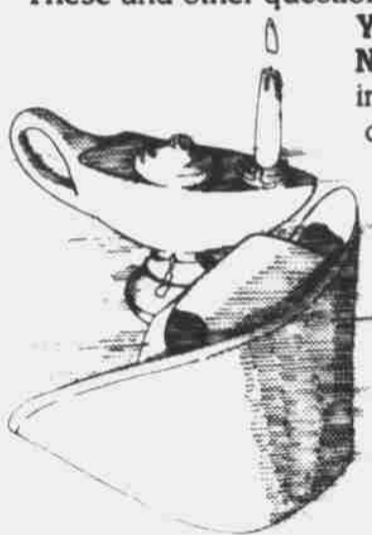


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Theologian says things should be related to God's ordering

By Mary Louise Knapp

Man's fundamental purpose is to relate to his life the will of God, a theologian said Tuesday.

In a lecture entitled "Toward a Theocentric vision," James M. Gustafson discussed the theology of John Calvin and his own beliefs concerning Calvin's doctrines.

Gustafson's lecture, the second in the Atkinson Theological Lectures series, was sponsored by the Religious Studies Committee of the UNL College of Arts and Sciences. The Atkinson lectures are the first theological lectures to be presented at UNL.

"All things ought to be properly related to God's ordering," Gustafson said.

This does not mean that man cannot help himself, he explained. Man should also accept help from others.

"We are not hindered from putting our affairs in order," he said.

Gustafson is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and a professor of theology at the University of Chicago.

Conscience can err

Gustafson said that man's conscience is usually his guide, but can err at times.

"This is why we were given a written law," he said. There are three elements of the "reform tradition" of Calvin in which Gustafson said he believes.

The first of these states that God is an all-powerful other who has complete knowledge of everything that happens and who has a purpose for every event.

"Nothing happens by chance," Gustafson said.

Gustafson said the qualities of God—foreknowledge of events and the ability to control events, are to some extent present in man, but, because of human limitations, man does not have the power to completely control everything in his life.

"The possibilities of human action are severely limited by who and where we are, but we can sustain and alter the course of events to some extent," he said.

The second element refers to the "centrality of piety." "When I speak of piety, I do not mean ostentatiously living or pretending to live a religious life," he said.

"Piety is respect and devotion to God, which implies the acceptance of duties and responsibilities," he said.

Gustafson said that piety is evoked by the presence of God and the realization of his power.

Pervasive sense

"Calvin was aware of a pervasive sense of piety, of the knowledge of God brought by the experience of God" through observation of the natural laws, he said.

"It is meaningless to make a case for the existence of God and our obligation to him, and for ethics and morality unless piety exists," he said.

The third element is the relation of a man's life to the will of God.

"We obey (God) out of gratitude and knowledge of what is displeasing to him," Gustafson said. "We are not to follow the mind's caprice."

Gustafson said that while he agreed with the basic principles of Calvin's theology, he questioned some points of belief.

He said that while tragic events can result in some benefit or meaning for those affected by them, these events were not designed solely for that purpose.

"Some reformers believe that God wills only what is good for man," he said. "God is for man in the sense that man's possibilities depend on what God gives him, but God's will is not always for our benefit."

Piety, faith, and moral virtue that results from them, which are given by God's grace alone, in the attainment

Gustafson said that eternal life provides rewards for those who did not receive all that they should have in this life, and retribution for those who received more than they should have.

UN-L Homecoming '80 GOOD VIBRATIONS October 15-18



BLACKBERRY WINTER

WEDNESDAY ROYALTY ELECTION — East Campus, East Campus Union, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

MARX BROTHERS MOVIE — "Horsefeathers," Nebraska Union Centennial Room, 9 p.m.

FRIDAY

HOMECOMING DISPLAY JUDGING, 2-4 P.M.

CAMPUS PARADE, 7 p.m.

PEP RALLY — Union Mall, 7:30 p.m.

HOMECOMING DANCE — Featuring Blackberry Winter, 8 p.m., Nebraska Union. Introduction of Homecoming Royalty Candidates at 8:45 p.m. Announce winners of Display Contest at 9:45 p.m.

SATURDAY

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT on the Union Mall, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

FOOTBALL — Cornhuskers vs. Oklahoma State Cowboys, 1:30 p.m. Memorial Stadium. Homecoming Royalty will be crowned at Half-Time.

ALL-ALUMNI Postgame Homecoming Gathering, after the game in the Hilton Hotel Ballroom.

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