

6/7/74

Summer Seminar

Body, Soul, Spirit

for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them." If these verses and a few others like them are taken by themselves, it is easy to see why the Flagellantes in the Middle Ages should walk the streets of European cities flogging themselves at every step; why monks should shut themselves off as some of them did from all contact with other people; some raised their arms above their heads and held them there until they shrivelled up in order to crucify the flesh, the body. Now this is an attitude which many people seeking spirituality find it desirable to follow. They think they have support for it in the Scriptures.

Over against that however, we have the common attitude of the Roman empire in the days when Christianity was coming into it which was to make bodily satisfactions the highest value in life. So the sensuality, the licentiousness and the wickedness of the later Roman empire became very extreme. One wonders whether it got any where near as far as was the attitude of so many people in our present day when a moving picture which is called an adult picture, because it was licentious or a picture which panders to people's desire to have an experience of horror, or of gasping or something like that might like the Exbrsist, will draw such crowds as compared with what the ordinary decent picture will draw. We have the two extremes: the body is the sole thing that matters in life; it is for bodily enjoyment that we live; let us eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. The opposite attitude is, the body is a bad thing; it is something that is very injurious to us, we must hold it under in every possible way, we must injure it, we must get away from it as rapidly as we can. Now this is the basic problem we are looking at now. In looking at it we are intruded to a number of other problems that are closely related to it, but which I do not think can be fully understood without giving this problem also. However, I'm not going to try at this moment to go further into this particular problem, but to speak of

II The Importance of Levels of Belief. Here we have a matter that we