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Andrew M. Davis

Teaching Notes

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A.C.T.S. Church History Seminar

Post-Reformation Europe: Nations, Reason, and Revival (1545-1914)

I. Class Overview

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II. Post-Reformation Europe: Theological and Political Conflict

A. Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation

[seen by some to be a primarily Spanish movement of Catholic revival: two of the three great streams were Spanish... Inquisition and Jesuits; Council of Trent called by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, grandson of Spanish reforming monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella]

1. The Council of Trent (1545-1563)

a. official R.C. response to Lutheranism and the Reformation

b. condemned “ambition, avarice and cupidity” of bishops

c. also condemned Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone

Tridentine doctrines: 16 chapters on Justification; 1-9 man unable to save himself, but must cooperate with grace by his free will, and prove it by baptism and a good life; justification results not only in forgiveness of all sins, but also a sanctification and renewal of the whole man; 10-13 affirm the increasing of justifying grace through obedience to the commands, and deny the predestination to salvation can be known with certainty; 14-16 declare that grace can be forfeited by any grievous sin and must be reclaimed through sacrament of penance; **salvation is given to the justified as a reward as well as a gift**, since by union with Christ the person has been able to obey the law and do good works in a state of grace

“And, for this cause, life eternal is to be proposed to those working well unto the end, and hoping in God, both as a grace mercifully promised to the sons of God through Jesus Christ, and as a reward which is according to the promise of God Himself, to be faithfully rendered to their good works and merits.”

d. emphasized Catholic doctrine of the sacraments, especially transubstantiation and *ex opere operato* (i.e. sacraments “work” benefits whether there is faith or not)

- e. emphasized that the Mass is a sacrifice afresh of the Son of God to appease the wrath of the Father; every time a Mass is said, the sacrifice is offered once again, with benefits to both the living and the dead
- f. tradition was established as of equal authority to Scripture; the correct interpretation of Scripture was the private reserve of the Catholic Church; Latin Vulgate was to be used exclusively in public readings of Scripture

2. The Jesuits (Society of Jesus; incorporated 1540)

- a. key figure: Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), Spanish mystic & bureaucrat
- b. “reform-minded” priests, lived amongst people rather than in monasteries
- c. Loyola trained them like soldiers to suffer immense hardships
- d. Jesuits led the training of the people in R.C. doctrine; education was the primary Jesuit directive; they were the “apostles of the Counter-Reformation”; established many colleges and seminaries
- e. massive missionary efforts especially in South America; Francis Xavier (1506-1552) missionary to India, Malaya, and Japan; Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) to China
- f. when Ignatius died, Society of Jesus had over 1000 members, administering 100 foundations; one hundred years later there were 15,000 Jesuits & 550 foundations
- g. 1986 movie “The Mission” starred Robert de Niro & Jeremy Irons

3. The Inquisition:

- a. originally begun in Spain to purify Catholic church
- b. Roman Inquisition started in 1542 to counter the Lutheran Reformation in Italy
- c. Italian Protestants persecuted

B. Nationalism: “Whose region, his religion”

1. More and more, people began to think of themselves as members of this or that nation
2. First Diet of Speyer, 1526: German regions permitted to follow Lutheran teachings temporarily
3. Second Diet of Speyer, 1529: earlier agreement revoked, Charles V threatened military action, Lutheran princes lodged a formal “Protest” (from which we get the word “Protestant”)

4. Protestants organized themselves and prepared for war, but Turkish invasion of Austro-Hungary postponed conflict
5. Peace of Nuremburg (1532) helped unite Protestants and Catholics for possible war with Turks

C. Religious Wars: Protestant vs. Catholic

1. Sixteenth century, Germany: internal strife, war between Protestant & Catholic princes; 1546: Charles V invaded Germany and won “War of Schmalkald”
2. “Peace of Augsburg” (September, 1555) ended war for fifty years in Germany, made Lutheranism legal; tensions still high; German regions lined up by whatever was the religious choice of its leader; this approach was called “Whose region, his religion”... no separation of church and state!!
3. Thirty Years’ War: 1608-1638, ended by Peace of Westphalia (1648); Europe’s bloodiest and most destructive war until the 20th century; Protestants vs. Catholics, one king trying to conquer region of another king and convert his citizens to their religion

D. Theological developments

1. Catholic orthodoxy: Council of Trent enforced by Jesuits
2. Lutheran orthodoxy: Philip Melancthon’s *Confession of Augsburg*; Lutheran scholasticism
3. Reformed orthodoxy: Synod of Dort (1618-19), the “Five Points of Calvinism”, Westminster Confession (1647)

E. The Rise of Denominationalism: “Options and choices”

Ultimately, state lost its power over matters of religion and faith became a matter of private choice for each citizen; thus came the rise of denominationalism; worship became a choice you made based on private convictions, not state coercion. “Christendom” was over; the stage was ripe for massive unbelief

III. The Rise of Unbelief and Liberalism

A. The Enlightenment: An age of advancement

1. Scientific achievements:

NICHOLAS COPERNICUS (1473-1543) Polish astronomer; proposed the theory that the sun was the center of the solar system, that the earth just rotated around the sun, and that it rotated on its own axis once per day; fearful of the Inquisition, he held his publications until 1543, the year of his death

GALILEO GALILEI (1564-1642) Italian natural philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician; developed scientific method of experimentation... believed all nature could be reduced to a set a mathematical laws; this led to immense optimism about the powers of human reason; studied laws of falling bodies; developed the telescope, revolutionized astronomy & proved Copernicus right; BUT Inquisition against him because of his defense of Copernicus

ISAAC NEWTON (1643-1727) English physicist and mathematician, who was the culminating figure of the scientific revolution of the 17th century. Made significant contributions to optics, mechanics, (his three laws of motion, the basic principles of modern physics, resulted in the formulation of the law of universal gravitation) mathematics, (he discovered calculus). Newton's *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (*Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*), 1687, was one of the most important single works in the history of modern science.

NOTE: Newton was trained in the outmoded philosophy of Aristotle, but was influenced by Descartes & Galileo who viewed the universe as a complex machine made up of intricate parts in motion; he was also a committed Christian

2. Human philosophy, skepticism about knowledge itself

1 Corinthians 1:20-21 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

a. Rene Descartes (1596-1650) "Father of modern philosophy"

French philosopher, opposed prevailing scholastic Aristotelianism; applied radical skepticism to every form of truth gained by authority, senses and reason until he could build an internally compatible system of philosophy; started with himself: "*Cogito ergo sum*", "I think, therefore I am." Went on from there to prove the existence of God; a strongly religious man, he thought he as doing religion a favor; but his skepticism laid the groundwork for later rationalistic attacks on Christianity itself... no truth was absolute, everything had to be proven or rejected

b. John Locke (1632-1704) & Empiricism

English philosopher; based system on "empiricism" (Gk. "experience"); in 1690 published *Essay on Human Understanding*, taught that all knowledge is based on experience; matters of faith were separate from reason, and could only be known by revelation; therefore knowledge of faith matters is never certain, and reason must be used to measure the degree of probability of what we are asked to believe by faith; opposed "fanatical enthusiasm" of people who claim absolute certainty of faith matters b/c it is based on divine revelation; he defended religious toleration, because intolerance is based on a certainty about faith matters that is impossible to attain

KEY: wrote *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, which became the basis of English deism; he argued that Christianity is the most reasonable of all religions. The essence of Christianity is the

existence of God and faith in Christ as Messiah; BUT Christianity added nothing of importance to those things which could have been known by mere application of human reason!

c. David Hume (1711-1776)

Scottish philosopher, destroyed empiricism and the rational basis for deism; stated that no theory of reason or knowledge is certain; opened the door for Kant's destruction of pure reason and all knowledge systems

d. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

German philosopher whose comprehensive and systematic work in the theory of knowledge, ethics, and aesthetics greatly influenced all subsequent philosophy, especially the various schools of Kantianism and Idealism; combined trends of rationalism (Descartes) and empiricism (Hume and Bacon); most important work was *A Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), in which he attacks the idea of metaphysical knowledge: basically, it's impossible to know anything that we can't experience (i.e. God, heaven, hell, Judgment Day, etc.) Kant destroyed all rational "proofs" of the existence of God that were current at the time; Kant had a much harder time explaining away innate sense of morality we all possess

Kant taught that we can't know anything as it truly is, only as it appear to our minds, in the categories of truth we set up

All future theologians dealing with the issue of faith and reason had to take Kant into account

B. Deism and Atheism

1. John Locke's "Reasonable" Christianity & Deism

Deism: basic idea of a God who created the universe to run independently by a set of immutable natural laws, and who never interfered with those laws; image: a clockmaker who wound up the universe and let it run; many of America's "founding fathers" were deists (e.g. Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson). Deism denied the supernatural; religion not based on revelation but on human reason and experience

2. Voltaire's Atheism

Voltaire used satire and wit to attack the excesses of the Roman Catholic church in France; ultimately was an open despiser of all religion; predicted that Christianity would soon be obsolete, and that, within a generation, no one in France would be reading the Bible; after his death, the French Bible society bought his home and used it to publish French Bibles!

C. Liberalism

1. Friederich Schleiermacher (1768-1864)

German theologian, sought to rescue religion from irrelevancy after the Enlightenment had seemingly destroyed it; deeply influenced both by German Pietism (through the Moravians) and Immanuel Kant; wrote *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (1799) in which he tries to defend Christian faith and marry it to popular culture; basic thought is that truth of Christianity is not important, but rather the passions and feelings it evokes from people as they read the stories and consider the claims of Christian faith; religion is not a system of truths, nor a system of morality, but a "feeling"

2. Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889)

German Lutheran theologian, sought to deal with Kant's critiques by placing Christianity in a sphere distinct from pure reason; but he also felt Schleiermacher's "feeling" was too subjective; for Ritschl, Christianity was neither a matter of reason, nor of feeling, but of practical life; Christianity is a set of practical moral injunctions, meant to be lived out in common, ordinary life. The center of Ritschl's theology was the "event of Jesus," and specifically, the teaching on the "Kingdom of God," ("The organization of humanity through action based on love") Ritschl greatly influenced Walter Rauschenbusch's "Social Gospel"; he also helped start the idea of "the quest for the historical Jesus," which took skepticism about the reliability of the Gospel accounts as its starting place

3. Adolph von Harnack (1851-1930)

German historian and theologian; saw the story of church history as the evolution from teachings by Jesus to teachings about Jesus; Jesus (according to Harnack) taught the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, the infinite value of the human soul, and the commandment of love; after his death, however, the church began to put faith IN Jesus as God at the center of their dogmas, something Jesus had never taught

D. Darwinism (Charles Darwin, 1809-1882)

English naturalist whose theory of evolution posed a major crisis of faith for Biblical Christianity, and sent shock waves through the Church which are still being felt today; as a result of Darwinism, the church rearranged its doctrines of Scripture, humanity, salvation, and the relationship between faith and science

IV. Revival Movements

A. German Pietism

1. Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) August Hermann Francke (1663-1727)

Spener: German mystic; wrote *Pia Desideria* (Pious Desires) in which he outlines a program for the development of piety; developed the Lutheran doctrine of universal priesthood of believers;

emphasized deep personal faith over theological training; did not attack role of doctrine, but said Christians must go beyond mere doctrinal assent to a true and living faith;

Francke: Spener's greatest disciple, continued to challenge "academic Lutheranism" along Spener's lines; sought to emphasize personal experience of God, and perhaps even a "conversion story"; Pietism developed into "colleges of piety" which emphasized the emotional and subjective aspects of Christianity

The Moravians: German Pietists led by Count Nicholas von Zinzendorff... greatest contribution was to modern missions movement; developed community of faith at Herrnhut; 100 year prayer vigil; greatly affected John and Charles Wesley

B. English Methodism

1. Oxford "Holy Club"... John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield
2. Whitefield's "field preaching"
3. Wesley's "strangely warmed heart"
4. Beginning of revivalism in the United States

C. Theological effects: "revivalism", premillennialism

D. Social effects: English anti-slavery crusade

V. The Birth and Growth of Modern Missions

A. The Moravians

B. William Carey (1761-1834)

Founder of the English Baptist Missionary Society (1792), lifelong missionary to India, and educator whose mission at Serampur set the pattern for modern missionary work. He has been called the "father of Bengali prose" for his grammars, dictionaries, and translations.

A Baptist from 1783, and a Calvinist, Carey served for several years as a pastor in Moulton, Northamptonshire, where he also taught school and continued his trade as a shoemaker. In 1789 he transferred to the Baptist church at Leicester and three years later published a pamphlet entitled *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, which led to his formation, with a dozen other ministers, of the English Baptist Missionary Society. Gave his life in service to the Lord in Shrirampur, India

