Scott In Chapel: ‘Theology Broods Absence Of God’

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"Modern theology is brooding on the eclipse or absence of God . . . the death of God," according to Dr. Nathan A. Scott.

"There has been a basic shift from the great theological campaign against security in the '40s. We now realize that there is no radical disjunction between the sacred and the secular."

In his address last Thursday in the Rice Chapel, Dr. Scott spoke of the "rare insight into the human situation" as found in modern literature. The literature of today in its secularity "has never been so human."

Search For Self

According to Dr. Scott, the new tide of anti-tradition literature must be greeted by the church. Christianity and the new authors are united in the "search for the nature of ourselves."

Modern authors express the idea that man is "a creature ousted from security, riddled with doubt," and who is threatened by "an invasion of the surrounding nothingness."

This idea of an invasion of nothingness is a theory widely divergent from the story of the Gospel. Man is described as a creature "trailing clouds of glory." The Christian viewpoint is one of "man turned toward God, and God eternally turned toward man."

"To be human in the Christian sense of reality is to be stamped by the Glory of God."

Hostility

Dr. Scott said that this view differs sharply from that which is expressed in the great literature of today. Because of this, each side approaches the other with a great deal of hostility.

According to Dr. Scott, Christians should not expect the artist to do the impossible. There has been a "great erosion of this type of religious faith in the present period."

Modern theory is pondering the question about how we may speak of God. Dr. Scott said that "religious imagination seems to disappear in a world without the presence of God."

God-less World

"Our literature, if it is to be truly contemporary, must be wholly secular, a literature in which the world described is one where God has disappeared."

The church must accept a "deepened sense of secularization." Man must undergo a "Baptism of Imagination" in which he encounters the effects of the totally secularized world.

"In this type of secularized world, we are brought anew to the presence from which we thought to be absent."