



Patristics and Christian Learning with Dr. Jordan Wood

Lecture 3: Pedagogy Human and Divine: The Alexandrians

Outline:

Pedagogy Human and Divine: The Alexandrians

- Acts 18:24-28: Apollos, Alexandrian by birth
 - He is well educated and from Alexandria. Alexandria became an epicenter of education and human learning.
 - Alexandria had a renowned library.
 - From Eusebius, we learn that there was a catechetical school in Alexandria.
 - There are other schools and even competing “Christianities”, the Gnostics.
 - There is a battle on two fronts.
 - Those who were growing suspicious of pagan literature.
 - Gnostics draw their own inspiration from their own learning.
 - Simple Christians are suspicious of learning, and the learned Christians are suspicious of Christians who are not educated.
- Clement of Alexandria
 - The multitude of Christians are scared of Greek philosophy fearing that it will lead them astray. Clement doesn't think this is acceptable.
 - Christ is the revelation of human wisdom itself, the wisdom which suffuses the universe. There can't be an ultimate conflict.
 - Clement is very well educated.
 - Clement's big ideas:
 - Clement considered philosophy as the summit of human wisdom and learning.
 - Philosophy was the schoolmaster, the pedagogue to bring the Greek mind to Christ, to divine wisdom.
 - The Word/wisdom of God is accessible, even if dimly.
 - The law was given (temporal) through Moses, but grace and truth comes about (it is infinite/eternal) in Jesus (truth, wisdom, power, grace).
 - Clement claims that God's act of creation and salvation is one long act of pedagogy, instruction, formation. It is getting us to mature both individually and as a species.
 - All of creation is like an education, a raising and a perfection of a student's knowledge.



- Whether God is punishing or whether God is forgiving, all of it serves the same goal, which is perfection.
- Clement's idea of divine pedagogy as four moments of spiritual progress:
 - Admiration prepares human beings, prepares the soil for the growth of the seed (the logos within).
 - You've been prepared for the logos. At some point you meet Christ in faith.
 - This lays the groundwork for a new and further knowledge. Faith is the entrance into Christ's school.
 - The fourth and final moment is called love. When you reach this summit of love, you want to share it with everyone else.
 - **Christian education is nothing other than your participation in God's pedagogy, which we call creation.**
 - Clement says that in the four moments that faith and love cannot be taught like knowledge can be taught (in the catechetical school).
 - Christ is both the foundation and the superstructure. Faith and love are not matters of teaching. Christ is playing a decisive role in the faith and love. This is interpersonal knowledge. That personal knowledge can only be given through an encounter with Christ.
 - **Pedagogy must first and last be encompassed by the personal dimension between student and teacher and ultimately between God and Christ and everyone else involved in the divine pedagogy.**
- Implications:
 - Beauty of interpersonal relationships is important to the work of classical educators.
 - We need to have patience as teachers and instructors, as God has had utter patience with us from the moment of creation through perfection.
 - Fundamental to knowing God and the world is knowing Christ.