

Syllabus for use with: A JOURNEY THROUGH CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, second edition, with texts and commentary from the First to the Twenty-first Centuries

Introduction:

This text traces the development of Christian thought from the end of the New Testament period up to and including the present age. Through the eyes, ears, and pens of many influential writers, the central message of the Christian faith/gospel may be seen in its growth and interaction with a variety of cultures. Changes may clearly be perceived as the gospel message moves from the writings of Ignatius of Antioch to the great intellectual crises of the late fourth and mid-fifth centuries issuing in the creedal statements of Nicea-Constantinople and Chalcedon. As the church develops new discussions take place regarding ecclesiastical, sacramental, and apologetic issues to cite just a few. These can be examined in this text through such writings as those of Anselm, Abelard, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, and others.

In succeeding centuries, the church becomes embroiled in internal debates, disputes, and corruption leading to the monumental split in the sixteenth century as a result of the protests of Luther, Calvin, Bucer, and many others. These disputes caused the fracturing of the Church into many denominations and, at the same time, engendered internal reform and renewal within Catholicism itself, e.g. The Council of Trent.

Subsequent to the rise of various denominations, the churches—as a group—faced intellectual challenges from the outside. From the moment of Immanuel Kant’s potent critiques to modern linguistic philosophy’s challenge to religious language, to the powerful intellectual independence of the secular, scientific community, the Christian faith has been placed in a new and more comprehensive apologetic environment. Some of these vital issues are addressed in the final sections of this work.

A SUGGESTED POSSIBLE OUTLINE FOR USING THIS WORK

Parts I: The Christian Gospel Encounters the Graeco-Roman World

- A. The Early Church: Ignatius of Antioch-Origen of Alexandria***
 - 1. Ignatius of Antioch—early developments seen through his letters***
 - 2. Justin Martyr—the “intellectualization” of the Christian faith***
 - a. Justin the Apologist***
 - b. Justin’s doctrine of the Logos***
 - 3. Irenaeus of Lyons***
 - a. Irenaeus’ Doctrine of Recapitulation***
 - b. Irenaeus and the Gnostics***
 - 4. Origen of Alexandria—the “First” Systematic Theologian***
 - a. Origen’s De Principiis***

2. *The Neo-Platonism of Pseudo-Dionysius*
- C. *John Scotus Erigena*
 1. *On the forms of Creation*
 2. *Erigena's Apokatastasis doctrine*
- D. *A Eucharistic Debate: Ratramnus of Corbie and Paschasius Radbertus*
- E. *The Middle Ages: The Rise of the Corpus Christianum*
 1. *Anselm of Canterbury*
 - a. *The Ontological Argument for the Existence of God*
 - b. *The Cur Deus Homo—the doctrine of Atonement—an objective view*
 2. *Peter Abelard: the Doctrine of the Atonement—a subjective view*
 3. *Bonaventure: A Mystical Approach to God*
 4. *Thomas Aquinas*
 - a. *Thomas and the Summa*
 - b. *The Arguments for the Existence of God*
 - c. *On the doctrine of the “real presence” in the eucharist*
 5. *Johannes Meister Eckhardt*
 - a. *Eckhardt and “pantheism”*
 - b. *Eckhardt as a “mystic”*
 6. *Women of the Middle Ages:*
 - a. *Hildegard of Bingen*
 1. *Hildegard as critic*
 2. *Hildegard: mystic*
 - b. *Julian of Norwich: Mystical Theology*
 - c. *Catherine of Sienna: Mystical Theology*
 7. *Thomas a Kempis: The Imitatio Christi*
 - a. *Critique of rational theology*
 - b. *Thomas' mystical views*

Second Examination: Midterm

Part III: The Reformation to the Modern Period

- A. *The Reformation*
 1. *Erasmus of Rotterdam*
 - a. *Erasmus and the Reformers*
 - b. *Erasmus' “In Praise of Folly”*
 - c. *Erasmus' critique of Luther*
 2. *Martin Luther:*
 - a. *Luther's Theology*
 - b. *An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility*
 - c. *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*
 - d. *Concerning Christian Liberty*
 3. *Huldrych Zwingli*
 - a. *On the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper*
 - b. *A Summary of Zwinglian Belief*

4. *Martin Bucer: The Place of the Sacraments in the Life of the Reformed Church*
5. *Philipp Melancthon*
 - a. *The Impact of Melancthon's work*
 - b. *The doctrine of justification*
 - c. *Sacramental signs*
6. *John Calvin*
 - a. *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*
 - b. *Excerpts from Calvin's Institutes*
 1. *The bible and the Word of God*
 2. *The Knowledge of God*
 3. *Sin and Depravity*
 4. *Election and Predestination*
7. *The Anabaptists: The Radical Reformation*
 - a. *Balthasar Hubmaier: The Meaning of the Lord's Supper*
 - b. *Johannes (Hans) Denck*
 1. *On Free Will*
 2. *On Salvation*
 - c. *Menno Simons: The Nature of Christ's Church*
8. *The Tridentine Theology: A Catholic Response to the Reformation*
 - a. *The Decree on Justification*

Part IV: The Modern Period

1. *Immanuel Kant*
 - a. *Philosophy and Theology: The Critique of Pure Reason*
 - b. *Ethics: The Critique of Practical Reason*
 - c. *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*
2. *Friederich Schleiermacher*
 - a. *The Place and Meaning of Religion and Faith*
 - b. *The Speeches "On Religion"*
 - c. *The Person of Jesus*
3. *Ludwig Feuerbach*
 - a. *The Essence of Religion—Generally*
 - b. *On Ethics and Morality*
4. *David F. Strauss: Myth and Theological Study*
5. *Soren Kiekegaard*
 - a. *Existentialism and Christianity*
 - b. *"The Attack Upon Christendom"*
6. *Albrecht Ritschl: The doctrines of justification and reconciliation*

Third Examination: The Reformation—the Modern Period

Part V: The Later Modern Period

1. *Adolf von Harnack*

- a. *Liberal Protestant Theology*
- b. *What is Christianity?*
2. *Rudolf Otto: The Idea of the Holy*
3. *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: Science and Theology*
4. *Rudolf Bultmann: Demythologizing the New Testament*
5. *Karl Barth: Neo-Orthodoxy*
 - a. *The Centrality of Barth's Christology*
 - b. *The Epistle to the Romans*
 - c. *Barth's Dogmatics*
6. *Paul Tillich*
 - a. *Method and Language*
 - b. *Existentialism*
 - c. *Ultimate Concern*
7. *Reinhold Niebuhr: Understanding Human Nature*
8. *Karl Rahner: Neo-Thomism*
 - a. *Rahner's view of Christ*
 - b. *Rahner on Nature and Grace*
9. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*
 - a. *Religionless Christianity*
 - b. *The High Cost of Christian Living*

Part V: The Contemporary Period

1. *Hans Kung*
 - a. *Kung and Barth on Justification*
 - b. *Vatican Controversies*
 - c. *Liberation Theology: Gustavo Gutierrez*
 - d. *James Cone*
2. *Ecological Theology: Sallie McFague*
3. *Two Contemporary Ecclesial Statements*
 - a. *The Second Vatican Council: Gaudium et Spes*
 - b. *The Second Vatican Council: Nostra Aetate*
 - c. *The Confession of 1967 (The Presbyterian Church USA)*

The Final Examination – (Can be either comprehensive or simply over the final section)

NOTE: In the preface to this volume (pp. xi-xx), there is presented an alternative manner in which to present this material, namely, "Thematically." Nine different topics are presented for consideration, along with suggested reading sections for each.