

Wednesday 8 March, 8<sup>th</sup> Week

## The Dance of Dante's Paradiso

*Dr Brian Williams*

Dante's journey through the afterlife plunges him into the dark and rancorous cacophony of the Inferno, where he experiences sin and disorder; sees him climb alongside the struggling and mutually supportive community of the Purgatorio, where loves are slowly reordered; and finally lifts him into the radiant quick-stepping dance of the Paradiso, where souls enjoy intellectual, volitional, and spiritual harmony with one another and with the Triune God. Whereas the Inferno is the city we repent, and the Purgatorio the city we indwell, Paradiso is the city for which we hope. However, Dante's vision of paradise is not a soft utopian dream to occupy our wishful thinking. It educates our desires through longing and challenges us to discern ways of living and being in 'this' city that proleptically anticipate the beauty and harmony of 'that' city. In doing so, it challenges us to ask which of our thoughts and actions, practices and structures would be resisted and rejected by that harmonious city rather than welcomed into it. What is wood and hay and what silver and gold? Thus, with the culminating vision of the Paradiso, Dante inspires us to embody our hope through adopting a kind of proleptic sacramentality that teleologically orders our practical reason toward the wholeness and human flourishing of the heavenly city. His desire is that we learn to pursue, in the words of another poet, some of the "dearest, freshness, deep down things" that we will meet with glad recognition when that eschatological "morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs" and we enter together into the eternal day of paradise.

*Brian Williams is a Lecturer in Theology at Jesus College, and a DPhil student in Christian Ethics, focussing on the work of Hugh of St. Victor, Philip Melancthon, and John Henry Newman, on education and the intellectual appetite.*



THE MNEMOSYNE PROJECT AT PUSEY HOUSE

This Series is open to all students, clergy, and members of the public. The aim of the series is to provide an intensive introduction to some of the key periods, characters, and ideas of Christian history.

Recollection Series - Hilary 2017  
**Pusey House**

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THE MNEMOSYNE PROJECT

# THE RECOLLECTION SERIES 2017 HILARY

Intensive introductions to some of the key periods, characters & ideas of Christian history.

*Wednesday 25 January, 2<sup>nd</sup> Week*

**Nikitas Stithatos, 11th-Cent. Controversialist  
and nearly-forgotten Spiritual Master**

*Professor Andrew Louth*

Nikitas Stithatos was the biographer and editor of St Symeon the New Theologian. He was involved in the debates with the Latins in 1054, and earlier with the Armenians. He was a monk of the Stoudios Monastery and a staunch defender of their customs, and a spiritual writer (his three centuries on the spiritual life were included in the Philokalia). For those not familiar with his work, one could say that he is, in some ways, *mutatis mutandis*, a kind of mid-Byzantine Thomas Traherne.

*Andrew Louth, Professor Emeritus of Patristic and Byzantine Studies in the Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University, and Rector of the Orthodox Parish of St Cuthbert and St Bede, Durham.*

*Wednesday 8 February, 4<sup>th</sup> Week*  
**Anselm's conception of God**

*Dr Ian D Logan*

Anselm is famous for his argument for the existence of God. But what and who is this God whose existence he seeks to establish? In this talk I seek to answer this question and to consider the distinctively Anselmian philosophical/theological approach to God.

*Ian D Logan is Senior Research Fellow, Faculty of Philosophy, Blackfriars Hall.*

*All are invited for tea and coffee  
before the lecture, from 3.30pm.  
The lecture itself begins at 4pm  
and lasts about an hour, followed by  
a time of questions and discussion.*

*Wednesday 22 February 6<sup>th</sup> Week*

**'Oculus Sacerdotis' - Pastoral Theology and  
Practice in late mediaeval England**

*The Rev'd Canon Dr Robin Ward*

This lecture will consider how the reform legislation of the 13th century was put into effect in pastoral theology and practice, particularly in the way priests were instructed in their duties pertaining to the cure of souls. Taking Chaucer's parson as the model, the lecture will look at the English tradition of pastoral manuals, in both Latin and the vernacular.

*Robin Ward is the Principal of St Stephen's House, Oxford.*

