

MARTIN LUTHER - REDISCOVERING THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

Synopsis of lecture given 7th. November 1991

1. Luther's spiritual, intellectual and cultural background
2. Luther's re-discovery of the Gospel
His lectures, disputations and writings:-
 - 1517 Disputation against Scholastic Theology. True Christology.
 - 1517 Disputation against Indulgences. Quest for the true Gospel.
 - 1518 Disputation at Heidelberg. His Theology of the Cross.
 - 1519 Disputation at Leipzig. Eck attacks Luther's teaching.
 - 1520 The Reformation Writings
 - 1521 The Diet of Worms. Luther's Great Stand.
3. The theological and spiritual meaning of rediscovering a gracious God.
 - a) The Theology of the Cross - The Darkness of Faith
 - b) Justification by Faith - The Tranquility of Faith
4. Significance of Luther for today
 - Re-discovering the Gospel meant a fresh and true Christology
 - Primacy of Scripture gave authoritative criterion to judge and criticise Church, Tradition and Practice
 - Restoration of the New Testament doctrines:-
 - Sin, redemption, reconciliation
 - Law and Gospel
 - Evangelical sacraments, liturgy, catechisms and hymns.
 - Sacred and secular; role of laity. Priesthood of all believers.
 - His Christology opened up the immediate experience of God and a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 - A Christian understanding of education, politics and economics.
5. Begin here
 - Do not begin with the Church's problems, or the problems of society. Begin where Luther began.
 - First question: What is a Christian (Who is Christ)?
 - Second question: How do I become a Christian? (Find a Gracious God?)
 - Third question: What is the Church? (The people of God).
 - This brings us back to our title, Re-discovering the heart of the Gospel.

Book list:

- Atkinson, James: Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism 1968. 1981.
Atkinson, James: The Darkness of Faith. 1987
Bainton, Roland: Here I Stand. 1950
Kittelson, James: Luther the Reformer 1989
Rupp, Gordon: Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms 1951
Todd, J.M.: Martin Luther. 1964
Watson, Philip: Let God be God. 1947
(All these books provide a bibliography)