

Lecture 12: The Line of Despair (I)

Father, we want to thank You for this day, we thank You for revealing Yourself to us. And as we begin to look now at the dilemma that our contemporaries are in, we pray that You will give us understanding; that we may really begin to see in a new way just how people around us look at the world and themselves. With understanding we may have compassion and a desire to communicate more faithfully. We ask it Father, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

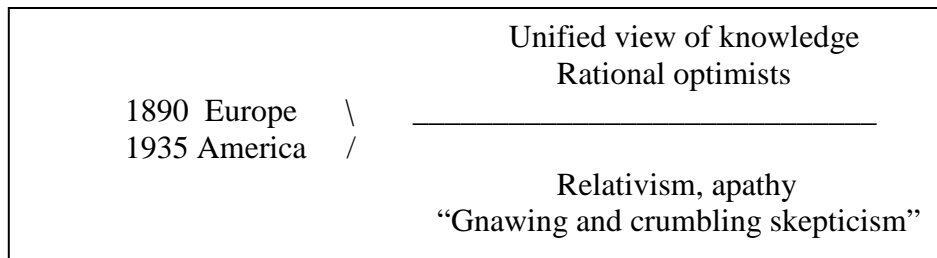
Introduction and Review: Moving on from Schaeffer's *Basic Bible Studies* to *The God Who Is There* and *Escape from Reason*, Professor Barrs now examines the central points of Schaeffer's explanation for the mindset of the present culture and how it affects the church. After a brief introduction, he begins with the basic concept of what Schaeffer called "the line of despair."

The Line of Despair (I)

I. Introduction

- A. The necessity of understanding "the line of despair"
 - 1. Ability to communicate
 - 2. Ability to resist the "spirit of the age"
- B. The distinction between "rational" and Rationalism
 - 1. "Rational" - consistent with reality, not contrary to reason
 - 2. Rationalism - faith in reason alone; secular humanism

II. "The Line of Despair"



- A. A shift in the concept of truth
 - 1. "Modern man"
 - 2. The insight of Nietzsche
- B. The problem for the church
 - 1. Still operating in the former system of assumptions
 - a. Hindered communication
 - b. An example: the abortion issue
- C. Inconsistent claim of relativism in "religious knowledge" and objectivity elsewhere
- D. Examples of the line of despair (19th century)
 - 1. Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush" and "In Tenebris"
 - a. Hopeless human condition
 - 2. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*
 - a. Stoicism not of courage but resignation
 - 3. Stephen Crane's "The Black Riders"