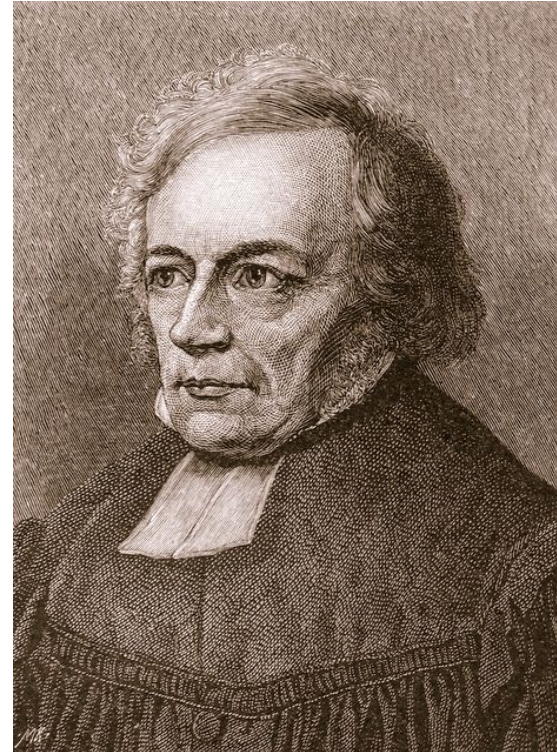


Week 2: People, Schools, and Movements

- 1. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834)
- Early in his career member of Romantic circle in Berlin
- 1799: *Speeches on Religion*
- Later Professor at Universities in Halle, then (from 1810) Berlin
- 1821/22: *The Christian Faith* (2nd ed. 1830/31)



Friedrich Schleiermacher I

- Often called ‘father of liberal theology’ but more properly ‘father of modern theology’
- Uniquely influential in his attempt to offer a justification for religion in response to modern challenges.
- Accepts the need for historical criticism: hermeneutics as fundamental theological discipline (How do we *understand* texts and traditions?)
- Consciously post-Kantian: no use of arguments for God’s existence.

Friedrich Schleiermacher

- Religion is *sui generis* phenomenon of humanity, expressing its relation to the whole of reality ('feeling of absolute dependence').
- Christianity is a historical religion, the most perfect realisation of what religion can achieve ('inclusivism')
- Within this framework, Schleiermacher offered a full engagement with the entirety of the doctrinal tradition:
- The Christian faith is both individual (belief in Jesus) and communal/historical (faith of the Church).

2) Karl Barth (1886–1968)

- Worked as a pastor in Safenwil (Switzerland)
- Professor of Theology at Göttingen, Münster, Bonn, and Basel (from 1935, after he had to leave Germany due to his refusal to swear the oath of allegiance to Hitler)
- Involvement in German Church Struggle (main author of *Barmen Declaration*, 1934)



Karl Barth II

- With his *Epistle to the Romans* (1919, 2nd ed. 1922) he initiated a theological renewal directly opposed to liberalism:
- Strong emphasis on the transcendence of God and the ‘infinite qualitative difference’ between God and man (‘dialectical theology’).
- Later (notably in his 13-volume *Church Dogmatics*) he sought to move away from the ensuing dualism by emphasising the reality of divine-human union achieved in the Incarnation.

Karl Barth III

- Barth's theology has sometimes been called 'neo-orthodox', and he has often emphasised his opposition to liberalism and to Schleiermacher in particular.
- In reality, he is squarely within modern theology:
- He accepts Kant's (and Feuerbach's) critique of theism as well as the need for historical criticism.
- His project is to reintegrate the salient claims of traditional Christianity into the modern world by stressing the counter-cultural dimension of all theology.

3) Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945)

- Theologian, pastor, political activist
- Influenced by Barth but much more aware of the precarious situation of Christianity in practical life.
- Who is Jesus Christ for us today?
- *Ethics* (published posthumously from notes): theory of ‘responsible vicarious action’



4) Paul Tillich (1886–1965)

- Professor of Theology in Frankfurt
- Emigration to US (1933): posts at Union Theology Seminary, Harvard, and Chicago.
- Christianity can only respond to cultural challenges by understanding the *questions* ('method of correlation').
- Responses are given from revelation (link with Barth).



5) Nouvelle Théologie

- Major Catholic movement in the mid-20th century:
- Henri de Lubac (1896–1991); Jean Daniélou (1905–1974); Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988)
- Close links with Vatican II (1962–1965) and its attempt to realign Catholicism with the modern world.
- Emphasis on the unity of nature and grace (with Aquinas but against Neo-Thomism): positive appreciation of culture but it *needs* religion as its fulfilment.
- Inclusivism: interreligious openness (Catholicism represents ‘fullness’ of truth)

6) Liberation Theology

- Broad and diverse movement of theologians in Latin America since the 1970s (officially condemned by the Vatican in 1984).
- Influenced by earlier ethical and political theologians (Bonhoeffer, J. Moltmann, J.-B. Metz) as well as philosophers (Hegel, Marx, E. Bloch).
- Emphasis on 'freedom' as key concept in the Bible underlying the promised transformation of individual life.
- Awareness of social and political contexts preventing or facilitating such transformation: involvement in political liberation movements.