Critical Historiography (see Hume lecture)

1. Hume's argument against believing in miracles represents the position of critical historiography: it is always more probable that an historical document reporting a miracle is in error than that the miracle actually occurred.

2. However, if one rejects classical foundationalism, it is reasonable to suppose that historical documents should be evaluated on the basis of one's whole set of beliefs, including religious beliefs that would make miracles more probable.

C. The Problem of Religious Pluralism

1. An urgent question for contemporary scholars of religion is: what are we to make of competing claims to authority by different religious traditions?

2. Philosopher John Hick answers: the Ultimate is conceived differently by different religious traditions, but these different conceptions are really about one and the same divine Reality.

3. Hick thus makes a distinction (borrowed explicitly from Kant) between the one unknowable "Real in itself" and the plurality of human ways of experiencing and conceptualizing it.

4. Hick's proposal has roots going back to Neo-Platonism: behind the many appearances of this world lies a deep and ultimate unity.

5. Indeed the key notion in Hick's conception of religious pluralism is a denial of ultimate plurality: the different religions are really about one and the same Reality.

6. The problem with Hick's view is that the particular religions in their orthodox forms do not believe they are all about the same thing.

7. Hence Hick is not a neutral interpreter of the various religions, but is trying to convert orthodox believers to a substantially different religion.
D. Proposal: Inter-religious Dialogue and the Spirit of Socrates
   1. If critical dialogue is conducted in the spirit of Socrates then reasoned disagreement is a form of respect for the other.
   2. Such dialogue preserves mutuality with the other by putting the self at risk: if I criticize other people's views, it is only fair to listen to their criticisms of my views.
   3. Openness to other views involves the risk of what may be called Socratic or cognitive repentance: the recognition that my beliefs are based on ignorance or error.
   4. This risk does not lessen one's commitment to one's own religion, but is simply a consequence of the adventure of life, in which it is always possible to find one is mistaken.
   5. I would propose such a dialogical approach to the diversity of religious traditions, in the conviction that it "does justice to difference": i.e., pays respect to otherness of other people's views and the possibility that their religion really does mean something fundamentally different from mine.
   6. All this is a reason to be glad that the religious traditions of the West have a long history of learning from the philosophical tradition.

Essential Reading:

Mitchell in "Theology and Falsification"

Hick, "A Philosophy of Religious Pluralism" in Hick, chapter 3

Supplemental Reading:

Cary, "Believing the Word: A Proposal about Knowing Other Persons" (my philosophical argument in favor of the view that knowledge of other persons is always dependent on their authority)

Evans, *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith*, chapters 7 and 8 (on critical historiography and belief in miracles) and chapters 9 and 11 (on the "externalism" of Reformed Epistemology)

James, *The Variety of Religious Experience*, chapters 16-20

Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, chapters 10-36 (contains what is in my judgment the deepest attempt to address the problem of theodicy ever written by a Christian)

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think there is a role for authority in religion?
2. Do you think it is possible to disagree with other people's religions without disrespect?

Glossary

Adonai: Hebrew for "Lord," this word is pronounced by Jews in place of the sacred name for God, YHWH (*q.v.*)

A priori: Latin for "in advance"; in Kantian philosophy this term refers to knowledge we can have "in advance of experience" or (in other words) without having to make any observations—e.g. mathematics is an *a priori* science, but physics is not.

Absolute: not relative (q.v.).

Active Intellect (called by medieval philosophers, "Agent Intellect"): in Aristotelian philosophy, the part or aspect of the intellect which makes Forms in material objects (which are potentially understandable) actually understood.

Actual Occasions: in Whitehead's process philosophy, this refers to the events which are the basic constituents of reality.

Actualism: the view, characteristic of both Barth and Bultmann, that revelation, faith or the knowledge of God are always *events* (due to the *act* of God) rather than things we can possess.

Agent Intellect: see Active Intellect.

Allegory: method of interpretation in which persons, events or characteristics in a narrative are read as symbols of a higher reality; allegory is specially characteristic of Platonist readings of the Bible "according to the spirit rather than the letter."

"Allegory of the Cave": name given by scholars to a particularly important passage from Plato's *Republic*, book 7.

Anthropomorphism: from the Greek words *anthropos* ("human") and *morphe* ("form"), this refers to the tendency to describe God in ways that make him look human; thus the descriptions of God in the Bible are more anthropomorphic than the concept of the divine in Platonism.

Apollinarianism: the Christological teaching of Apollinarius, who held that in Jesus the divine *Logos* replaced the human soul; rejected by the orthodox because it would mean that Jesus, having no human soul, was not truly human.

Apophaticism: from the Greek term for negation or denial; the characteristically Eastern Christian approach to speaking about God by saying what he is not rather than what he is; called in the West *via negativa*.

Arianism: the view of the Trinity taught by Arius (early 4th century) according to which Christ as *Logos* is the first of all the things God created; known to orthodox or *Nicene* theologians as "the Arian heresy."

Asceticism: from the Greek *askesis*, meaning "discipline"; refers to religious or spiritual disciplines such as fasting and celibacy, which are associated in the Christian Platonist tradition with efforts to give the soul control over or freedom from the body.

Aufhebung: German term (from a verb meaning literally "to pick up") translated in these lectures as "subsumption" (but elsewhere "sublation," "sublimation," supercession," "cancellation," or "abolition"); Hegel uses this term to describe the completion of the dialectical movement from opposition to unification, which involves both canceling and preserving the opposition, and resolving it at a higher level of consciousness.

Autonomy: from a Greek term for "self-legislation"; in Kant, this refers to the fact that rational beings legislate the moral law for themselves—it is not imposed on them from outside (not even by God). Contrast *heteronomy*.

Beatific Vision: literally, "the seeing that makes [us] happy"; in the Augustinian tradition, this means seeing God, which is the goal of human life and the source of our ultimate happiness or beatitude.

Bible: see *Scriptures*.

Binah: Hebrew for "Thought", the name for the third *Sefirah* in Kabbalah, also called "Palace" and "Womb"; emanates from and is paired with *Hokhmah* ("Wisdom" or "Point") the second *Sefirah*.

Canon: a standard collection, in these lectures specifically the *Scriptures* (q.v.) and the Bible, which consist of collections of Jewish or Christian writings, with some texts definitely included and the rest definitely excluded.

Cartesian: adjective formed from the name "Descartes" (originally *Des Cartes*); hence the *Cartesian philosophy* is the philosophy of Descartes.

Categorical: in Kant, a principle which takes the logical form "All X is Y."

Causality: the relation of cause and effect.

Chalcedon: site of a Church council in 451, where the orthodox Christology was formulated, which teaches that Christ is one person in two natures: both truly God and truly man.

Christology: Christian doctrine concerning the person of Christ, and particularly the relation of his humanity to his divinity.

Church fathers: the theologians of the early Christian tradition c. 150-500 A.D. (e.g. Origen, Athanasius, Augustine) who formulated the basic teachings of Christian orthodoxy, including the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology.

Classical Theism: the view of God combining Biblical concepts with metaphysical concepts from the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions (emphasizing the eternity and absoluteness of God) developed by the Christian Church fathers and systematized in the middle ages by Islamic thinkers such as Avicenna, Jewish thinkers such as Maimonides, and Christian thinkers such as Anselm and Aquinas.

Contemplation: from a Greek word for "beholding", this is a technical term in Plato and Aristotle for the act of intellectual vision or seeing the Forms (i.e. actually looking at them with our mind's eye, not just having them in our knowledge or memory).

Contingent: the opposite of necessary; hence while a necessary being cannot not exist, a contingent being may exist or not.

Contrition: in medieval penitential theology, the proper state of mind for a penitent (i.e. repentant person), consisting in sincere hatred of one's sins.

Cosmological Proof: an argument for the existence of God which reasons from the existence (or contingency) of the world (*cosmos*) to the existence of a necessary first principle from which the world originates. See the *ontological proof* and the argument from *design*.

Creature: a thing created by God; i.e. (according to orthodox Christian theology) everything that exists other than God (see *uncreated*).

Deconstruction: a strategy of reading devised (or at least named) by Jacques Derrida, which is concerned (among other things) to observe how philosophical texts undermine their own attempts to formulate a comprehensive or totalizing theory of the nature of being (see *metaphysics*).

Demiurge: Greek for craftsman or artificer, Plato's term for the divine being who forms the world—the Platonic version of God the Creator.

Demythologization: in Bultmann, the project of re-interpreting mythological concepts (in the New Testament) in terms of more adequate modern concepts, such as those of existentialism.

Deontological: from the Greek word for "ought", this refers to an ethics based on the concept of duty, i.e. what we *ought* to do, rather than what will make us ultimately happy (see *eudaimnonism*).

Design, Argument from: a proof for the existence of God based on the inference that the order or apparent purposiveness of the world requires an intelligent Designer.

Dialectic: originally Greek for "conversation" (similar to our word "dialogue"), this word came to refer to the art of debate or logical argument (in Plato and afterwards), then was used by Hegel to describe the logical development of *Geist* or reason in history.

Dignity: in Kant, a technical term for the value of rational beings, which is beyond price.

Dogmatics: from German *Dogmatik*, a term for "systematic theology," as in the title of Karl Barth's systematic theology, the *Church Dogmatics* (*Kirchliche Dogmatik*); unlike the English word "dogmatic," the term is not pejorative.

Dualism: this term has many philosophical meanings, but in these lectures it refers only to the Platonist tradition's tendency to divide the human self neatly into two parts, soul and body.

Ecstasy: (from a Greek word meaning "to stand outside"), in Denys, the natural tendency of all intellectual beings to be drawn out of themselves by love.

Ein-Sof: "the Infinite," a designation of the hidden and unknowable God in Kabbalah.

Elect: old way of saying "chosen," used in Calvinist theology to describe those predestined by God for salvation; the usage goes back to Paul's phrase "the election of grace" (i.e. literally God's "choice of favorites") in Romans 11:5.

Enlightenment: self-description of a movement in 18th-century thought which was critical of revealed religion and its dogmas and insisted on the primacy of the individual and his own reason; it arose in Britain (represented by Locke and Hume), flourished in France (among philosophers like Voltaire, whose critical thought contributed to the French Revolution) and found its last great champion in Germany, with Kant. It was succeeded by Romanticism.

Empirical: from the Greek word for "experience," this adjective refers to knowledge that is based on sense-experience or observation: e.g. physics and biology are empirical sciences, but mathematics and metaphysics are not.

Empiricism: refers to philosophies which place a decisive emphasis on sense-experience as the source of all our knowledge (contrast *rationalist*); *logical empiricism* is a 20th century version of this philosophy which makes extensive use of the mathematical logic developed by Russell and Whitehead in *Principia Mathematica* (1910-12).

Enthusiasm: from a Greek term meaning "God within," a pejorative term used by Locke and other 18th-century mainstream Protestants to refer to religious sects that based their beliefs on claims of direct inward inspiration.

Ephesus: site of a Church council in 431, where the orthodox officially adopted the description of Mary as "mother of God" and Christ body as "life-giving flesh."

Epistemology: from the Greek *episteme*, meaning "knowledge," this is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and possibility of human knowledge.

Eschatology: from the Greek *eschaton*, meaning "last thing", this is any account of the end or goal or ultimate future of history and humanity; giving such an account is typical of Jewish and Christian views of history rather than Greek philosophical views.

Essence: a word that can have many meanings (the root sense of the original Greek term is "being") but in Platonic and Aristotelian usage it is typically identified with Form. For Christian usage, see *hypostasis*.

Eternal Recurrence: a theory in 19th-century physics that every physical state of the universe will eventually recur, so that all events will repeat themselves forever; for Nietzsche the highest test of life-affirmation is whether someone loves life enough to say "Yes" to this.

Eudaimonism: from the Greek term for "happiness" (q.v.), an ethics based on the pursuit of happiness as the ultimate goal of human life.

Event: see *Substance*.

Evidentialism: the epistemological view that it is irrational for a person to believe something without evidence.

Existentialism: a philosophical movement concerned with problems of human existence, originated by Kierkegaard and developed by (among others) Heidegger in *Being and Time*.

ex nihilo: Latin for "out of nothing"; used in the phrase "creation *ex nihilo*" to describe the distinctively Christian and Jewish conception of creation. In contrast to the Platonist view (e.g. in Plato's *Timaeus*) that the creator or demiurge formed the world out of pre-existing matter, orthodox Christians and Jews believe that God created matter as well—hence the process of creation began with nothing but God.

Experience: in modern philosophy up to Kant, this term refers mainly to sense-experience, and especially to the kind of observation which takes place in the physical sciences. Beginning with Schleiermacher, the word takes on a broader meaning which includes every sort of consciousness and feeling, including religious experience.

Externalism: the epistemological view that a belief may be rationally justified by factors outside (i.e. *external* to) the believer's own knowledge.

Fallacy of Composition: an illogical inference from *each* to *all*, as for example the inference from the premise "in the long run each of us will be dead" to the conclusion "there will come a time when everyone is dead"—for clearly, even

though each one of us will die, the human race could continue reproducing, so that there would never come a time when everyone is dead.

Fideism: from *fides*, Latin for "faith," this refers to an emphasis on religious faith to the exclusion of reason.

Form: for Plato, the eternal essence of things, separate from this world (also called *idea*); for Aristotle, the essence of a material thing (also called "species") which is inseparable from the thing—embodied in it, as it were. For Aristotle, material things are composed of matter plus form.

Foundationalism: the epistemological view that a belief is rationally justified only if it is based on the proper foundations; according to "classical" foundationalism this foundation must be absolutely certain.

Geist: German term (cognate to English "ghost") central to Hegel's philosophy, which can be translated either Spirit or Mind; historically a descendent of the Platonist concept of the divine Mind.

Gentiles: Jewish term for non-Jews.

Gemara: Talmudic commentary on the *Mishnah* (q.v.).

Given: as in sense-data (from Latin *data*, given); from Kant onwards this refers to the starting point of a person's empirical knowledge, prior to conceptualization or objectification.

Gnosticism: from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge," this refers to a variety of early Christian movements that sought to escape from the material world (regarded as evil) and return to live among heavenly beings by means of special or secret knowledge.

Grace: in many religions, this means simply the favor of a god; in Augustinian Christianity, it means the inner help of God healing the disease of sin and strengthening the soul to do good. In Thomas Aquinas and subsequent Roman Catholic theology, grace not only heals and helps our nature, but raises it to a supernatural level where it may see God.

Ground of the Soul (or "bottom of the soul"): translation of Meister Eckhart's old German term, *Grunt der Seele*, referring to the aspect of the soul that is uncreated, eternally united with the "ground of God."

Haggadot (or *Aggadot*): Hebrew for lore or legends; refers to all rabbinic discourse other than *Halakhot* (*q.v.*).

Halakhot (or *Halachot*): Rabbinic legal rulings or interpretations of Jewish Law.

Happiness: translation of a Greek term (*eudaimonia*) which means whatever makes a person's life a success; hence for ancient and medieval philosophers, happiness is not necessarily a feeling (see *hedonism*).

Hedonism: the ancient philosophical view that happiness is a good feeling (i.e. some version of the feeling of pleasure, Greek *hedone*); Plato and Aristotle rejected this view in favor of the view that happiness consists in a life of wisdom or contemplation.

Hellenistic: the Greek culture of the Eastern Mediterranean in the era from the conquests of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) to the establishment of the Roman Empire (30 B.C.).

Hermeneutics: (from *Hermes*, who as the divine messenger was the god of interpreters) the theory, method, or style of interpretation.

Heteronomy: Greek for "other-legislation"; in Kant, this refers to any sort of law imposed on us by outside sources, in contrast to the moral law, which we legislate for ourselves (see *autonomy*).

Hokhmah: See *Binah*.

Holism: label for any theory which derives parts from wholes rather than building up wholes from pre-existent parts: e.g. the theory that words get their meaning from their place in a whole language (and could not have a meaning if there were no language to be part of).

Homo-ousios: Greek for "the same essence," a key phrase in the Nicene Creed, where Christ is confessed as having the same essence as God the Father (sometimes translated as "of one substance" or "of one being" or "consubstantial").

Hypothetical: in Kant, a principle taking the logical form of an "if-then" sentence.

Hypostasis: Greek term that in the course of theological discussion by the orthodox Church fathers came to mean particular or individual being, as opposed to essence: e.g. human nature is an essence, but Socrates is a *hypostasis*. Thus in the Trinity there are three *hypostases* but only one essence, while Christ is one *hypostasis* with two essences (divine and human).

Hypostatic Union: The orthodox Christian doctrine that in Christ divine nature and human nature are united in one person or *hypostasis*.

Idea: originally a Greek word meaning "something seen"; Plato uses it to mean something seen *with the mind's eye*—hence the equivalent of *Form* (q.v.). In Plotinus and in Christian Platonism, Ideas are located in the divine Mind. Descartes introduced the modern habit of talking about ideas as belonging within the *human* mind.

Idealism: any philosophy which makes reality dependent on the mind; Kant's "transcendental" idealism is the doctrine that we only know how things appear to us in experience, not how they are in themselves.

Impassability: God's freedom from suffering and emotion, both of which were thought of (in ancient and medieval philosophy) as passive states (from Latin *passio*, suffering or emotion, whence come both "passivity" and "passion" in English).

Imperative: in Kant's ethics, a general principle guiding the will in its choices; the appropriate imperative for moral choices is categorical rather than hypothetical.

Incarnation: (from the Latin word for "flesh") the Christian doctrine that the Son of God took on flesh or was embodied as the man Jesus.

Intellect: in the Platonist and Aristotelian traditions, this refers to the highest function of the soul, its *understanding* of Form—in Greek, "understand" (*noein*) is the verb cognate to "intellect" (*nous*).

Intelligible: adjective designating the sort of thing which is perceived by the intellect (as "sensible" designates the sort of thing perceived by the senses).

Justify: (1) literally "to make just or set right" ("justice" and "righteousness" are alternative translations of the same Greek term), the term has been prominent in Christian theology ever since Paul used it in the New Testament used to talk about how the Gentiles may be made righteous (i.e. just) in God's sight. (2) In recent Anglo-American epistemology, the term means to give a reason for one's belief, as in the definition of knowledge as "justified true belief."

Kabbalah: literally "tradition," refers to the esoteric tradition of Jewish mysticism whose central document is the *Zohar* and whose distinctive idea is the *Sefirot* (q.v.).

Ketzer: "Crown," the name for the first of the *Sefirot* in Kabbalah; also called "Nothingness."

Legalism: a specifically Christian (and usually Protestant) term, referring to the attempt to justify oneself in God's sight by obeying God's law, without help from the grace and mercy of God.

Liberalism: in these lectures, this term refers to a tradition of Christian theology whose most important representative is Schleiermacher, and which is characterized by the effort to base religious belief on experience.

Logos: Greek term that can be translated "reason" (Latin *ratio*) or "word" (it is the term from which we get English words such as "*log*ic," "dia*log*ue," and "bio*log*y"); when used in Christian theology (capitalized) it refers to Christ as the eternal Word of God (see John 1:1-14).

Mediate: (from the Latin word for "middle") a verb that goes back to ancient logic, referring to a "middle term" or concept which links two other terms or concepts whose relation might otherwise be unclear or unknown, as (e.g.) in neoplatonism the divine Mind mediates between the One and everything else, and the Soul mediates between the divine Mind and the visible world.

Merkabah: literally "chariot," refers to the vision of God sitting upon a chariot-like vehicle drawn by four living creatures, recorded in the first chapter of the Biblical book of Ezekiel. An esoteric tradition of Jewish mysticism grew up around attempts to see the *Merkabah* and the One who sat upon it—a tradition which contributed to the development of Kabbalah (q.v.).

Messiah: from a Hebrew word meaning "the anointed one," designating the legitimate successor to King David; translated into Greek the word is "Christ," the fundamental Christian title for Jesus of Nazareth.

Metaphysics: the subdiscipline of philosophy concerned with the nature of being (ontology) and the nature of the universe (cosmology) as well as the supreme being (theology); in continental postmodernists such as Levinas and Derrida, the term often refers to the whole of the Western philosophical tradition, considered as the project of obtaining total knowledge of the nature of being.

Middle Knowledge: knowledge (attributed especially to God) of what *would have* happened if things had been different (e.g. what someone would have chosen in situations that never actually occurred).

Midrash: Hebrew for "exegesis" (literally "seeking," as in seeking the meaning of a text); refers to the rabbinic practice of Biblical interpretation and the writings that result from it (plural *midrashim*).

Mishnah: the first and foundational document of rabbinic Judaism, a collection of rabbinic discussions and rulings concerning Jewish law (*halakhot*).

Monads: the basic constituents of the world according to Leibniz; each monad has a conscious "inside."

Monarchia: belief in only one First Principle (*arche* in Greek).

Monolatry: worship of only one thing (compare the word ido*latry*, worship of idols).

Monotheism: belief in the existence of only one God (*theos* in Greek).

Mysticism: a term invented by modern scholars to describe people having (or claiming to have) direct experiences of God.

Neo-Orthodoxy: English name for a movement in German-speaking theology initiated by Karl Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans*; originally called "crisis theology" or "dialectical theology," it came to include Rudolph Bultmann, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr.

Nestorianism: the teaching of Nestorius, 5th-century bishop of Constantinople, that the eternal *Logos* of God and the man Jesus were united merely by a kind of conjunction; rejected by the orthodox in favor of the view that the man Jesus and the *Logos* are one and the same person.

Neurosis: a psychological illness which (according to Freud) is caused by repressed instincts seeking disguised expression in symbolic form; examples include phobias, obsessive-compulsiveness, and hysteria.

Nicene: having to do with the council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) or the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity which it formulated; with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, "Nicene" and "orthodox" are equivalent terms.

Nominalism: (from the Latin *nomina*, "names") the philosophical view that universals are only names, not real things— so for example the word "human" refers only to particular human beings, not to a Form or essence of human nature, as in Platonism or Aristotelianism (both of which are forms of *realism*, q.v.).

Ontological Proof: an argument for the existence of God based on the sheer concept of God: i.e. it is argued that the mere concept of God (or its existence in our minds) is sufficient by itself to show that such a thing as God could not *not* exist. There are several versions of this kind of proof, the most famous being those by Anselm and by Descartes.

Ontology: from Greek *ontos*, "being"; the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of being or reality.

Pantheism: from the Greek for "all is God" (*pan theos*); the doctrine that everything that exists is in some sense identical with God.

Panpsychism: from Greek for "all is soul" (*pan psyche*); the doctrine that everything that exists is in some way alive or has an "inside" with some level awareness or feeling.

Patristic: from the Greek word for "fathers" (*patres*); having to do with the *Church fathers* (q.v.).

Phenomenology: a 20th-century philosophical movement founded by Edmund Husserl and devoted to a the study of the phenomena of consciousness as they appear to the ego; not to be confused with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Geist*, which is a 19th-century book about phenomena in history.

Piety: religious devotion or form of reverence; to understand Plato's discussion of the term in *Euthyphro* it is important to be aware that in older usage it is proper to have piety or reverence not only for the gods but also for parents ("filial piety").

Positivism, logical: a version of logical *empiricism* (q.v.).

Postmodernism: a word of many meanings, depending on which postmodernist you ask; for purposes of these lectures, it means any of the recent philosophies which undo the modern "turn to the subject"—e.g. Derrida's deconstructionism or the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein.

Prehensions: from the Latin for "grasping"; a term in Process Philosophy for the feeling by which one *actual occasion* (q.v.) is aware of another.

Primary Cause: God as the fundamental cause of events in this world, in contradistinction from the causal powers of creatures, which are *secondary causes* (q.v.).

Process: a sequence (or recurring pattern of sequences) of *events*, for example physiological processes (see *Substance*).

Process Philosophy: the movement of philosophy founded by Alfred North Whitehead, which sees events, processes and relations as more fundamental than things or *substances* (q.v.).

Pure: in Plato, the soul is pure when it is free from all attachment to bodily things; in Kant, our knowledge is pure when it is completely *a priori* (q.v.), free from all admixture of experience.

Rabbis: in these lectures, this term does not refer to the rabbis of today, who are leaders of local congregations, but to the sages of Israel 200-600 A.D., whose task was to study, interpret and debate the meaning of the *Torah* (q.v.). The rabbis are the authorities who took part in the discussions recorded in the *Mishnah*, the *Talmud* and *Midrash* (q.v.). "Rabbinic Judaism"—which is what we normally mean by "Judaism" today—is the form of religion originating with these rabbis.

Rationalist: refers to philosophies which emphasize reason or rationality as the basis of all our knowledge. In modern philosophy, this term is used in contrast to *empiricist* (q.v.); in religion, it is often contrasted to mysticism, *fideism* (q.v.), or a reliance on *revelation* (q.v.).

Realism: a word with a great many meanings; the only relevant one for this course is the medieval meaning—the philosophical view that universals are *real* things, not mere names (contrast *nominalism*).

Recollection: In Plato, the theory that any real learning means remembering things we saw in a previous life (see *transmigration*).

Reductio ad absurdum: (Latin for "leading back to absurdity") a form of proof which begins by assuming the opposite of what is to be proved, and then tries to show that this leads to an absurdity or self-contradiction.

Reductionism: the philosophical project (typical of logical *empiricism*) of explaining the theories of one science in terms of another—e.g. *reducing* biology to physics.

Reformation: 16th-century movement to reform the Church led by Luther, Calvin and others, resulting in the formation of the Protestant churches.

"Reformed" Epistemology: recent movement in Anglo-American philosophy of religion, which criticizes evidentialism and classical foundationalism in order to argue in support of the rationality of religious beliefs ("Reformed" refers to the tradition of the Calvinist Reformation, which provided some of the key ideas for this philosophy).

Relation: see *Substance*

Relative: from the word "relation"; refers to anything that is essentially *related* to something else.

Ressentiment: French for "resentment," Nietzsche's technical term for the vengefulness of slaves toward masters, which expresses itself not in actually taking revenge (which would be the noble and masterful thing to do) but in morality, Judaism, Christianity, and democracy.

Revelation: from the 17th century onward, this word is used, in contrast to *Reason*, to designate external sources of authoritative religious knowledge (e.g. Scripture or prophecy); hence "revealed religion" (e.g. historical religious traditions such as Biblical Christianity or Talmudic Judaism) is contrasted to "natural religion" (i.e. religious beliefs that are established by reason).

Romanticism: a movement in philosophy and literature focusing on feeling rather than reason as the means by which individuals experience the divine meaning of the universe; represented in philosophy by Schelling and in religion by Schleiermacher.

Scholasticism: the tradition of medieval Christian thought centered in the universities (rather than the monasteries) including Aquinas, Bonaventure, Scotus and Ockham.

Scriptures: from a Latin word meaning "writings," this term is used by both Jews and the New Testament to designate the sacred writings of Israel; it is used in these lectures in place of the widely-used but specifically Christian term "Old Testament" (the term "Bible" is accordingly used to designate the Christian collection containing both the Scriptures and the New Testament).

Secondary Causes: the causal powers of creatures (e.g. free will) in contrast to God, who is the *primary cause*.

Sefirot: in Kabbalah, the spheres or attributes of divine manifestation or creative activity (singular *Sefirah*) in contrast to the undifferentiated and unknowable *Ein-Sof* (q.v.).

Sensible: in Platonism, this refers to object which can be perceived by the senses (contrast *intelligible*).

Shekhinah: In rabbinic Judaism, the divine Presence; in Kabbalah, this becomes the lowest of the ten *Sefirot* (q.v.), which goes into exile along with Israel.

Solipsism: the doctrine (or more often the fear) that I am alone in the universe (especially likely to emerge if, like Descartes, one considers it possible to doubt the existence of the external world).

Stoicism: philosophical tradition originating in Athens in the generation after Aristotle and important up to the period of the Roman empire; it is characterized by belief in the lawfulness of nature, wisdom as the goal of life, materialism, and a rigorist ethics.

Subject: see *Turn to the Subject*.

Subordinationism: A version of the doctrine of the Trinity, common among Christian teachers prior to the formation of Nicene orthodoxy, according to which Christ as the eternal *Logos* is less than or subordinate to God the Father.

Substance: (translation of Greek *ousia*, literally "being") refers to independently-existing *things* (e.g. a table, a dog, a human being) in contrast to *qualities* (e.g. white, tall, wise), *relations* (e.g. "taller than," "to the left of," "is the son of" and "knows about"), or *events* (e.g. birth, death, meeting someone, falling down, hearing something).

Subsumption: translation of *Aufhebung* (q.v.).

Supernatural: in Roman Catholic theology since Aquinas, this term refers not to ghosts and spirits, but to the grace of God as it elevates human nature above itself (super-nature in the sense of "above human nature") in order to see God.

Symposium: from an ancient Greek term for "drinking party," this is also the title of a dialogue by Plato, in which a number of Athenian men at a drinking party give speeches on the nature of love.

Synoptic: term designating the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which (in contrast to the Gospel of John) share the same basic plot-structure, which can relatively easily be brought under a common *synopsis*.

Talmud: The key document of Rabbinic Judaism, consisting of the *Mishnah* (q.v.) together with its commentary, the *Gemara* (q.v.).

Teleology: from the Greek word *telos*, meaning "end" or "goal," this term is used in three different senses in these lectures. (1) In *Aristotelian physics* it refers to the notion that natural motion tends toward some definite end (not always a conscious goal, but always a final state that is natural and good for the thing): hence it is natural for stones to end up on earth where they belong, not in the sky, and it is natural for animals to seek food, and it is natural for human beings to desire knowledge and happiness. (2) *Ethical systems* are called teleological if they are based on the desire to attain some ultimate goal, such as happiness. (3) *Proofs for the existence of God* are called teleological if they are based on the apparent design or purposive order in the world.

Theodicy: (from a Greek term meaning "justification of God") a philosophical reply to the "problem of evil," trying to show it is possible that God is good, despite all the evil there is in the world.

Things-in-themselves: in Kant, a technical term designating what we cannot know about things: the way they are in themselves, apart from the way we experience them.

Tikkun: in Kabbalah, the restoration of the world and the divine realm of the *Sefirot* brought by the good deeds of humanity, and especially by Israel's obedience to Torah.

Torah: Hebrew for "Law," refers literally to the scroll containing the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible; in an expanded sense Torah includes the whole of God's revelation to Israel at Mt. Sinai, both written and oral—the latter being identified with the rabbinic interpretation of Scripture that was eventually written down in the Talmud.

Trinity: The Christian teaching that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are not identical with one another yet are one God.

Transcendence: (from a Latin verb meaning "to go beyond") the characteristic of God being beyond this world or beyond space and time.

Transmigration: the view that souls move or migrate from one body to another at death (including from animal bodies to human bodies and vice-versa).

Turn to the Subject: a phrase designating any epistemology which begins by examining the nature or powers of the self. The turn to the subject is characteristic of modernity. ("Subject" in this phrase means *epistemological* subject, referred to by the subject of sentences such as "I know this" or "I believe that." While modern philosophers tend to start by examining the subject of such sentences, ancient philosophers are more likely to start with their *object*, e.g. Platonic Forms).

Uncreated: technical term in Christian theology referring to God, who is the only thing in existence *not made* by God (see *creature*).

Via Negativa: Latin for "the negative way," the theological method of speaking about God by saying what he is not rather than what he is (see *apophaticism*).

Voluntarism: a philosophical emphasis on the will (Latin *voluntas*); divine voluntarism is the belief that any essences or laws in the universe, including moral laws, are the result of God's will and not the other way round.

Will to Power: Nietzsche's concept that all existence, down to the level of the forces of attraction and repulsion between microscopic particles, consists of a striving for mastery, expansion, and growth; all human motivation (including that of the weak and the moral) consists of will to power.

YHWH: transliteration of the Hebrew letters for the sacred name for the God of Israel; the actual pronunciation of the name is no longer known, because Jews have for many centuries regarded it as blasphemous to utter the name, and the original Hebrew script was written without vowels. However, an old Christian suggestion is "Jehovah" and a recent scholarly guess is "Yahweh" (see *Adonai*).

Zeitgeist: literally, "spirit of the age," an Hegelian term referring to the involvement of *Geist* or "Spirit" in particular historical eras (see *Geist*)

Zohar: (Aramaic for "Splendor") name of the central text of Kabbalah (*q.v.*) composed c. 1280 in Spain.

Biographical Notes

Alexander of Aphrodisias (flourished c. 200 A.D.): Aristotelian philosopher, the leading commentator of Aristotle in antiquity, influential on Plotinus (*q.v.*).

Alston, William (1921-): American philosopher, contributor to "Reformed" epistemology.

Anselm, St. (1033-1109): archbishop of Canterbury, Christian theologian and philosopher.

Apollinarius (?-385? A.D.): Christian theologian, originator of Apollinarianism, rejected as a heresy by the orthodox Church fathers.

Aquinas, St. Thomas (1225-1274): Dominican theologian and philosopher, central figure of medieval scholasticism and the Roman Catholic tradition.

Aristotle (384 A.D.-322 A.D.): Macedonian-born Athenian philosopher, student of Plato, founder of the sciences of logic, physics and biology.

Arius (?-336 A.D.): Christian priest in Alexandria, originator of Arianism, the view against which orthodox Nicene Christianity defined itself.

Athanasius, St. (293? A.D.-373 A.D.): bishop of Alexandria and leader of the Nicene opposition to the heresy of Arius (q.v.); he is thus one of the founding figures of Christian orthodoxy.

Augustine, St. (356 A.D.-430 A.D.): bishop of Hippo in Roman North Africa, the most influential Church Father in the Latin or Western Christian tradition.

Avicenna (980-1037): Latin version of the name of Ibn Sina, Moslem Aristotelian philosopher.

Barth, Karl (1886-1968): Swiss "neo-orthodox" theologian.

Biel, Gabriel (c. 1415-1495): German theologian of the nominalist tradition, a major influence upon the early Luther, who later vehemently rejected his position.

Boethius, Ancius (c.480-525): Christian philosopher and Latin scholar of the late Roman empire.

Bonaventure, St. (1217-1274): Franciscan theologian and philosopher, leader of the Augustinian illuminationist tradition.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich (1906-1945): German theologian, conspirator against Hitler, executed by the Nazis.

Buber, Martin (1878-1965): German philosopher and scholar of the Jewish tradition.

Bultmann, Rudolf (1884-1976): German New Testament scholar and neo-orthodox theologian.

Calvin, John (1509-1564): French theologian and reformer, who lived most of his life in Geneva, where he led the reformation of the church (i.e. its re-organization along Protestant rather than Roman Catholic lines) and wrote the most influential text of Protestantism, the *Institutes*.

Cicero (106-43): Roman orator and politician, author of numerous philosophical treatises based on the teachings of the Stoics, Plato and other Greek philosophers.

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321): Italian poet (usually known by his first name) and author of the *Divine Comedy*, an epic poem which depicted Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, and which crystallized the Christian imagination of the afterlife.

Darwin, Charles (1809-1882): English biologist, founder of the modern theory of biological evolution.

Denys or "Pseudo-Dionysius" (c. 600 A.D.): pseudonymous Christian Neoplatonist author, writing in Greek and especially influential in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

Derrida, Jacques (1930-): Algerian-born French philosopher, founder of deconstructionism and a leading post-modernist.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor (1821-1881): Russian novelist, passionate Eastern Orthodox Christian, often classified as an existentialist.

Durkheim, Emile (1858-1917): French sociologist and theorist of religion.

Eckhart, Meister (c. 1260-1327): Dominican theologian, preacher, and founding figure of the tradition of "Rhineland" mysticism ("Meister" is medieval German for "master," in the sense of "teacher").

Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1803-1883): American essayist and popularizer of the philosophy of Romanticism.

Engels, Friedrich (1820-1895): German political and social writer, friend and collaborator with Karl Marx.

Feuerbach, Ludwig (1804-1872): German philosopher and critic of religion.

Fichte, J.G. (1762-1814): German idealist philosopher of the generation after Kant.

Flew, Anthony (1923-): British philosopher and critic of religious belief.

Freud, Sigmund (1856-1939): Austrian physician and psychologist, founder of psychoanalysis.

Hartshorne, Charles (1897-): American process philosopher.

Hegel, G.F.W. (1770-1831): German philosopher; theorist of the rationality of history.

Heidegger, Martin (1889-1976): German philosopher; in the early stage of his career (which influenced neo-orthodox theology) he was an existentialist.

Hick, John (1922-): British philosopher and theorist of religious pluralism.

Hume, David (1711-1776): Scottish empiricist philosopher, skeptical critic of religion and rationalism.

Husserl, Edmund (1859-1938): German philosopher, founder of phenomenology.

Jacobi, Friedrich (1743-1819): German philosopher.

James, William (1842-1910): American psychologist and philosopher, author of *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1875-1961): Swiss psychiatrist who broke off from Freud to found a distinctive form of psychoanalysis that was more receptive to religious belief.

Kant, Immanuel (1724-1804): German philosopher, founder of the tradition of modern German philosophy.

Kierkegaard (1813-1855): Danish philosopher, Christian critic of Christendom, and founding figure of existentialism.

Leibniz, Baron Gottfried Wilhelm von (1646-1716): German philosopher and mathematician.

Lessing, Gotthold (1729-1781): German literary critic and playwright.

Levinas, Emmanuel (1906-): born in Lithuania of Jewish parents, a leading French philosopher in the phenomenologist tradition.

Locke, John (1632-1704): English philosopher, founder of the British empiricist tradition in philosophy.

Luther, Martin (1483-1546): German theologian who initiated the church reform later called "Protestantism."

Maimonides (1135-1204): Jewish philosopher and Talmud scholar, author of *Guide for the Perplexed*.

Marx, Karl (1818-1883): German political philosopher and economist, founder with Engels of modern communism.

Muhammad (570-632): Arabian religious leader and founding figure of Islam.

Nestorius (?-453?): bishop of Constantinople, originator of Nestorianism, rejected as a heresy by the orthodox Church fathers.

Newton, Isaac (1642-1727): English mathematician and scientist, founder of modern physics.

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1844-1900): German philosopher, critic of Christianity and morality, as well as of the metaphysical tradition of philosophy stemming from Plato.

Ockham (or Occam), William of (1285?-1349): Franciscan philosopher and leading nominalist.

Origen (185 A.D.-254 A.D.): Greek-speaking Church Father of Alexandria (Egypt), extremely influential in formulating an early version of Christian Platonism and spreading the method of allegorical reading of Scripture.

Paul, St. (?-64? A.D.): Early Christian missionary and author of many of the letters in the New Testament.

Philo of Alexandria or Philo Judaeus (c.20 B.C. - 50 A.D.): Jewish Platonist philosopher and Scriptural exegete.

Plantinga (1932-): American philosopher, contributor to "Reformed" epistemology.

Plato (427? B.C.-358? B.C.): Athenian philosopher, student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle; arguably the founding figure of the Western philosophical tradition.

Plotinus (205? A.D.-270 A.D.): Greek-speaking Egyptian philosopher who spent most of his working life in Rome; founder of the neo-Platonist tradition of philosophy.

Proclus (410? A.D.-485 A.D.): Greek neoplatonist philosopher.

Pseudo-Dionysius: see *Denys*.

Quine, W.V.O. (1908-): American philosopher and logician, critic of logical empiricism.

Russell, Bertrand (1872-1870): English philosopher and logician, founding figure of logical empiricism.

Schelling, F.W.J. (1775-1854): German idealist philosopher in the generation after Kant, influential in Romanticism.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich (1768-1834): German theologian, founding figure of liberal Protestant theology.

Schopenhauer, Arthur (1788-1860): German pessimist philosopher.

Scotus, John Duns (1266-1308): Franciscan philosopher and theologian, dubbed "the subtle teacher" (*doctor subtilis*).

Socrates (470?-399): Athenian philosopher, teacher of Plato.

Spinoza (1632-1677): Dutch philosopher (of Jewish background), devised a system of metaphysical pantheism that became highly influential in the period of German idealism after Kant.

Voltaire (1694-1798): pseudonym of Francois Marie Arouet, French Enlightenment philosopher, critic of dogmatic religion, and author of *Candide*, a satirical novel directed against Leibniz's view that "this is the best of all possible worlds."

Whitehead, Alfred North (1861-1947): English mathematician and philosopher, founder of process philosophy.

Wittgenstein (1889-1951): Austrian philosopher, who spent much of his career in England; his early work (the *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus*) played a founding role in logical positivism, while his later work is one of the landmarks of post-modernism.

Wolterstorff (1932-): American philosopher, contributor to "Reformed" epistemology.

Wordsworth, William (1770-1850): English romantic poet.

Timeline

410	Fall of Rome; beginning of the end for the Western Roman empire
431	Council of Ephesus officially approves the description of Mary as "Mother of God" and of Christ's body as "life-giving flesh"
451	Council of Chalcedon officially adopts the doctrine of Christ as consisting of one person in two natures, "true man and true God"
c. 500	Writings of Pseudo-Dionysius composed in the Eastern Roman Empire (by now becoming the Byzantine empire)
c. 600	Completion of Babylonian Talmud
632	Death of Mohammed, founding prophet of Islam, followed within a decade by the Moslem conquest of most of the Eastern Mediterranean, including the land of Israel
1078	Anselm writes the *Proslogion*, containing his "ontological argument" (as it was later called) for the existence of God
1195	Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* written
1274	Year of death for both Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure
1286	Composition of the *Zohar*, the central text of the Jewish mystical tradition or Kabbalah
c. 1300	Beginning of the philosophical career of Duns Scotus
c. 1320	Beginning of the philosophical career of William of Ockham
1328	Death of Meister Eckhart, while under investigation for heresy
1517	Luther's "95 Theses" precipitate Protestant Reformation
1536	Calvin begins work as Reformer (religious leader) in Geneva, shortly after publishing the first edition of his *Institutes*
1641	Publication of Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*.
1687	Publication of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, the founding document of modern ("Newtonian") physics
1689	Publication of Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*
1779	Publication of Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*
1781	Publication of Kant's first great philosophical work, the *Critique of Pure Reason*
1789	Beginning of the French Revolution
1793	Publication of Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, his last major philosophical work
1807	Publication of *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel's first great philosophical work
1821	Publication of Schleiermacher's systematic theology, *The Christian Faith* (often referred to by the German title, *Glaubenslehre*)
1841	Publication of Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*
1848	Publication of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*
1859	Publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, the founding document of modern evolutionary biology
1887	Publication of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*

1899 .... Freud publishes *The Interpretation of Dreams*, his first major work on psychoanalysis and the theory of the unconscious

1902 .... Publication of William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*

1910 .... Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead begin publication of their multivolume treatise on the logical foundations of mathematics, *Principica Mathematica*

1912 .... Publication of Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

1914-1918 .... World War I

1918 .... Publication of Karl Barth's commentary, *The Epistle to the Romans*, inaugurating the movement known initially as "dialectical theology" but later as "neo-orthodoxy"

1921 .... Publication of the great work of the "early" Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, using Russell and Whitehead's mathematical logic to lay the foundation for logical empiricism

1923 .... Publication of Martin Buber's *I and Thou*

1925 .... Publication of Rudolph Bultmann's early essay, "What Does It Mean to Speak of God?"

1927 .... Publication of Martin Heidegger's major philosophical work, *Being and Time*

1929 .... Publication of Whitehead's major philosophical work, *Process and Reality*

1932-1961 .... Publication of Barth's multi-volume systematic theology, *Church Dogmatics*

1939-1945 .... World War II

1941 .... Publication of Rudolf Bultmann's fundamental essay on demythologization, "New Testament and Mythology" (*Offenbarung und Heilsgeschehen*)

1953 .... Publication of the major work of Wittgenstein's later period, *Philosophical Investigations*, perhaps the earliest work of philosophical "post-modernism"

1961 .... Publication of Emanuel Levinas' major work, *Totality and Infinity*

1967 .... Publication of Jacques Derrida's early work, *Of Grammatology*, one of the seminal volumes of deconstructionism

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