

## Course Notes

### Introduction; Syllabus, Christianity in Europe

#### Week 1: Monday August 23, 2021

##### Lecture 1

Topic: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Syllabus

#### CHRISTIANITY IN THE ERA OF BRITISH COLONIALISM (1600–1760)

Christianity in Europe (1600–1800)

Enlightenment, Deism, and the New Era

Due: Gonzalez, 2:237–248

#### Lecture 1 Summary

Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Outline of the Course.

- I. Christianity and the Age of Enlightenment in Europe (1600–1800)
- II. Christianity in the Era of British Colonialism (1600–1760)
- III. Christianity in the National Era (1760–1880)
- IV. Christianity in the Modern Era (1880–1960)
- V. Christianity in the Post-Modern Era (1960–2021)

**I. Christianity In the Age of Enlightenment in Europe, (1600–1800)** The first part of the following outline was covered in the previous semester. It is reproduced here to provide easy continuity.

##### A The Enlightenment Defined

“A movement seen in particularly clear-cut form in eighteenth-century Germany. Karl Barth characterized it as ‘a system founded upon the presupposition of faith in the omnipotence of human ability.’ Immanuel Kant defined it in his *Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Only* (1793): ‘The Enlightenment represents man’s emergence from a self-inflicted state of minority. A minor is one who is incapable of making use of his understanding without guidance from someone else . . . *Sapere aude!* Latin phrase meaning “Dare to know”;

“ ‘Have the courage to make use of your own understanding, is therefore the watchword of the Enlightenment.’ . . . Predicated upon the reliability of reason,

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<sup>1</sup> All of us are products of our professors, pastors, and teachers. The core of these notes are based on the those of Dr. John D. Hannah who mentored me at DTS. I have added to them through the years as a result of my own study. To him and Dr. Ed Deibler of DTS I owe a debt of gratitude.

the *Aufklärung* rejected both supernatural revelation and man's sinfulness. God, the all-wise creator, had implanted in man a natural religion which taught both morality and immortality" (Detzler, *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*).

"Gradually a new outlook developed, called the Age of Reason. Philosophy combined with studies of nature to open larger vistas and opportunities for man. New inventions made possible better tools of discovery, and man slowly became confident that the world about him was not a mysterious realm directed by the inscrutable will of God, but a realm of complex relationships that were subject to intelligible laws. To control his environment, man had but to discover those laws. A future of progress and happiness lay before him! It was as if he had been liberated. It was the period of the Enlightenment, *Aufklärung*. Man's rational powers in league with science made dependence on God seemingly unnecessary. Men were confident that they had the tools with which to unlock the mysteries of the universe. Former distrust of man's reason and human culture, as seen in the traditional emphases on depravity, original sin, predestination, and self-denial, gave way to confidence in reason, free will, and the ability of man to build a glorious future" (Manschreck, *History of Christianity in the World*).

"The theology of the Enlightenment did not begin, as it is often shown to begin, with a criticism of trinitarian and Christological teaching, or of the miracles of the Bible, or of the biblical picture of the world, or of the supernaturalism of the redeeming event attested in the Bible. Its starting-point in the 'rational orthodoxy' which was conservative in all these matters was a re-adoption of the humanistic, Arminian, Socinian, and finally the acknowledged Roman Catholic rejection of what were supposed to be the too stringent assertions of the Reformers concerning the fall of man—the indissolubility of human guilt, the radical enslavement of man to sin, the *servum arbitrium*. Originally and properly *enlightenment* means the enlightenment that things are not quite so bad with man himself. But if we cannot, and will not, see and understand in this respect, we will necessarily be blind in other respects. And there was an inability and refusal to see and understand in this respect because—without any real sense of what was being done or to what would necessarily lead—a natural self-understanding of man was adopted as the norm of Christian thinking. In the sphere of this understanding the assertions could not, and never can, be made" (Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV, 1, 479).

"Europe would no longer orient itself, as in the Renaissance, on antiquity as its model, but rather on autonomous reason, on technical progress, on nation" (Kung, *The Catholic Church*, 243).

B. The Enlightenment: Its determination.

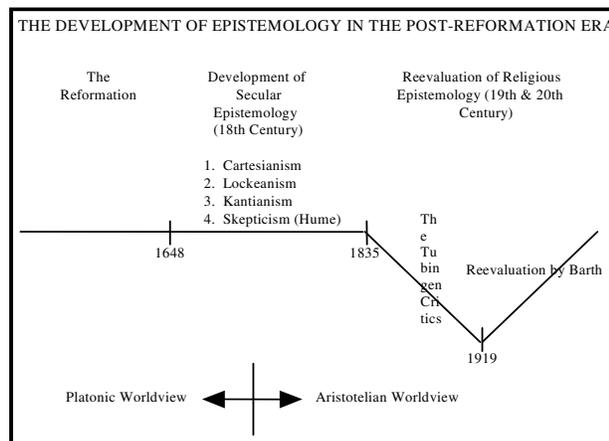
Much debate has occurred over the nature of the Enlightenment. On one end Peter Gay represents those who see one monolithic Enlightenment, with its center in the radical French enlightenment. In contrast, more recent studies recognize that there

were numerous “Enlightenments” mostly related to nations or cultures: the German, British, Scottish, French, American, Italians, and Russians, to name a few, each had their distinctive Enlightenment. Himmelfarb makes a strong case in locating the primary Enlightenment to be the British with the American. The center of the radical French enlightenment is Reason, reason over everything. For the British it was virtue.

Further, I agree with Gertrude Himmelfarb’s thesis that the Enlightenment itself is more to be located in the eighteenth century rather than in the sixteenth, which is more of the precursor to the enlightenment proper. *The Road to Modernity*

The essence of the “enlightenment” is to assert that human thought which had been suppressed by the darkness of the authority of religion (i.e., Christianity) in the “dark ages,” has now been freed from these shackles and restored to a position of autonomy. All knowledge thus is to be under the authority of human reason, or rather faith in either human ability to interpret his reason or faith in his ability to interpret his sense experience. The primary difference is philosophy provides a different focus for faith from the Church or Scripture.

“Philosophy is given precedence over theology; nature (natural science, natural philosophy, natural religion, natural law) over grace; the human over the specifically Christian” (Kung, *The Catholic Church*, 146). Human rights replace the Christian creed; the “Marseillaise” the “Te Deum”.



### 1. Background – Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274)

Change introduced through Aquinas, the 1<sup>st</sup> modern man. His ideas about the nature of man are implied in the way he used Aristotle. Aquinas only implied these ideas, he did not believe that man could know the biblical Creator God apart from revelation. However, his approach opened the door to what followed:

Man in the fall – man’s will was corrupted but his mental processes weren’t affected. Gave birth to a Natural Theology:

“How do I know God?” Knowing God apart from divine revelation. Though to be fair to St. Thomas, the “God” arrived at independently from Revelation is not necessarily the Creator God of the Bible.

Before 12<sup>th</sup> century – man could know God only through revelation.

After 12<sup>th</sup> century – also through my mind.

Before 12<sup>th</sup> century – truth is only in revelation.

After 12<sup>th</sup> century – truth could be found through revelation and reason. Intellect can't be wrong. This prepares for the “two books” theology. One book is revelation, the other is “nature.” At the beginning, nature was understood through divine revelation. But soon the “books” were equated and then independent of one another.

## 2. Philosophical Inquiry.<sup>o</sup>

### a) The French: Descartes, Rosseau, and Voltaire.

(1) Rene Descartes (1596–1650) - attended Jesuit schools; served in Dutch and Bavarian armies; settled in Holland where he wrote his most important works; moved to Sweden at Queen Christina's invitation.

(a) Cartesian doubt: chief principle - “never to accept anything as truth which I do not clearly know to be such.” Descartes began by doubting everything, but eventually realized he could not doubt his own existence which was self-evident in the fact that his thinking indicated his own existence could not be an illusion.

(b) *Cognito, ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am.”) No idea is clearer and more free from contradiction.

This became the starting point of his philosophy, and his attempt was to move from this principle to the existence of all things including God through the use of logic.

(c) The existence of God and the world:

(2) Voltaire (1694–1778)—born 50 years after Descartes died. French writer; 50 years in the French stage (60 pieces); opposed the Catholic church; stressed natural revelation (a deist); wrote *Candide*. His was a much later development

of Enlightenment thought, the radical Enlightenment of France.

“I believe in God; not the God of the mystics and the theologians, but the God of nature, the great geometrician, the architect of the Universe, the prime mover, unalterable, transcendent, everlasting.”

“I shall always be convinced that a watch proves a watchmaker and that a universe proves a God.” Fundamental principle of Deism

- (3) Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78)—French-Swiss (Genevan) writer; restless life; wrote seven operas; educationalist; political theorist; novelist; five illegitimate children.  
—Culture: *A Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* “Our souls are corrupted in proportion to the advancement of our arts and sciences towards perfection.”

—Education: *Emile*.

—Religion: held to a deistic view of God as the watchmaker creator. Emphasized natural religion, book of nature over special revelation.

—Naive view of human nature (depravity is the result of society’s corrupting influence.)

—Rejection of special revelation.

“Our most sublime notions of the Deity come to us through reason alone. Gaze upon the spectacle of nature, give heed to the inner voice. Has not God said everything to our eyes, our conscience, our judgment? What is there left for men to tell us?”

—Rejection of the uniqueness of Christ and Christianity.

“entertained no principle ... but vanity. With this vice he was possessed to a degree little short of madness”, Edmond Burke

- b) The English and Scottish: John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and George Berkeley are the three primary empiricists; Thomas Reid is the key person for Scottish Common Sense Realism.
- (1) Latitudinarianism.  
Emphasis on tolerance and diversity.  
Deemphasis on doctrine.

- (2) The New Science: The Scientific Revolution.
- (a) The Religion of the Scientists.  
not heterodox.
- (b) The Importance of the Scientific Revolution for religion.  
Tone.  
Religion view as mystery.
- (3) Empiricism: John Locke (1632–1704). Locke was reared in a Puritan home, which gave him decidedly Puritan presuppositions about God, Christ, Scripture.
- (a) Philosophical views.  
Empiricist. Strongly asserted there were no innate ideas (contra Descartes) that man was born with a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate in the mind to be written on by his sense data.
- (b) Religious views (not a deist, accepted some miracles). Later some deists would seek to claim him, but he was not one.  
—God’s existence is provable.  
  
—Revelation is a legitimate source of knowledge, yet is subject to scrutiny of reason.  
  
—The center of Christianity is that Jesus is the Messiah, sent into the world to teach truth about God and human responsibilities.  
  
—Christianity is simple.  
  
—Right conduct is more critical than detailed doctrines.  
  
—Toleration should be granted.
- (4) Deism.
- (a) Background:  
Latitudinarianism.  
Science.
- (b) Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648)  
—He wrote *On Truth* and is often considered to be “The Father of Deism.”  
—God exists.

—It is man's duty to worship him.

—Morality and virtue are the most important areas of religion.

—Sin is evil and must be repented of.

—Rewards and punishments will be administered after death.

- (c) Matthew Tindal (1655–1733)—*Christianity as Old as Creation*.
- (d) John Toland (1670–1722)—*Christianity Not Mysterious, Showing that there is Nothing in the Gospel contrary to Reason nor above it, and that no Christian Doctrine can properly be called a Mystery* (1696).
- (e) Anthony Collins (1671–1729)—*A Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*.
- (f) Thomas Woolston (1670–1733)—*Discourses on the Miracles of Our Savior*.

\*This ends previous semester.

- (5) David Hume (1711–1776) and Skepticism— Scottish historian and philosopher.

“He used reason to the limits to demonstrate the limitations of reason.”—Colin Brown

- (a) Skepticism.
- (b) Denied the certainty of cause–effect relations.
- (c) Attacked arguments for the existence of God.
- (d) Denied miracles.

“It is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true, but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false”.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND BIBLICAL MIRACLES:  
THE EXPLANATION

1. CONSCIOUS DECEPTION
  - a. Founders of religion lied.
  - b. Followers lied about their founders.
  
2. UNCONSCIOUS DECEPTION
  - a. Unusual or misperceived events viewed as miracles.  
(Simple people puzzled by natural events.)
  - b. Events embellished through repetition.

- (6) Thomas Reid and Scottish Common Sense.
- (a) Thomas Reid (1710–96). *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764).
  
  - (b) Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746). *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1726).
  
  - (c) Others: William Hamilton (1788–1856).  
 Lord Kames (1696–1782) [Henry Homes].  
 Dugald Stewart (1753–1828).  
 Adam Smith (1723–90).
  
  - (d) Defined: Thomas Reid’s refutation of Hume’s skepticism argued that the principles of skepticism were more dubious than that of common sense he claimed were universally knowable based on the reliability of memory, sense perceptions, and the credibility of testimony. See Evans, C. Stephen. *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.  
  
 Reid’s ideas immigrated to the colonies via John Witherspoon when he assumed the presidency of the College of New Jersey in 1768.
  
  - (e) The major tenants of Common Sense Philosophy.
    - “Man’s reason is only a superstructure which has, as its foundation, man’s sensitive nature.”
    - “Nothing is perceived but what is in the mind that perceives it.”
    - Knowledge is instinct based.

- Self awareness is the instrument of observation.
- Truth independent of experience.
- Emphasized the importance of an inductive methodology to maintain a scientific approach in keeping with Bacon and Newton’s natural philosophy.
- Reasoning was based on *per se notum* (self-evident) first principles for both necessary and contingent truths.

(f) The impact of Common Sense (CS) Philosophy.

CS Philosophy was foundational to Old Princeton apologetics and theology.

c) The German: Lessing and Kant.

(1) Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81) leader in the German national theatre; son of a pastor, librarian.

(a) *Fragments* (1774–78)—Though supposedly from an unknown author, they were really from H. S. Reimarus (1694–1768), a deist and biblical critic. These writings rejected miracles and special revelation. They accused the biblical writers of fraud, contradiction, and fanaticism. Reimarus assumes that the supernatural in history is impossible.

Through the publication of Reimarus’ work Lessing ushered in a new period in New Testament studies dominated by “the quest for the historical Jesus.”

(b) *On the Proof of Spirit and of Power*.

“Accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason.”

“There is a broad ugly ditch of history that I cannot jump across.”

(c) *Nathan the Wise* (1779).

“There was once an ancient ring which had the power to bestow upon its owner the gift of being loved by God and man. This was passed on down many generations until it came into the possession of a father who had three sons equally dear to him. To resolve the dilemma, he had two replicas made

and gave a ring to each son. After his death all three claimed to possess the true ring. But as with death all the original cannot be traced. Historical investigation is of no avail. But a wise judge counsels each son to behave as if he had the true ring and prove it by deeds of love. Thus in the end it will not matter who had the original. The three sons represent Judaism, Christianity and Islam. One day they will transcend themselves and become united in a universal religion of love.”

Point: Christianity is valid because of its moral power, not its historicity. The truth of Christianity is apprehended in experience.

- (d) *The Education of the Human Race* (1780).  
 “I only prefer the old orthodox theology (at bottom, tolerant) to the new (at bottom, intolerant) because the former is in manifest conflict with human reason, whereas the latter might easily take one in. I make agreement with my obvious enemies in order to be able to be the better on my guard against my secret adversaries.”
- (e) Reid argued for the necessity of reason alongside revelation in matters of religion.

CSR was dominant in the thinking of the old antebellum south through the influence of Presbyterianism.

It is no doubt true that Revelation exhibits all the truths of Natural Religion, but it is no less true that reason must be employed to judge of that revelation; whether it comes from God. Both are great lights and we ought not to put out the one in order to use the other. ... Tis by reason that we must judge whether that Revelation be really so; Tis by reason that we must judge of the meaning of what is revealed; and it is by Reason that we must guard against any impious, inconsistent or absurd

interpretation of that revelation.<sup>24</sup>

b. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) Essential in Philosophy and Theology. A marked division. The “Copernican Revolution” in thought.

1. His life.

He was born in Königsberg, Germany in 1724. He died there in 1804. His early training was in a pietist school. He studied mathematics and physics at the University of Königsberg, tutored for nine years, then took his doctorate. In 1770 he was appointed professor of logic and mathematics. In 1797 he was forced to retire because of his unorthodox religious views.

He never married.

He had a methodical lifestyle.

He was a hypochondriac.

He was very moral.

He was unemotional.

He was not religious.

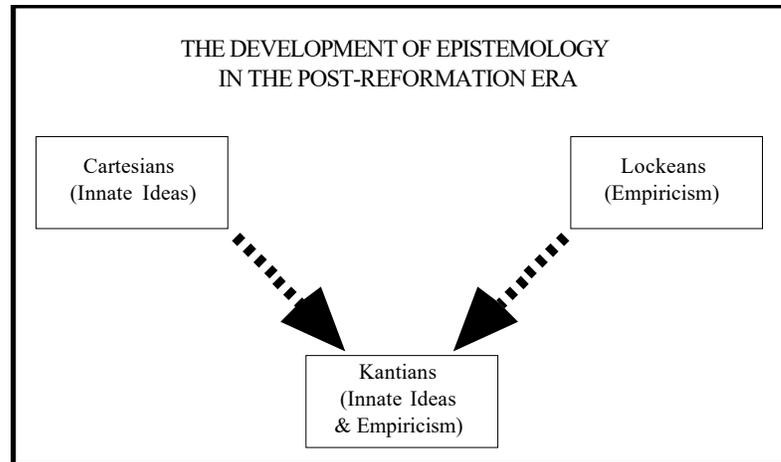
“Kant did not, like Rousseau, go to Holy Communion, did not, like Lessing, call Luther to witness. Instead, when the university of Königsberg was proceeding in solemn procession from the Great Hall to the church for the university service on the *dies academicus* Kant used ostentatiously to step away from the procession just as it was entering the church, make his way round the church instead, and go home.” –Karl Barth

2. His thought. 2 famous books.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 1-2. This statement could have been taken from any number of the later Princetonians. See below for statements by Hodge and Greene on the use of reason with respect to revelation. Duncan argues that one reason that Reid did not publish his lecture notes on natural theology was that he was “nervous” about religion—that is, about possible repercussions within the Church of Scotland. Reid was a member of the moderate party, and would have known about other moderate philosophers, such as Francis Hutcheson, who had had problems with the evangelical or Calvinistic (“immoderate,” as Duncan calls them!) wing. He refers to Witherspoon, among others, as one who would have found the first sentence quoted above as a “damnable heresy.” This seems a rather odd evaluation, inasmuch as Witherspoon, a leading clergyman within the evangelical wing, was also the great popularizer and proponent of Reid’s philosophy as the president of Princeton College. See Duncan, Introduction xx-xxii.

<sup>2</sup> Tim McConnel, [“The Old Princeton Apologetics: Common Sense or Reformed?”](#) *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46, no. 4 (2003): 654.



1. *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). (An analysis of the proper use of reason)

How does a man know – 2 realms of knowledge: spiritual and natural. Man receives sense perception, knowledge comes in, and there is an interplay between the incoming knowledge and the mind (categories) and we interpret it in our minds according to those categories, then we can know.

Truth = incoming sense + mind. We cannot know the natural world, then, we can only know our perceptions not reality!! We cannot know the spiritual world because there are no sense perceptions, no categories for supernatural knowledge.

Kant agrees with Paul except that his presuppositions deny supernatural revelation. Supernatural can't be known because these are not categories.

Certain fallacies that arise from applying space and time (or the categories) to things that are not experienced: Mutually contradictory propositions arise, each of which can apparently be proven (antinomies). Equally compelling arguments can be presented for contradictory views.

—Is the will of man free or determined?

—Does God exist or not?

—There are certain realms of thought that cannot be examined by pure reason.

—Freedom of the will.

—Immortality.

—The existence of God.

—Importance: Rational arguments cannot argue for these things because equally compelling rational arguments can be mustered for the other side.

2. *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). Wants to retain religion – in every man is a category of duty. “The categorical imperative,” if a man does his duty, he can know God. If you do right, (a la Fletcher) doing moral duty can lead to God. Religion is reduced to moralism.
3. Other writings:  
*Critique of Judgement* (1790)  
*Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793)
4. His influence. He gave us:
  - a. A century which is introspective “*what I ...*” This makes man seek truth within himself. Man can only know his perceptions of things, cannot know things as they are. Destroys objective truth, objective knowledge.
  - b. Reduced Christianity to moralism
  - c. Gave Germany an extreme mood of optimism
  - d. Gave a practical Pelagianism – works + revelation
  - e. A closed system universe. God can’t reach us; we must reach Him. If God is speaking, I don’t know; everything around me is naturalism. The Bible is man’s experience of religion because man can’t be communicated to from God.
  - f. He takes the supernatural out of religion.