
THE ORIGINS OF SECULARISM

COTR Sunday School, 4th Week of Advent, 2019

REVIEW FROM LAST WEEK...

- Locke's new appropriation of reason
 - Hume's empiricism
 - Descartes' foundationalism (that began with himself)
 - Newton's Laws
 - The rise of Pietism (the inward, subjective turn)
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KANT AND HEGEL

- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
 - Phenomenal and Noumenal Realms
 - Formalized the “subjective turn”
 - Consequently, scholars began to investigate the “natural” origins of religion.
 - The “sacred” has been overrun by the “secular”
 - Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)
 - Developed a dialectical view of history
 - This caused a polarization—of the two dominant views
 - Provided a clear alternative to Christianity
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LUDWIG FEUERBACH (1804-1872)

- A radical left-wing follower of Hegel
 - The church wasn't bad, it was just severely misguided—superstitious.
 - It placed its trust in a “false deity” rather than itself (as people)
 - Therefore, it should be criticized for not tackling man's problems and “merely” trusting in God.
 - The study of “religion” is reduced to the religious yearnings of people
 - “Psychogenetic method”—exposes peoples' needs for religion
 - “What humans are not, but what they will be, just that and only that is God.”
 - He did NOT deal with man's or society's sin and wickedness or account for man's dignity!
 - Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud were all contemporaries
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ROMANTICISM AND EXISTENTIALISM

- In reaction to the over-emphasis on reason, Romanticism tended to emphasize emotions and, human experiences, and responses to nature.
 - But, still critical of formal religion and sympathetic with the Enlightenment
 - In Existentialism, there is an almost rejection of an objective truth in favor of an appeal to a new way of thinking—authenticity. Human existence cannot be defined through reason. It is against a systematic approach to understanding ourselves and the world.
 - And we see an odd mixture of Modernity and Post-modernity in our society. The eclipse of “autonomous reason” above “faith” and the reactions against such a position of reason have led to a social imaginary where Secularism is pervasive.
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A WAY FORWARD?

- Three branches of Philosophy under the Lordship of Christ.
 - Metaphysics
 - Not a return to the Medieval sacramental world, but faithful attention to Creation, the Kingdom, and the New Heavens and New Earth
 - Epistemology
 - Michael Polanyi
 - Covenant Epistemology—loving to know
 - Ethics
 - A continual project into all of life.
 - Redeeming...
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