‘Head’ and ‘Heart’ in Augustine, Anselm, Calvin and Edwards

A conflict is often experienced between the study of the Bible and of Christian theology on the one hand, and the religious life on the other. This is sometimes expressed as failure to integrate ‘head’ and ‘heart’. This short course aims to address this issue using various models of integration drawn from notable theological figures in Christian history. These are taken from the Augustinian tradition where, in my judgment, such integration is seen at its best.

The outline of the teaching is as follows:

Monday: Identifying the cause of the problem, human fallenness and the loss of ‘order’ in the self. Voluntarism and Intellectualism; fideism. The characteristics of Augustinianism. “Faith seeking understanding” – what does this mean? Distinguishing this issue from others e.g. the relationship between Christianity and culture, and the relation between faith and reason.

Monday: Introduction and Case 1 Augustine, Time and eternity (Drawn from Books VII and XI of the Confessions)

Tuesday: Case 2 Anselm, God as the most perfect being (Drawn from his Proslogion)

Wednesday: Case 3 Calvin, Knowing God, and Justification and the judgment of God (Drawn from his Institutes)

Thursday: Case 4 Edwards, Truth and the affections (Drawn from his Religious Affections)

The cases are largely discussed in a text-based way, in a seminar mode. Students are required, therefore, to bring copies of the relevant texts (details below) to class and to be prepared to discuss them, based on their prior reading.

The objectives

To understand, from a historical perspective, issues of methodology raised by the problem of faith and learning.

Outcome

To be able to think biblically and critically about various truth claims, effectively evaluating them.

Reading

Basic


John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Various editions)

*Further Reading*

D.A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Leicester, Apollos)