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Theological Discussion Group papers6882670

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Description is written in: English.

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

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URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke.html>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	Theological Discussion Group
Title:	Theological Discussion Group papers
ID:	6882670
Date [inclusive]:	1934 -- 1961
Physical Description:	2.25 linear feet 2.25 linear feet; 5 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Theological Discussion Group, meeting twice yearly in weekend retreat initially at Yale University, included Reinhold Niebuhr, Richard Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Henry Van Dusen, James Luther Adams, Georgia Harkness and many other leading Christian thinkers. Papers were presented and critiqued, and issues concerning the evolution of Christianity and the modern world discussed. The collection contains typescript addresses presented to the Theological Discussion Group, as well as a small amount of administrative correspondence, including lists of members.

Preferred Citation

Item description, Theological Discussion Group papers, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Biographical / Historical

The [East Coast] Theological Discussion Group was started in 1934 by Henry Pitney Van Dusen at the time when he was Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at UTS and continued until the early 1960s. The aim of this long lived discussion group, in the words of Van Dusen, was to "discover what is essential and distinctive in the Christian gospel for today" by a process of debate around chosen themes. The recurrently attending theologians of this group were Reinhold Niebuhr, Richard Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Henry Van Dusen, James Luther

Adams, Georgia Harkness, Wilhelm Pauck, John Knox, Edwin Aubrey, Douglas Steere and Cornelius Kruse among others. The group chose a topic for the year and would meet twice yearly to present papers concerning that topic at a weekend retreat. A critic was chosen for each presentation. Topics include: Church and Politics, Humanism, American Corruptions, Redemption, War, Eschatology, etc. While most of the meetings were held as weekend retreats at Yale Divinity School in New Haven, CT, some were held at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey and College of Preachers in Washington D.C.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains typescript addresses presented to the Theological Discussion Group. It includes a small amount of administrative correspondence, including lists of members, which are included with the folders of addresses given at the retreats to which they refer. A number of undated or anonymous papers within this collection appear to originate from the group or to have circulated among members of the group.

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged in one chronological series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2023-02-09

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection is a compilation from two sources in the Burke Library: initially papers from Union Seminary Administrative records Series 9F whose original source was President H. P Van Dusen's papers after 1963 and the contents of a formerly unprocessed restricted access box of papers (Cage RK55T391).

Processing Information

The collection has been retained in the original chronological order of the discussion group meetings. Administrative papers are retained with the meeting session to which they refer. Dated papers are followed by a sequence of undated papers and finally a small number of anonymous papers also undated. 42 of the total of 55 meetings are covered here. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. In some cases, acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper. The finding aid was created by R. Clifton Bailey in 2007 and revised with additions by Ruth Tonkiss Cameron in 2008, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2023.

Conditions Governing Use

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Related Materials

Related Materials

42 of the total of 55 meetings are covered here. For papers and meetings not covered in this collection, please see Yale Divinity School archives: Theological Discussion Group

Papers (RG 43), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library. <https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/4/resources/252>

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Controlled Access Headings

- Theology
- Discussion in Christian education
- Bainton, Roland H (Roland Herbert), 1894-1984
- Bennett, John C (John Coleman), 1902-1995
- Calhoun, Robert Lowry, 1896-1983
- Cavert, Samuel McCrea, 1888-1976
- Corwin, Virginia, 1901-
- Harkness, Georgia Elma, 1891-1974
- Horton, Walter Marshall, 1895-1966
- Miller, Francis Pickens, 1895-1978
- Miller, Randolph Crump, 1910-2002
- Moore, John Morrison, 1904-
- Muilenburg, James
- Niebuhr, H. Richard (Helmut Richard), 1894-1962
- Niebuhr, Reinhold, 1892-1971
- Pauck, Wilhelm, 1901-1981
- Steere, Douglas V (Douglas Van), 1901-1995
- Tillich, Paul, 1886-1965
- Van Dusen, Henry P (Henry Pitney), 1897-1975
- Wilder, Amos N (Amos Niven), 1895-1993
- Yale University. Divinity School
- Theological Discussion Group

Burke Library record group:

General collections

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Collection Inventory

Theological Discussion Group papers, 1934 -- 1961

Physical Description: 2.25 linear feet 2.25 linear feet; 5 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains typescript addresses presented to the Theological Discussion Group. It includes a small amount of administrative correspondence, including lists of members, which are included with the folders of addresses given at the retreats to which they refer. A number of undated or anonymous papers within this collection appear to originate from the group or to have circulated among members of the group.

Title/Description	Instances	
What is Essential and Distinctive in the Christian Gospel for Today? 1 st Meeting, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., Feb 2-4, 1934	box 1	folder 1
Scope and Contents		
Addresses: Aubrey, Edwin E. What is Essential and Distinctive... Calhoun, Robert What is Essential and Distinctive... Horton, Walter M. What is Essential and Distinctive... McGregor, Daniel What is Essential and Distinctive... Pauck, Wilhelm What is Essential and Distinctive... Administrative Papers of Henry Van Dusen: Proposed Conference-Retreats of Younger Christian Thinkers Correspondence to members of Princeton Group, Feb 2-4, 1934 Correspondence to the members of Retreat, Dec 1933 - Feb1934 Includes Memo re Program		
Significance of Jesus Christ? 2 nd Meeting, Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, N.J., Apr 27-29, 1934	box 1	folder 2
Scope and Contents		
Addresses: Hough, Lynn Harold I. Thinking in a Shaking World Branscombe, Harvie II. Jesus of History Miller, Francis P. IV. Significance of Jesus for Our Concept'... Bennet, John C. V. Relevance of the Ethic		

of Jesus for Contemp Administrative Papers: Extract
from letter from Steere, Mar 16, 1934

The Social Strategy of the Christian, 3 rd Meeting, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT, Oct. 26-28, 1934	box 1	folder 3
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Cavert, Samuel Resources of Churches
for Economic Change Farmer, Herbert H. Strategy of
Christians in Present Threat of War Henson, Francis
A. Christian Attitude towards Marxist Strategy Van
Dusen, Henry P. Limits of Compromise and Asceticism
Administrative Papers from Henry Van Dusen:
Correspondence to members, June 12 -Oct 12, 1934

The Christian Doctrine of Man, 4 th Meeting, Yale D S, New Haven, CT, Feb 1-3, 1935	box 1	folder 4
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Calhoun, R.L. Aspects of the Churches
Thought about Man -History Vlastos, Gregory Brief
Analysis of Human Nature Niebuhr, H. Richard
Christian Doctrine of Man Paulk, Wilhelm Man
as Saved Aubrey, Edwin Summary of Discussions
Administrative Papers from Henry Van Dusen:
Correspondence to members, Dec 14, 1934

A Study of Our Knowledge of God, 5 th Meeting, Yale D S, New Haven, CT, Nov 1-3, 1935	box 1	folder 5
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Horton, Walter M. Revelation Bainton,
Roland H. Authority and Religious Knowledge Moore,
John M. Scientific Method and Religious Knowledge
Steere, Douglas V. Role of Mystical Experience in
Religion & Morality Administrative Papers from Henry
Van Dusen: Correspondence and Schedule of Meeting,
Mar 5, 1935; Oct 18, 1935

The Christian Philosophy of History, 6 th Meeting, Yale D S, New Haven, CT, Feb 7-9, 1936	box 1	folder 6
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Thomas, George Can we Believe in
Progress? Mackay, John Historical & Supernatural
Elements in Christianity Tillich, Paul Marxist View of
History Niebuhr, Richard Reflections on the Christian
Theory of History Administrative Papers from Henry
Van Dusen: Correspondence to members, Mar 25,
1936; Schedule, Dec 11, 1935

The Church, 7 th Meeting, Yale D S, New Haven, CT, Nov 6-8, 1936	box 1	folder 7
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Pauck, Wilhelm Historical Conceptions of the Church
 McGregor, Daniel Catholic Conception of the Church
 Miller, Francis Church and World Community
 Van Dusen, Henry Functions of the Church
 Bainton, R.H. Comments on W. Pauck's Paper
 Pauck, Wilhelm Idea of the Church in Christian History, pt.1 + 2
 Administrative Papers from Henry Van Dusen: Correspondence to the members, Oct 9, 1936

The Church and Politics, 8 th Meeting, Yale D Sl, New Haven, CT, Jan, 1937	box 1	folder 8
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Cavert, Samuel Church and State Arising From American History
 Kruse, Cornelius What Strategy to Adopt With Reference to Fascism?
 Harkness, Georgia What Strategy to Adopt With Reference to Democracy?

The Problem of God, 9 th Meeting, Yale D S, New Haven, CT, Nov 5-7, 1937	box 2	folder 1
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Bixler, J.S. Three Contrasts in Contemporary Thought about God
 Niebuhr, Reinhold Transcendence of God
 Bennett, John C. Problem of Evil

Christian Evangelism, 10th Meeting, Yale D S, New Haven, CT, Feb 4-6, 1938	box 2	folder 2
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Niebuhr, Richard Christian Evangel and Social Culture
 Mackay, John A. Universal Element in Christianity
 Steere, Douglas V. Evangelism and Christian Fellowship
 Moore, John M. Memorandum Slip

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, 11th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov 11-13, 1938	box 2	folder 3
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Kruse, Cornelius Philosophical Meaning of "Spirit"
 Branscomb, Harvey Biblical Doctrine of the Holy Spirit
 Moore, John M. Schedule of Meeting

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, 12th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Feb 10-12, 1939	box 2	folder 4
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Steere, Douglas Holy Spirit (God and Man)
 McGregor, D.A. Holy Spirit and the Church Tillich,
 Paul Holy Spirit and the General Concept of Spirit
 Calhoun, Robert L. Holy Spirit in the Trinity Van
 Dusen, Henry Memorandum Administrative Papers
 from John M. Moore: Correspondence and Schedule
 of Meeting, Jan 2, 1939 Correspondence re death of
 Ernest A. 'Syme' Yarrow

Nature, Grace, Sacraments, 13th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov 10-12, 1939	box 2	folder 5
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Bixler, J.S. Problem of Nature and Grace
 ... Horton, Walter M. Nature and Grace in Catholic
 Theology Bainton, Roland Grace and Nature in
 Christianity Corwin, Virginia Modern Protestant
 View of Nature and Grace Administrative Papers
 from Henry Van Dusen: Schedule of Meeting; Active
 Members, Oct 28, 1939

Nature, Grace, Sacraments, 14th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar 8-10,1940	box 2	folder 6
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Van Dusen, Henry Nature, Grace,
 Incarnation Harkness, Georgia Nature as the Vehicle
 of Grace Zabriskie, A.C. Nature, Grace, and the
 Sacraments Mays, Benjamin Nature, Grace, and
 Community Administrative Papers from Henry Van
 Dusen: Schedule of meeting, Feb 28, 1940

Eschatology, 15th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov 8-10, 1940	box 2	folder 7
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Kraeling, Carl Pre-Christian Eschatology
 Knox, John New Testament Eschatology Calhoun,
 R.L. Time, Eternity and the End of History Tillich,
 Paul Eschatology and Personal Destiny Administrative
 Papers from Henry Van Dusen: Schedule of Meeting,
 Oct 31, 1940

Eschatology, 16th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar 7-9, 1941	box 2	folder 8
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Bainton, Roland Types and Times of
 Christian Eschatology Piper, Otto A. The Idea of
 Progress and Christian Eschatology Niebuhr, Richard
 Kingdom of God and Eschatology Cavert, Samuel
 Eschatology and Ethical Decision Administrative

Papers from Henry Van Dusen: Schedule of Meeting,
Feb 28, 1941 Correspondence to members, April 15,
1941

Christian Ethics, 17th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov 7-9, 1941	box 2	folder 9
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Knox, John Old Testament Ethics
Branscomb, Harvie Ethical Principles of the Gospels
Van Dusen, Henry Moral Authority of Jesus Aubrey,
Edwin Christian and Philosophical Ethics

Christian Ethics, 18th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar 6-8, 1942	box 2	folder 10
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Niebuhr, Richard Types of Christian Ethics
Horton, Walter Law and Grace Thomas, George
F. Love and Justice: Perfection vs. Compromise
Moore, John M. Christian Ethics and Civil Society
Administrative Papers from Henry Van Dusen:
Schedule of meeting, Feb 26, 1942

19th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov 13-15, 1942	box 3	folder 1
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Chicago Group Addresses: Pauck, Aubrey, Harkness,
Knox: Preaching as an Expression of the Ethical
Reality New Haven Group Addresses: Calhoun,
Bainton, H.R. Niebuhr Central Christian Affirmations
Princeton Group Addresses: Greene, Mackay, Thomas,
Wicks II. Bases of Christian Beliefs New York Group
Addresses: Tillich, Cavert, McGregor, R. Niebuhr, Van
Dusen Present World Situation and Christian Message,
drft.1

20th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, May 7-9, 1943	box 3	folder 2
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Tillich, Paul Present World Situation
and Christian Message, drft.2 Knox, John First
Draft of Chapter IV Thomas, George Some Christian
Affirmations Greene, Theodore III. Reasonableness of
Christianity Van Dusen, Henry Dilemma of the Modern
World

War, 22nd Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1944	box 3	folder 3
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Ferre, Nelse F.S. Relation of the Church to the War... Van Dusen, Henry Christian Faith and War

Redemption, 23rd Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov, 1944	box 3	folder 4
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Thomas, George F. Creation and Redemption Harkness, Georgia Redemption and Personal Destiny

Redemption, 24th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1945	box 3	folder 5
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Bennett, John Meaning of Redemption in Personal/Social Life Dun, Angus Atoning Work of Christ Pauck, Wilhelm Issues in the History of the Doctrine of Redemption

The Church's View of Itself, With Special Reference to Problem of Christian Unity, 25th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov 9-11, 1945	box 3	folder 6
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Van Dusen, Henry Nature of Christian Unity Niebuhr, Richard Norm of the Christian Character of the Church Bennett, John C. Limitations of the Church-Inherent and Accidental

26th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1946	box 3	folder 7
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Addresses: Wedel, Theodore Some Anglican Views on the Church

28th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1947	box 3	folder 8
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Kuhn, Helmut Bible and Non-Christian Knowledge of God Anonymous Notes

30th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1948	box 3	folder 9
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Kruse, Cornelius Roman Religious Liberty & American Democratic Idea Pauck, Wilhelm What is American in American Theology?

31st Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov, 1948	box 3	folder 10
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Scope and Contents

Address: Cavert, Samuel Relations...Catholics and Protestants in America

32nd Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1949 box 3 folder 11

Scope and Contents

Addresses: Moore, John M. Authority in Protestantism
Steer, D.V. Protestant Piety Today

Reinhold Niebuhr, 33rd Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov, 1949 box 3 folder 12

Scope and Contents

Addresses: Horton, Walter Doctrine of Man II: Salvation
Thomas, George R.N.'s Doctrine of Man-Creature, etc.
Niebuhr, Richard Reinhold Niebuhr's Interpretation of History
Bennett, John C. Reinhold Niebuhr's Theological Ethics

34th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar 3-5, 1950 box 4 folder 1

Scope and Contents

Addresses: Thomas, George Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy
Wilder, A.N. Modern Crisis Reflected in Contemporary Poetry
Wilder, A.N. Patterns of Belief in Modern Literature

37th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov, 1951 box 4 folder 2

Scope and Contents

Addresses: Thomas, George Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy
Wilder, Amos New Testament Kerygma... Muilenburg, James
Ethical Implications of the Covenant Knox, John Place of Love in New Testament Ethics

38th Meeting, Yale D S, New Haven, CT,, Mar, 1952 box 4 folder 3

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Addresses: Miller, Francis Christian Ethics and Practical Politics

Address, American Theological Society meeting, April 1952 box 4 folder 4

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Ferm, Vergilius Mysticism and Faith in the Christian Tradition

Humanism, 40th Meeting, College of Preachers, Washington D.C., Nov 6-8, 1953 box 4 folder 5

Scope and Contents

Addresses Nelson, W.S. Types of Humanism Greene, Theodore Humanistic & Anti Humanistic Elements in Modern Culture Bainton, Roland Man, God, and the Church in the Renaissance Administrative Papers: Participant list

American Corruptions, 41st Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1954	box 4	folder 6
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Addresses Zabriskie, A.C. Some American Corruptions of the Christian Hope Wedel, Theodore American Corruptions of the Meaning of the Church Dinkler, Erich The European View of the American Crisis... Miller, Francis American Corruptions: Meaning of Being a Christian

Biblical Hermeneutics, 42nd Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov, 1954	box 4	folder 7
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Addresses Dinkler, Erich Principles of Biblical Interpretation Schubert, Paul Context... Bible: Rev., Kerygma, Church, Tradition Wilder, Amos Myth and Symbol in the New Testament Wilder, Amos Supplement: Cognitive Element in Religious Symbol Wright, G. Ernest Unity of the Bible

Christian Ethics, 49th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1958	box 4	folder 8
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Wilder, Amos Basis of Christian Ethics in the New Testament Thomas, George Christian Ethics and Political Realism

Christian Ethics, 50th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Oct, 1958	box 4	folder 9
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Wright, Ernest Cult and History in the Old Testament Davies, Horton Non-Episcopal Protestantism & Liturgical Movement Reissig, Herman What Should Christians Seek in Foreign Policy?

51st Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1959	box 4	folder 10
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Nelson, Robert Christian Theology and the Living Faiths of Men

Philosophical Theology, 52nd Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov, 1959	box 4	folder 11
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Addresses: Smith, John E. The Problem of a Christian Philosophy Moore, John M. Philosophical Analysis and its Bearing upon Theology

The Trinity, 55th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Mar, 1961	box 4	folder 12
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Van Dusen, Henry Trinity in Recent Thought Horton, Walter Objections to the Doctrine of the Trinity

56th Meeting, Yale DS, New Haven, CT, Nov, 1961	box 4	folder 13
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Scope and Contents

Addresses: Steere, D.V. Ecumenical Encounter: European Protestant-Roman

Undated addresses, A - C, circa 1934 -- 1961	box 5	folder 1
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Bainton, Roland Sectarian Theory of the Church Bennett, John C. Obstacles before the Church – Internal Difficulties Brigham, Thomas Peace of the Gospel Christian, William Dilemma of the Liberal

Undated addresses, D - K, circa 1934 -- 1961	box 5	folder 2
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Scope and Contents

Harkness, Georgia Protestant Faith and Ethical Action Knox, John Revelation of God in Christ

Undated addresses, L - N, circa 1934 -- 1961	box 5	folder 3
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Miller, Randolph Empirical Method and Its Critics Minear, Paul Christian Hope and Eschatology Muelder, Walter Relation of Faith in Science to Faith in Religion Muilenburg, James Doctrine of Man in the Image of God Nash, Arnold Social Sciences in the Making of a Moral Judgment

Undated addresses, O - W, circa 1934 -- 1961	box 5	folder 4
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Scope and Contents

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Amos Status and Content of Biblical Theology

Undated addresses, anonymous, circa 1934 -- 1961

box 5

folder 5

Scope and Contents

Buddhism: Nirvana and the World Evangelism in the
USA Christian and Secular Hopes for Society Bible,
Church and Tradition

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