

O.K., Plotinus. I wrote my dissertation on Plotinus who was pretty well the major figure in the history of Neoplatonism, he pretty well created Neoplatonism so that I have done a little thinking about him. I'll tell you how I came to Neoplatonism; how I came to do my dissertation on Plotinus because I think it ties into what we are talking about.

When I was at college one of my professors was Dr Renner at Calvin College, and he was the one that got me sold on the idea of the cosmic redemption of Christ and on the calling of Christians to do scholarly work in the Christian Way so I asked him, how best could I devote my life to Christian scholarship. Well he says you've got a talent for languages you've taken a Greek major, and you got an interest in Greek philosophy, what I would say the best thing for you to do is to make a study of patristics because patristics that's where it's at, R.C. will bear me out here; if we have a good understanding, as Christians today, with what happened in patristics, then we are going to get a very clear insight into very much of the history of theology, and of contemporary theology. So I went to the free University and studied the history of philosophy, *with emphasis on the Greek period, and within that with an emphasis on the patristic period, and I said to myself, if I want to have a philosophical degree, if I want to have a degree, a doctors degree that will be accepted outside of of the Christian community as being philosophically respectable, I'm going to have to take, not one of the Church fathers themselves, but a Greek philosopher who had great influence on the patristic field, and I decided to take Plotinus, because Plotinus is perhaps the single philosopher who has had the greatest influence on patristic thought and who, therefore an understanding of whom is quiet important for an understanding of patristic thought. Now I've tried to illustrate that, in this little scheme I have, this is a very rough and ready thumbnail kind of a sketch of the history of philosophy. I'll just go through basically, Greek philosophy that is, I'll just go through it bascially . . . see bascially, that way you can picture this in a very rough and ready way, you can say that Greek philosophy through patristic age is you say this is where the Christian era begins, you take three centuries back, and then you take two centuries there, and you have the classical era of Greek philosophy; that's basically: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The pre Socratics are up here, and the Hellenistic philosophers are behind there. so three centuries back from the two centuries there, that's the classical period, where Greek philosophy came to its full flowering, came to its major expression, to this day most books on the history of Greek philosophy deal 90% with this period, and all the rest is dealt with in a final chapter called*

*post-Aristotelian philosophy.*

On the other hand, you can do the same thing on the other side of the time scheme, you could take three centuries after Christ, and take the two centuries after that, and you have there the Golden Age of patristic philosophical, or theology, or patristic thinking, the Golden Age of intellectual endeavor in those days. So you can see importance of Plotinus. Plotinus stands on the threshold of the Golden Age of patristic philosophy, that's the reason I picked Plotinus as the subject of my dissertation, so I would have a good orientation to start out from the beginning, with the study of patristic thought. So, O.K., so that's the basic thumbnail sketch, a kind of a mnemonic device to remember where we're at.

Now what I want to say about Plotinus in the first instance is that he recapitulates, all the Greek philosophy until his day. After you had the big names in classical Greek philosophy, every one of the philosophers, the major philosophers started a school. Plato started the Academy, and this is a school from generation to generation, this Platonic school kept on. Aristotle started the Lyceum, the Peripatetic philosophers, the Aristotelians, started a school right down the history, and a fellow who is actually just a bit after the classical period, a fellow by the name of Zeno of Citium, started a school of Stoicism, which was also a regular school right down Hellenistic period. So pretty well the history of post-Aristotelian philosophy, until Plotinus, is the history of these three schools. I mean this is an oversimplification but it is basically what happens. An illustration of that is a famous work by Cicero which some of you may have had to read called *On the Nature of the Gods*, in which he has a survey of all the current theories of what the gods are, then he has, in order, he has the Platonist, talk about the Platonic academic view of the gods, and he has the Peripatetic, the Aristotelians, and he has a Stoic, and that pretty well surveys what that period of history had to say to any particular question, once you had the view of those three schools.

O.K., what I'm saying is that Plotinus was not only a Neoplatonist, he was also a Neo-Aristotelian and he was a Neostoic. He took all those traditions, right through the history of Hellenistic philosophy, and more or less fused them into one grand all encompassing scheme, which we know as Neoplatonism. The reason this is called Neoplatonism, rather than Neo-Aristotelianism, is that he took certain passages, chiefly the myths, in the dialogues of Plato and treated them as more or less canonical, and he

tried to justify all his theories in terms of the text of Plato. He considered Plato to be the authority, but in fact he built all kinds of Aristotelian doctrines, like Aristotelian Logic, the Aristotelian idea of the thinking of the thinking, and also very many Stoic doctrines, like the doctrine that nothing should really affect a man, he may be in pain, but it doesn't really affect him if he's a true philosopher, or the idea of the seminal reasons that the structure of things is really a Logos, which is a rational thing, deriving from a higher kind of rationality.

Anyhow there's all kinds of studies which demonstrate that Plotinus was absolutely soaked through so to speak, with all the philosophical tradition known in his day, and that he fused them together into one mighty system, and this was so impressive, this system, that all the other schools after Plotinus withered. The Stoic school pretty much died within half a century of Plotinus the Aristotelian school pretty much died the traditional academic school withered and died, and by the time that a century was over, the only kind of pagan philosophy that was around was Neoplatonism. Plotinus' recapitulation of the history of Greek philosophy, and you can see how important that is because that great assimilation of the whole Greek tradition comes at a point, just before the grand flowering of patristic philosophy, so that you can say, in effect that Greek philosophy, Greek philosophy as the church fathers, the great church fathers knew it, there were some exceptions, the great Church fathers knew it, Greek philosophy as the great patristic thinkers knew it was Neoplatonism. So that when you study the great systems of the Golden Age you will find time and again that there are actual quotes, you know just taken directly from Plotinus in their writings in which they applied to their Christian doctrines, in a minute I will talk to you about in, in Augustine as an illustration of this—let's see, maybe I should go right into Augustine, no, right, no I'll first tell you, you see I made the qualification that not all the great patristic thinkers had this, there is one especial, one exception, and that was Origin, but he too can be tied in immediately with Neoplatonism and I'll tell you how it goes.

We have a biography of Plotinus written by a student, Porphyry in which she tells us that Plotinus at the age of 28, Plotinus was from Egypt, at the age of 28 was in Alexandria he became converted to philosophy. Now that may seem strange to you but in those days philosophy was a way of life, it was like dropping out of society today, it was like joining a different culture, you dressed differently, you had a beard, and a staff, and

a particular kind of coat that you wore, it was a completely different lifestyle, and to turn to philosophy, to start to study was much more than just taking up another line of inquiry, it actually meant that your whole life changed. You went around preaching the gospel of philosophy.

O.K., at the age of 28, Porphyry tells us, Plotinus was converted to philosophy and started to attend the lectures of various philosophy profs. In Alexandria. Alexandria was as you know is at the mouth of the Nile, in Egypt, and was at that time one of the great cultural centers of the Hellenistic world. In fact in fact it measured up to Rome in importance and another significant thing about it was that it had a Jewish quarter, about a quarter of the city was the Jewish Quarter, and it produced many first-rate Jewish scholars, among whom are Josephus and Philo and a number of other men. So that, Plotinus came to philosophy in this great Cultural Center and went to all the standard philosophy teachers, which meant that he would go to a representative of the Academy, and of the Lyceum, and to the Stoa, the Stoic, and Porphyry tells us that he was not satisfied with any of them, until a friend of his took him to a fellow whose name was Ammonius Saccas—Ammonius Saccas, and when he heard him, when Plotinus heard this fellow, he said this is the man I've been looking for, and he stayed with him for 11 years, and he studied under him for 11 years, and after that he moved to Rome and started his own school.

Now the way this ties in with Origin, is this way. That Origin had had another, or Ammonia Saccaus, had had another student, about a generation, about some 20 years before, he had Plotinus. In fact he had several other students, one of these students was Origin who was the leader of the Christian catechetical school in Alexandria. At that time there was only one school, Christian school of higher learning in the whole world, and it was in Alexandria, and a particularly bright lad by the name of Origin was the head of it and he got his philosophical training from Ammonius Saccas. One reason, one of the reasons perhaps, this is speculation, that he chose Ammonius Saccas is that Ammonius had himself, according to Eusebius the Greek church historian, been a Christian, had grown up Christian but had thrown it overboard, but nevertheless it's possible that Origin had thought at least he's close enough to the Christian faith that I could learn a lot from him. But in any case Origin, and not only Origin, but after Origin was kicked out by the local bishop, banished, the fellow who took over the

catechetical school after Origin, a man by the name of *Her-a-class* was also a student of this Ammonius Saccas, and he in fact, Eusebius tells us, he went so far as even, when he was prof in this Christian school, wear this dress, this distinctive dress, of the pagan philosophers. So we can probably deduce, you see, that nothing Ammonius wrote has been preserved so we don't know what he taught, but we can more or less, deduce some of the things that he said by comparing the doctrine of Origin, whose writings have been largely preserved, and the doctrine of Plotinus, whose Enneads have been luckily completely preserved, so that it is in a sense true that the father of Neoplatonism is Ammonius Saccas, and that his two big pupils were Plotinus and Origin. So that in that sense, Origin who is the Great theologian before the great flowering, the great patristic flowering in the 4th and 5th centuries, was also influenced by Neoplatonism. My point being that an understanding of Neoplatonism is essential for an understanding of patristic thought.

O.K. now I'll just tell you in very brief outline what Plotinus said, and you'll notice as I go along that there's many resemblances to Gnosticism. He, said on top of the metaphysical latter, that is to say that the ultimate reality, the origin, the Arche of everything that is, is something he called to-han, the One, sometimes he called it the one, sometimes he called it the Good, sometimes he called it the arche, he used a lot of names for it, but every time that he would use a name like he would immediately qualify a statement and say, that is was only, that I can only talk about that analogically, I can't really say positively that it is, that I can only say it is not diversity, therefore the other side of the coin of that is, I'd have to say is the One, but it's no kind of one that we'd know in the cosmos in that we are live in. Or, that it is in no sense evil, and therefore the other side of the coin would be to say, that it is the good, but that doesn't mean that it's good in any sense that we know it, it transcends all the categories of our thinking. So this one, let's just call it the One, stands above everything, is the origin of everything, and devolves—as in Gnosticism—out of itself, the Nous, which is a Greek word for intellect, or mind or spirit, however you want to translate it, nous, let's say intellect, and this is, the nous was for Plotinus the ultimate rationality of everything, conceived as the union of subject and object. Now I don't know if that means anything to you, you people probably know about the ideas of Plato. Plato had the notion

of ideas, which were archetypes, models, patterns out in an intelligible world, which were the explanation of the individual things in the sensible

He would say, well, we see horses, all kinds of horses in the sensible world, well there is the idea of the horse, which is in the intelligible world. Well, Plotinus took over this idea, mixed it, brought together with Aristotle's notion of thinking which thinks itself, and came up with his idea of the Intellect, which is the second level of reality after the One. It's a very abstract metaphysical theory, so I probably haven't made it very clear, but we'll leave it at that. So we have the intellect, the Nous, after the one, and the Nous in turn, devolves out of itself, the Psyche, the Soul, and what the Greeks meant by the soul, essentially, very often what they meant was, the vitality of things, and everything that has soul lives, and this soul accounted for both the macrocosm, the whole universe had a Soul, that accounted for the orderliness of the stars, the orbits of the stars, and the change of the seasons, all the orderliness of the world at large, of the universe was explained by soul, and also soul explained organic order of animals and men.

O.K., so that's the third stage, you have the One, you have the intellect, you have the soul, and then you get to a critical point because the soul admits evil into the cosmos. It falls, there's a kind of a fall into sin, just as we had in Gnosticism, and through this fall we get the material world. Matter, which is, it's not really like the way we talk about matter, it's kind of like a limiting concept, it was kind of like the absence, what he meant by matter was sort of the absence of order, and was therefore intrinsically evil, he said the principle of evil is matter, so you can see again where there is an analogy with a Gnostic notion that the material universe is in itself evil. So that is the downward progression, down from the One, the intellect, to the soul, to matter; but there is also a progression, a movement going up, which you have is human beings. Human beings are a composite of all these various levels, I mean the way we are now today, like sitting in this room, you know having, relating to the material world the way we do through our senses, thinking in our soul, the way we are now is a composite, a putting together of all these various elements of: matter, of our body, our soul, of our vitality, which is in contact with our higher soul, which is our thinking, and if we really get up there to theoretical abstract thought then we're actually participating in the intellect, and—this is essential, if we really follow the way upward, and get to theoretical thought then there's one last step, and then you become

identified with the One. Mystical Union with the One so that is analogous with the Gnostic notion of the re-integration into the original Godhead. So basically you have this going out of God into the whole material cosmos, and then Man, being a part and parcel of that cosmos, man though his soul having the capacity to come back into mystical union with the One, which is the meaning of life. This is what men are there for, I mean the only way to get to the good, the Good, means pretty well means, The meaning of things—the point of that you're here, so that man, every man, to get to meaning, to get to meaningfulness in his life has to be a philosopher in order to get to this hi-, you know to get to this intellectual level of abstraction, in order to in turn to come to mystical union with the One, and this involved a lot of things, it involves the whole ethics, the aesthetic, of ethics of meaning that you stayed clear of all material things, you withdrew within yourself and meditated; there's a famous statement by his biographer Porphyry, that Plotinus was like a man ashamed of his body, that same idea as in Gnosticism that there is this spark in man which doesn't really belong in the body, the bodyliness of the world as we know it. Okay, so that's in basic outline what he said. With this very heavy emphasis on return to a mystical God, or you know, first principle with an emphasis on the intellectual and nonmaterial, O.K..

---

Now, I'd like to take as an illustration of his influence Augustine. As you people know the patristic thinkers can be divided very roughly, this is a kind of an external criteria, but it makes sense, it has use to divide the patristic thinkers into the Greek and Latin fathers. The reason why it's important to make this distinction is, the tradition in which we stand is the tradition which goes back to this patristic period, via the Middle Ages, via the Western European Middle Ages, and in the Middle Ages in Western Europe people didn't read Greek so that much of the patristic fathers, patristic thought, was lost, their influence will be lost during the Medieval period and the fathers which they read in the Middle Ages, people like Aquinas for instance, where the Latin fathers, or those few Greek fathers which were translated into Latin.

So it's the Latin fathers which are particularly important in the tradition in which we stand. The other great Christian tradition is the one which goes through the Greek Middle Ages, the Byzantine area in which ends up what is today the Greek Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church, this whole thing which we have had little contact, though perhaps contact is growing and we can't understand them unless we know their

Greek fathers. But anyhow, what I want to say is that for us, the most important fathers are the Latin ones, and the greatest of the Latin fathers is Augustine. The first father was Tertullian but he has no influence, because he was basically influenced by Stoicism, and Stoicism was swamped by Neoplatonism, so that, he just had no—besides that, he went Montanist and became a heretic. And so Tertullian, even though he was a great theologian, and though he did have a hand in the formulation of many doctrines, as a whole had very little influence, because he was basically oriented to Stoicism. He talked about the soul as being basically material, as the Stoics had, he's therefore not as important in terms of influence as Augustine, and there were of course many other Latin fathers, Jerome for instance, Ambrosius, Ambrose, let's see, what's somemore? But, anyhow Augustine towers over all of them, the whole Middle Ages was dominated by Augustine. OK, I'll tell you something about Augustine in relation to Plotinus. I may be going over things that you've already told them, but, OK.

Augustine was born in North Africa near what was then called Carthage, which is, what is today known as Tunisia, Tunis. His mother was a Christian his father was not, his father was a civil servant in that Roman province, that Roman African province, and he grew he was taught by his mother the Christian faith, and he was a very bright lad, and at a very early age he threw over the Christian faith and went into the study of Latin literature. You should realize that at this time, besides the Berber language which was spoken in North Africa, the educated language was Latin so that the tongue in which Augustine felt most comfortable with was Latin, although there's evidence that he also knew this Berber language, and he had a great deal of trouble with Greek, which he tells us in his Confessions, he never really got to learn Greek that well, but since his great gift was in language, in the use of language, in the use of his of the Latin language, he went into what we today perhaps would call an English major, what was then known as a *retour*, a teacher of rhetoric, which meant that you taught people how to speak effectively in Latin.

He went from North Africa, which was his home, to Rome to exercise his profession as *retour*, and there he fell in with, having lost the Christian faith, the Manicheans. The Manicheans were a Gnostic sect which put a very heavy emphasis on the devaluation of creation and the material, then he went up to Milan, which is in the north of Italy, and I've forgotten

exactly though agency, or what means, he got to hear the sermons of the bishop, the chief Christian preacher in Milan who was Ambrose. And Ambrose was a fellow, unlike many of the other people in Italy at that time, who knew Greek, and who had read Origen, and Plotinus.

This has just recently been discovered that he knew Plotinus, since the rediscovery of Plotinus in the 20th century, that people have been discovering that there is all kinds of literal quotes from Plotinus in Ambrose. Anyhow, he was so impressed, Augustine, by the preaching of Ambrose, at first simply by his rhetoric, you know the way he could handle language, that he stayed on, and after a while it was via the Neoplatonic way in which Ambrose presented the gospel, which Ambrose had gotten from Origen and Plotinus, that Augustine became interested in the Christian faith.

And tells us in the Confessions, that at this stage in his approach to Christianity, some Platonic books fell his hands and it's pretty much been proved beyond doubt that these Platonic books were a Latin translation of Plotinus' works the Enneads. That he read these works of Plotinus, and that this combination of Ambrose's preaching, and the reading of Plotinus' Enneads, were the decisive factors in his deciding to be baptized into the Christian Faith. And the fact that this is so has led a number of scholars, in fact first guy that proposed this theory was our friend Adolf von Harnack, to suggest that when Augustine was—quote—converted, that he was not in a real sense converted to Christianity in the first instance, but to Neoplatonism. So there's been a hot controversy between the followers of Von Harnack and especially catholic scholars. Because catholic scholars pretty well dominate the field of patristic studies, which is a great pity, which is why some of you people should go up to the Institute to learn about patristics and get a protestant view of the matter.

There's been a hot controversy about whether Augustine was in fact converted to Christianity at that time in Milan. Nobody doubts that later in his life that he became an orthodox Christian, but the question is whether he really understood what christianity was about at that stage and whether he didn't really have a very Neoplatonic concept of what christianity was, because he himself says in his Confessions, that's his autobiography in which he tells the story of his intellectual development, he says what was really, what really was the decisive factor in his coming to Christianity, was that Ambrose, and the reading of these Platonic books, convinced him that it was possible for their to be a non material

human reality. The Manichaeians had said that man is completely material he's caught up in this world, what he's got to do is get out of it, the Neoplatonists had this heavy emphasis on the reality of the soul, and the reality of the intellect which was all immaterial, and in which man can participate. So he himself, Augustine himself says in so many words, that it was through this Neoplatonic distinction that he finally got into the Christian faith, and it's interesting that while up in Milan, before he was baptized he had to go into some catechism, you know a person was not baptized as today, until he had had some basic instruction in the Christian faith. So that what he did was took a few of his friends, plus his mother Monica who had been praying very hard for him all along that he would become Christian, he and his friends, and mother, went up to an Estate in the foothills of the Alps, anyhow the hill country up by the Northern Italian lakes, a place called Cassiciacum, I guess is about 30 miles North of Milan, which in the, and I can maybe as an aside say that today, this place is called Casago—and if you're ever in North Italy you can visit it, I went up there about two years ago just for the sake of being where Augustine was at that time—what he did there, on this estate, was talked about questions of faith and philosophy, with his friends and he wrote it up in the form of philosophical dialogues, and if you see the works of Augustine in the library you'll see that the first volume or two are called *The Cassiciacum Dialogues*, and it is in those dialogues that you can see very clearly his, the Neoplatonic influence.

One of the writings for instance is called *Dobrogea*, *On Order*, in which he explains evil as a lack of order, and he also goes into the whole metaphysical theory of Neoplatonism, that you can reduce that in turn to a lack of being, so all of this is very clearly Neoplatonic, he tells us this in his *Confessions*, and just before he died, Augustine—he wrote a book called *Retractions*, the Latin title is *Retractationes*, which is generally translated as *Retractions*, but that doesn't really mean that he took back what he said back, what it really means is that he had made a review of all of his writings to date, and that when he, in his old age, looks back on his intellectual development, he says about those early dialogues he had written before he was baptized, “I was far too much influenced by the Pagan philosophers,” a lot of that stuff would have to be rewritten and he says that he moves slowly, and further further away from that influence, which is important to note because, when people quote Augustine, you should always be aware of what stage of Augustine's development that work is, because if it's an early book, you know people can prove a lot of

Neoplatonic doctrine out of that, if it's a late book, you can prove the opposite very often. So the history of Augustine's life, after becoming a Christian, is a moving away from this Neoplatonic influence but nevertheless it was very decisively there. Especially in such doctrines as what is sin, you know is a lack of being, a the lack of the good, and so on which is the metaphysical doctrine of sin that completely lacks a moral dimension and is therefore rather bad. OK, so that's just an illustration of the influence of Neoplatonism on the patristics.

I should tell you one last anecdote about Augustine, and that on his deathbed, this is a kind of dramatic situation, the Roman Empire was crumbling at this time, he died in 430, and the Goths, I think it was the Goths, or else the Huns, but anyhow, some barbaric, some barbaric Germanic tribe had come down from what's today Germany, all the way from Italy and had ravished the countryside, had taken over all the Roman institutions, and had crossed the Mediterranean over into North Africa where Augustine was, and had besieged the city of which he was a bishop, Hippo, as he lay dying. He was on his deathbed when the whole Roman civilization was crashing around his ears so to speak, and the Goths were besieging the city in which he was, and it was only a question of time before they took the place over and everybody would be killed. So in that situation, his last words, his last recorded words on his deathbed are, you would think perhaps a quote from the Bible, but they are a direct quote from *Enneads* 4:05, a quote from Plotinus where he says, "it is not the part of a wise man to think that it is any great thing, if a mortal man dies," so he saying, you know, so a man dies, it is no big deal if I die because I'm a mortal anyhow. But, it's a word play, that's probably why he liked it because he was a *retour*. In Latin, as in the original Greek, there's a word play between between death and mortal, mortal is Latin for dying. But anyhow, so you could see what pervasive influence Plotinus had on Augustine, you know right up to the very end. That's just as an illustration of the importance of Neoplatonism.

Now, I should bring up one other thing which has been of great importance in the history of Christian thinking, I will have to do that in five minutes I see, I will deal very briefly with the figure of *Dionysius the Pseudo Areopagite*, now there's a title for you. You people may remember that in *Axe 17*, the story is told of how Paul preaches to the philosophers in Athens, and he talks either on the Areopagus or to the Areopagus, there

was a hill near the Agora in Athens, and there was also a council called by that name, so it is not for sure whether it was only on the hill, or also in the council that he spoke, but anyhow, Luke tells us in Acts that there were philosophers among them, and they listened to him for a while but when he talked about the resurrection of the dead, he, they laughed him out of court. They said, you know, this guy, huh—this is obvious idiocy, and I think that is also interesting that in first Corinthians, Paul talks about how he came first came to the Corinthians, that after being laughed out of Athens he goes to Corinth, and he says to the Corinthians—you knew how I was when I first came to Corinth, I was trembling with fear, and I'd lost all my confidence, because he's just been laughed out of court by these fellows in Athens, and then he says, but I came to you in the power of the Spirit and the demonstration of the power of the Spirit. But anyhow, he was not completely without success in Athens. Luke tells us that one of the people that did receive the Word of God was a man by the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, a member of this council called the Areopagus.

Now, so we know that there was a Christian that was converted by Paul, who was presumably pretty philosophically inclined, since he was in this gathering of philosophers, and that he was Dionysius the Areopagite. Now we don't hear anything of any Dionysius the Areopagite until the 6<sup>th</sup> Century after Christ, and then suddenly a great body of literature becomes known, written by someone who purports to be Dionysius the Areopagite. I'm going to have to go very fast now, I'll say very briefly what I'm saying. This Dionysius was in fact a hoax, his teacher had been, not Paul the Apostle, but Porclus the neoplatonic philosopher, and his writings are just neoplatonic philosophy dressed in biblical imagery. He is one of the few Greek fathers who was translated into Latin, and because it was believed right through the Middle Ages, that he was not a hoax, but he was the genuine disciple of Paul his writings had almost a canonical authority, so that Thomas Aquinas for instance quotes Dionysius the Areopagite almost as often as much as he quotes Augustine, which is quite a lot, so that both via Augustine, who wrote Latin, and via Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite who was translated, one of the few Greek fathers who was translated into Latin, the neo-platonic influence got into the Medieval Tradition, especially fellows like Aquinas, and became all wrapped up in the Christian Intellectual Tradition and it was not until the Renaissance when people began to learn critical literary analysis, that it was discovered that it was in fact impossible that this

fellow could have lived in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century after Christ, and that it was a hoax, and until the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there are Catholic thinkers who defend the authenticity of this Areopagite, which is really Neoplatonism, but because of this big mistake, had gotten confused with this Apostolic authority. So that its important, here again, to realize the pervasive the influence of Neoplatonism on Modern Christian thought.

---