

History of Science 423/523: Science and Religion

Lecture 1: Science in Early Christianity

I. Early Christianity

- A. The ministry of Jesus of Nazareth (c. 4 B.C.- c. A.D. 30)
- B. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles (his missionary career, A.D. c. 33-67)
- C. Roman persecution of the early Christians (A.D. 64-313); why they were persecuted
- D. Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312) and the Edict of Milan (313)

II. The Origin of the early Church

- A. The role of the twelve Apostles (authoritative interpreters of Jesus' teaching)
- B. The formation of the NT canon: apostolicity, orthodoxy, widespread acceptance
- C. Types of religion in the Roman world: pagan cults, mystery religions, philosophical sects; the uniqueness of Christianity as an ancient religion

III. The church Fathers (the intellectual and theological elite of the early church)

- A. Apologists: the earliest defenders of the faith
- B. Their appropriation of Greek philosophy: its dangers and its usefulness
 - 1. Justin Martyr (c. 100-165); his First Apology
 - 2. How Apologists used Greek philosophy: to defend the faith, to define doctrine
 - 3. The definition of orthodoxy: the Apostles (c. 150) and Nicene (324) Creeds

IV. Science in the Graeco-Roman World

- A. Ancient science a branch of philosophy (natural philosophy)
- B. The lack of science as a discipline in the classical world

V. Early Christianity and science

- A. The Apologists' ambivalence towards Greek philosophy
- B. The biblical appreciation of the natural world (e.g., Psalm 19); God's two books
- C. Two Fathers who appropriated natural philosophy to the Christian faith
 - 1. Tertullian (c. 155-230): used Greek science to refute pagan ideas
 - 2. Augustine of Hippo (354-430)
 - a. Rejected *curiositas* for a 'handmaiden' role for natural philosophy
 - b. His use of natural philosophy in *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*
- D. The hellenization of Christianity, which incorporated Greek science and medicine into a Christian world view
- E. The harmonization of faith (religion) and reason (secular knowledge)

Palestine	Gospel of Thomas	Incarnation of Christ
Jews, gentiles	Stoics, Epicureans, Cynics	<i>soma sema</i>
messiah	monotheism	Platonism
Apostle Paul	Galen (129-c. 210)	Antoninus Pius (138-161)
circumcision	apologetics (from <i>apologia</i>)	<i>praeparatio evangelica</i>
Nero (54-68)	Justin Martyr (c. 100-165)	orthodoxy, heresy
Peter	Tertullian (c. 155-230)	<i>scientia</i>
paganism	Irenaeus (c. 130-c. 200)	Hellenistic Age (323-30 BC)
Constantine (312-337)	Gnostics (<i>gnosis</i>)	Alexandria, Pergamum
<i>hoc signo vince</i>	polytheism	demiurge
disciples, Apostles	syncretism	special & general revelation
New Testament		Johannes Kepler
canon, canonical	dualism	Plato's <i>Timaeus</i>