

THE ORTHODOX SURVIVAL COURSE
Lecture two: From Reason to Renaissance and 'Enlightenment'

Departure from Orthodoxy: The 'Middle Ages'

- I. The root of modern history: The schism of 1054.
 - a. The schism of 1054 produces catastrophic consequences in the West and forms philosophical undercurrents that will lead directly into the views which govern mankind today—which we become very pronounced in the 13th c.
 - b. “a Christian of the Fourth Century would have felt less bewildered by the forms of piety current in the 11th century than his counterpart of the 11th c. in the forms of the 12th.”-Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years*
- II. Unbalanced rationalism
 - a. “It seems that the distinguishing feature of the Roman mind is precisely the conviction that outward rationalism outweighs the inward essence of things.” -Ivan Kireyevsky
 - b. “...After Rome separated from the Orthodox Church, this particular trait became decisive and dominant in the quality of the teachings of Roman theologians.”-Fr Seraphim Rose
 - c. “It is quite clear to us why Western theologians with all of their logical scrupulousness could not see the unity of the church in any other way but through the unity of the episcopate.” -Ivan Kireyevsky
 - d. A fascination with and reliance on human reason takes shape and leads into the scholastic period.
- III. Scholasticism
 - a. Roman Catholicism departs from Orthodoxy because of newly introduced dogmas based on accidental conclusions and Western logic.
 - i. “From this develops Scholastic philosophy within the framework of faith, then a reformation in faith, and finally philosophy outside of faith.”-Fr Seraphim Rose
 - b. The movement towards Scholasticism produces three shifts in the West:
 - i. From an exemplarist outlook to a naturalistic one.
 - ii. From symbol to dialectic.
 - iii. From Tradition and synthesis to research and study.
 - iv. **Turn from inward contemplation to rationalism**
 - c. Thomas Aquinas (pinnacle of scholasticism)
 - i. *Summa Theologica*:
 1. Syllogistic reasoning. Very different from the works of the Holy Fathers (i.e. St John Damascene)
 - d. Conclusion: Living faith is placed secondary to a system of logic.
- IV. A Search for a new Christianity that is not Orthodoxy
 - a. Romanticism

- i. *The Golden Legend*: Legends enter into the lives of the Saints
 - ii. New concepts of sanctity and stigmata (only 200 years after the schism)
- b. Politics
 - i. Pope Boniface VIII: "I am Caesar, I am Emperor."
 - 1. Reveals something that had now embedded itself deep into modern thought.

"It is not by means of persecution as it was in the beginning, but by means of taking Christianity and changing it so that it will no longer be Christian. And this is what we can call the "unfolding of the mystery of iniquity" in preparation for the Antichrist." -Fr Seraphim Rose

II. The Renaissance (15th-16th c.)

- I. Reason turns against religion
 - a. Since reason was seen as autonomous, it develops its own principles alienated from Holy Tradition and then from religion altogether.
- II. The world is "awakened"
 - a. A turn from romantic sainthood, monasticism, etc. and a negative attitude towards it.
 - b. The West turns from Christianity, back to the "reason" of pagan Greece and Rome.
 - i. "When I read certain passages of these great men, I can hardly refrain from saying, St Socrates, pray for me!" -Erasmus (16th c.)
 - c. The obsession with oneself and the "discovering" of man.
- III. Themes develop that shape modern thought
 - a. Fame
 - i. The exaltation of oneself, fantastical lives/biographies, the itch for human glory and reputation.
 - ii. Everything is based on intuition of the individual, something new is created. [[“I think therefore I am”-Descartes]]
 - b. Superstitions
 - i. The age also of astrology, alchemy, and witchcraft and sorcery.
 - ii. A contrary spirit to the Holy Fathers:
 - 1. "It was well known that Augustine and other Fathers of the Church had combated astrology, but their old-fashioned notions were dismissed easily with contempt."- Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1806)
 - iii. Superstitions in the Western Christendom
 - 1. Julius II had the day of his coronation calculated by astronomers, Paul III never held consistories unless the time was calculated by astronomers.
 - 2. New standards: In departing from Orthodoxy and the Holy Fathers the lines of good and evil become blurred and less distinct.
 - iv. Protestant Reformation
 - 1. The inheritance of the individual over Holy Tradition.
 - 2. "Papism was the first Protestantism"- St Justin Popovic

- IV. The new knowledge: Science, “the leaven of worldliness”
 - a. Most significant change and the building of something new
 - i. Man is “set free” from the tradition of inward contemplation and he becomes fixed on the outer world.
 - ii. Scientific method replaces the scholastic method
 - iii. Leads to a loss of truths that do not fit in a narrow framework.
 - b. Originated in the spirit of Faustianism (the spirit of magic)
 - i. Borne on the experiments of Platonic alchemists, astrologers, and magicians.
 - c. The aim: power over nature
 - i. Descartes: nature is a machine and the “angel of truth”
 - d. Modern science puts an intolerable weight upon men. “Many people feel that the rise of modern science has as its ultimate aim the bringing of mankind to total slavery.”-Fr Seraphim Rose
 - e. The Copernican Revolution
 - i. Heresy based on science
 - ii. Worldview changes at the loss of inner man (Giordano Bruno)
- V. Chiasm
 - a. First we see rise of man as a new god, now the world must become divine.

“Enlightenment” Prior to the French Revolution

- I. Some themes prior to the French Revolution:
 - a. Deism, the new religion.
 - i. Overt rejection of revelation
 - ii. God exists, but is irrelevant
 - iii. Diderot, Voltaire, etc.
 - iv. The age and birth of Masonry
 - b. Against Miracles
 - i. Hume
 - c. The Idea of “Progress”
 - i. That we will build a new world from generation to generation
 - ii. Improving upon the past