In my last lecture, I was discussing with you the Christology of Paul Tillich. We didn’t quite finish that, and so I want to pick that up again at the outset of this lecture. Once I’ve concluded that, I will have finished what I have to say about the theology of Paul Tillich, and then we’re going to move on to another movement in contemporary thought. But before we come to any of that, let’s bow for a word of prayer.

Our loving heavenly Father, we thank You so much for Jesus Christ. Lord, we thank You for who He is and what He means to us. We thank You for His sacrifice on Calvary for our sins. Father, we’re so thankful that He is truly God and truly man. He is not some human being that was adopted as Your Son. He is not some God-bearing man, but He is truly God-man. We pray, Lord, as we continue to study Paul Tillich and his thinking about Christ that we would come to an even clearer understanding of what Your Word says about Jesus Christ. So Father, bless our thinking together this lecture for it’s in Christ’s name we pray it. Amen.

At the end of my last lecture, I was looking with you at Paul Tillich’s discussion of the reality of Jesus Christ. And I noted with you that there were several different subsections under that. And we looked at most of them, but I still have several to go. We had looked at Tillich’s discussion of the symbol of Christ, in particular, the meaning of the symbol. Then I had turned to discuss what he says about paradox in Christian theology. Then I had noted with you what he says about the meaning of the incarnation. And then right at the end, we were talking about his discussion of Jesus as the Christ. And we had noted what he has to say about what Jesus Christ in fact means. He, first of all, took a look at the name Jesus Christ and tells us how this name should be understood. And he tells us exactly his perception of how Christianity began. It was at the point where someone, in particular Peter, in his confession at Caesarea Philippi recognized the historical figure Jesus of Nazareth as the one who was the Christ, the bearer of the new
being. Well, in his discussion of Jesus as the Christ then, Tillich talks about the name Jesus Christ, and I’ve shared that with you. But now let me turn to the next thing that he has to say about Jesus as the Christ, namely the historical aspect of Jesus as the Christ.

Tillich says that historical research that has tried to find out something about the historical Jesus of Nazareth has been a failure. The reason for that is that the only picture that we really can get of Jesus is the one that’s given in the Bible. But the picture that we have of Jesus that’s presented in the Bible always presents Him as the Christ, not simply as the historical Jesus. And as a result of that, the biblical picture always mixes the historical Jesus with the symbols that are involved in His being the Christ. And as a result of that, Tillich says, it’s actually impossible to find out, even through Scripture, the truth about the historical Jesus apart from what it says in terms of His being the Christ. So we really are not in a position just to do a historical study and learn about the historical person.

Well, there’s something further though that Tillich has to say about Jesus as the Christ as a historical individual. As a result of the thinking of another theologian and philosopher, Ernst Troeltsch, the following question arose in the late 19th, early 20th century. And it was discussed a good bit, and Tillich himself decided to write an essay on it. Now Troeltsch’s question was, what would it do to Christian faith (not to Christian doctrine or Christian historiography) but what would it do to Christian faith if historical research made it highly probably that Jesus of Nazareth never existed? Well, this question was batted about and reflected on by many thinkers. And as I suggested a moment ago, Tillich was one of those. Tillich took up this question in an essay that was published in 1911, and the title of that essay was “Christian Certainty and the Historical Jesus.” Tillich’s answers to this question were really two-fold. He said, in the first place, it wouldn’t matter at all to Christian faith if we were to find out that through historical research that Jesus of Nazareth, the historical figure, probably never existed. That wouldn’t touch Christian faith at all. But his second comment is that it would be unimportant, not because Christianity is unconcerned with history altogether, but because we could then just simply show that the person who did the things and said the things recorded in the New Testament was not in fact Jesus of Nazareth, but it was someone else. Now the New Testament then, Tillich says, is talking about some real person. And even if that person isn’t Jesus of Nazareth, it has to
be someone, and that’s really all that matters historically. It’s certain historically then that somebody was the Christ even if it didn’t turn out to be Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps we could put it a slightly different way. It’s impossible, Tillich might say, to prove historically that Jesus of Nazareth or any other specific human being was the Christ. But it is certain historically that someone, some human being was the Christ even if we don’t know exactly who it was. So if historical research should discover that Jesus of Nazareth never existed, that wouldn’t destroy Christian faith at all. We’d simply believe then that the bearer of the new being was still someone, even if it wasn’t Jesus of Nazareth.

Well, then Tillich moves on to discuss Jesus as the Son of God. Tillich says, and we surely would expect him to say this, but he says that the term *Son of God* has to be seen as a symbol. It in no way is meant to express a familial or family relationship within the inner life of the Divine. And it only suggests that kind of family relationship if you take the phrase literally. But, of course, that’s the wrong way to understand it. Now as I said a moment ago, it shouldn’t surprise us that this is what Tillich is saying because we’ve already seen that he believes that any statement about God is symbolic other than the statement that God is being-itself or the ground of being or the structure of being. So a term like *Son of God*, we would surely expect to be symbolic.

Well, Tillich says that being the Son of God means representing the essential unity between God and man under the conditions of existence, and it also means reestablishing this unity between God and man in all those who participate in His being. Now in *Systematic Theology*, Volume II, page 110, Tillich discusses this idea of the Son of God and just what it means to say that Jesus or anyone else, but in particular of course it’s Jesus who’s referred to as the Son of God. And Tillich discusses what that means. Tillich says,

The Son reestablishes the child character of every man in relation to God, a character which is essentially human. This use of the Son of God symbol transcends the Jewish as well as the pagan use. Being the Son of God means representing the essential unity between God and man under the conditions of existence and reestablishing this unity in all those who participate in His being. The symbol becomes distorted if it is taken literally and a human family situation is projected into the inner life of the Divine. Literalists often ask whether one believes that Jesus was
the Son of God.’ Those who ask this question think that they know what the term ‘Son of God’ means and that the only problem is whether this known designation can be attributed to the Man, Jesus of Nazareth. If the question is asked in this way, it cannot be answered because either an affirmative or a negative answer would be wrong. The only way to answer the question is to ask another one, namely what do you mean if you use the term ‘Son of God?’ If one receives a literalistic answer to this question, one must reject it as superstitious. If one receives an answer which affirms the symbolic character of the term ‘Son of God’ the meaning of this symbol can then be discussed. Much harm has been done in Christianity by a literalistic understanding of the symbol ‘Son of God.’

Well, we shouldn't be surprised that Tillich wants us to understand this symbolically and there you just heard something of why he thinks that's so and what he thinks the symbol “Son of God” actually means.

Well, let me turn now to look at the very last item that I want to cover under Tillich’s discussion of the reality of the Christ, namely his section that he entitles “The New Being in Jesus as the Christ.” And this really is the culmination, if you will, of his Christology, because the new being in Jesus as the Christ is the answer to what Tillich has set forth as man’s existential problem—the problem of estrangement of existence from essence. Well, what does Tillich say in this section? Tillich says that new being is essential being under the conditions of existence. Now remember that Tillich is telling us that essence is to be linked with potentiality and existence is to be linked with actuality. So to say that something is in existence means that it stands out of its ideal or potential essence. It’s not everything that it could be, but it is something rather than a complete nothing. But obviously there is a great deal of estrangement, a great distance, so to speak, between what we actually are in our existence as opposed to what we might be potentially in our essence. And, of course, that’s the problem: that distance between essence and existence, between actuality and potentiality, that’s the problem of man according to Tillich. Now the key then is going to be how you conquer that distance between essence and existence. And Tillich is saying that new being is going to be the answer to that, because new being is really essential being under the conditions of existence. And as new being is here under the conditions of existence, it conquers the gap, Tillich says, between essence and existence.
Now Tillich says that the term *new being* points directly to the cleavage between essential and existential being, but it also shows that new being is the restorative factor or the restorative principle for the whole of this theological system, let alone, for the whole predicament that man finds himself in as he is estranged from his essence from what he potentially could be. Now the new being, Tillich says, is new insofar as it is the undistorted manifestation of essential being within and under the conditions of existence. So it is new then in two respects. It’s new in contrast to the merely potential character of essential being, and it’s new in contrast, on the other hand, to the estranged character of existential being. This is a way new being to actually unite the essential being and the existential being. And the way that it’s done is to have essential being live under the conditions of existence and to live as new being in the person Jesus Christ. Well, that’s what new being means, but Tillich says beyond that that new being as a matter of fact has appeared in a personal life, namely the life of Jesus of Nazareth the Christ. He is the one who’s the bearer of the new being. Now this means, of course, that anyone else could have been the bearer of the new being. It just happened to be Jesus of Nazareth who was, but it could have been anyone else. And of course this fits with what we just saw in terms of Tillich’s analysis of the historical aspects of Jesus. If it’s not in fact Jesus of Nazareth, we think it is, but if it’s not, that’s okay. It is someone else, and surely even if it is Jesus of Nazareth, it could have been anyone else.

Tillich also makes it clear that Jesus as the Christ is not a third kind of thing, a third kind of being between man and God. He’s not, for example, a God-man in the traditional orthodox sense. Tillich says if you understood Him as a third kind of being, well that would make Him just another god among many. Instead, he says, we have in Jesus a case of essential being under the conditions of existence. But Tillich says this is not a third type of entity, it is simply being itself under the concrete conditions of finitude. Well, as you reflect upon that, I think you can see again why I said in the last lecture that as you think about Tillich’s Christology, you really don’t get the impression that he holds to Jesus as the God-man. But this looks more and more like a view that sees Jesus as a God-bearing man. And of course in that case, it could have been any other man who went around bearing God within himself. There’s not then clearly a unity of the divine and the human within this one person, but it’s more a case of Jesus being, if I can put it this way, sort of a receptacle who carries around essential being within Himself. And in this one person, Jesus Christ then,
there’s supposed to be this unity between essence and existence or, if you will, essential being and existential being.

Well, Tillich then goes on in pages 125 to approximately 135 of Volume 2 of the *Systematic Theology* to tell us that the new being in Jesus as the Christ conquers all the marks of and the kinds of estrangement that we find between man’s existential and his essential being. And so the whole Christology then, or the perspective, on the reality of Christ, the person Jesus, is rounded off in this way. You can see again that Tillich’s theological method here is in fact the method of correlation. He began as he did in the case of his doctrine of God with an analysis of the human situation using, of course, existential philosophy as the basis for that. And then he went to the Christian message, the Christian symbols to see exactly how they would provide the answer to the predicament of man. This is what we saw as the method in Tillich’s concept of God. We also see this as the method that Tillich uses in his Christology.

Well, I want to turn now away from Paul Tillich. Surely there is much, much more that we could say about him as is the case with any of the men and the movements that we’ve discussed in this course, but we want to give a taste of a number of different people and movements and so I’d like to move on now to the next development that I want to discuss with you. Most of the people who I’ve been discussing up to this point have been theologians who were working, at least initially, on the continent of Europe. Indeed their thought has penetrated the American, the North American scene. But they initially began on the continent.

What I would like to do now is to turn to a movement, not so much in theology but in philosophy, that has its origins somewhat on the continent. But it turns out to be a movement that is much more typical of England and North America than it would be the continent. And I want to share with you something about this movement, because it is going on at the same time that these developments we’ve been discussing in theology are taking place. And I think that you can see that, as I’m going to discuss this movement, that there are certain ideas in this philosophical movement that are going to be and turn out to be very, very important for theology. What I’m referring to specifically is the movement known as analytic philosophy. Now analytic philosophy involves a number of different things and a number of different philosophers. And again it’s going to be impossible to cover every one of those. But I thought that what would be helpful
here is to pick a representative philosopher, in fact, someone who is extremely important to analytic philosophy.

And so I’ve done just that. I want to discuss with you the philosophy, not all of it, but some of the major ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Now Wittgenstein was born in 1889 in Vienna, and much of his early life was spent on the continent. But later on in life he spent a good bit of his time in England and then later on came to America. He taught for a number of years at Cambridge University. And the philosophy that he developed has been very, very influential in contemporary philosophical discussions. Though, in talking about his philosophy I need to amend that by saying that really from Wittgenstein we find something unusual. There’s not just one philosophy that is attributed to Wittgenstein, there actually are two philosophical systems. Wittgenstein was a very unusual person, a brilliant individual. And he was one of those people who evidently had the ability to present his ideas and then critically interact with them and make corrections where he saw that that was necessary. In many of our cases we produce some ideas, maybe a system of thought, and we’re not able to look at it critically and correct it but not so with Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein presented and produced an initial philosophical system which is represented in his major work entitled *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. But after he finished this system, this early work, he continued to think about the issues that he had discussed in that particular book. And as he reflected more and more upon it he came to the conclusion that his earlier philosophy as represented in the *Tractatus* was really wrong. And so in his later philosophy, he wound up writing a different philosophical system. And it turned out that many of the items in this later philosophical system refuted his first philosophical reflection.

So he writes two systems. The second system, which is represented in his major work entitled *Philosophical Investigations*, though indeed there are other books that are associated with the second period. But the *Investigations* is his main work in the later philosophy. This later philosophy is seen to refute as well as to correct the errors that he himself came to conclude he had made in his earlier system.

Now the reason that I want to discuss Wittgenstein is that he is not only very important for analytic philosophy generally, but his thinking is, I think, very much relevant to religious and theological thought. In addition to that, Wittgenstein was living at the time of the logical positivists. There was a group of people, philosophers
and scientists, who were known as the Vienna Circle. And they produced a system of philosophy known as “logical positivism.” They weren’t the only logical positivists, but this view was largely associated with them. And they claimed that Wittgenstein’s thinking in his earlier work, the *Tractatus*, was heavily influential in their thinking. Now Wittgenstein always maintained that they really didn’t quite understand him in that earlier work. But they at least felt that he was very important, and his *Tractatus* was extremely important to their thinking.

What I would like to do then in my lectures on Wittgenstein is to look at his work *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* first of all and the philosophy that it sets forth, explain how that related to the Vienna Circle, the logical positivists, and then talk about the doctrines of the *Tractatus* and somewhat of logical positivism as well as they relate to theology. What are their implications for theology? And then after I’m done with the *Tractatus*, in future lectures we’ll be looking at Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, and we’ll see some of the themes there and how they relate to theology as well. Well, that’s where we’re headed.

Let me begin then by talking about Wittgenstein’s earlier philosophy, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, of course, being the major doctrine in that. Now as I suggested to you, Wittgenstein was born in 1889 and he lived until 1951. So you can see that he lived as a contemporary to a number of the other people who we’ve discussed in this course. Well, let me turn specifically to the Tractatus and give a few words of general introduction about this book and then look at its doctrines more specifically.

Donald Hudson in his book *The Religious Dimensions of Wittgenstein’s Philosophy* has argued that throughout Wittgenstein’s philosophy, whether it was the early part or the latter part, Wittgenstein was always concerned with two key items. Those items were, first of all, the problem of the meaning of language and then, secondarily, an understanding of the nature of reality. Now while one might want to add some other items at least in relation to his later philosophy, there are a number of other topics he discusses, I think, generally speaking, Hudson’s analysis is correct. The idea of the meaning of language and also an understanding of the nature of reality seems to be the focus of both the earlier philosophy, and to a certain extent, the later philosophy. It surely is the major focus of his earlier philosophy as embodied in the *Tractatus*. 
Well, what then was Wittgenstein’s theory of language that you find in the *Tractatus*? That theory of language is known as the “picture theory of language” or the “picture theory of meaning.” But before it’s possible to understand what Wittgenstein means when he says propositions picture reality, you have to first of all understand the way Wittgenstein conceived of reality. And it’s at that point that I am going to begin. Now let me make one or two other preliminary comments about the *Tractatus* so that as you do your reading in it, you will understand how it’s set up. You’ll notice as you read the *Tractatus* that there’s a numbering scheme that Wittgenstein employs. And as it turns out, the major propositions of the book are numbered one through seven. And then all of the other propositions are elaborations of those foundational seven propositions. And then, of course, you have some other propositions that are elaborations of elaborations and so on and so forth. So the major propositions would be one through seven. A more minor proposition would be 1.1. An elaboration of 1.1 might be 1.11 and so on and so forth.

Well, let me turn to the *Tractatus* specifically. And as I mentioned to you, in order to understand his picture theory of meaning, you first of all have to understand the *Tractatus*’s conception of reality. Well, Wittgenstein says, and this is proposition 1.1, that the world is the totality of facts, not of things. Or he puts it slightly differently in proposition 1.2, “The world divides into facts.” Well, that may sound illuminating, but it’s not as illuminating as it might be because we need to know what Wittgenstein means when he uses the word *fact*. In the *Tractatus* the term *fact* is used to refer to a state of affairs. Now, in some editions of the *Tractatus*, the German word for fact is rendered *atomic fact* while in other editions it’s rendered state of affairs. And you’ll probably hear me using both of those terms in my lecture. Don’t be confused. They refer to the same thing. But as Wittgenstein uses these terms, he seems to refer to a *state of affairs* that is elementary in nature. Unfortunately, Wittgenstein never gives us an example of an elementary state of affairs or what he calls an atomic fact. But Wittgenstein assumes that there must be such things, now more on that later. The basic thing to understand is that by fact he means a state of affairs.

Now as you hear that, you might think that that’s awfully strange, because your initial inclination would probably be to say if someone said to you *what is the world composed of?*—you’d probably say it’s composed of a bunch of objects. And I’m sure that I would respond in a similar way as well. But that’s not the
way Wittgenstein has responded. He said that the world is the totality of facts. Now that doesn’t mean that he doesn’t think there are objects in the world. He does think there are objects. He says objects form the substance of the world, that’s proposition 2.021. Objects then are the stuff, if I can put it that way, out of which the world is made. But he says the world though is not the totality of objects, it’s the totality of facts. Now why would he say that? Well, I think George Pitcher in his book *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein* is very helpful here as to why Wittgenstein would say that the world is the totality of states of affairs rather than the totality of objects. Pitcher explains, and let me quote him here, he says this.

> Whatever the world is the totality of, it might be argued, a complete list of them ought to tell us what the world is like, ought to provide a complete description of the world. But this is not the case if the world is the totality of things. From a list of all the objects that there are, one can derive only a very inadequate idea of what the world is like. If you are asked to describe a room and in reply simply list the articles contained in it plus the walls, windows, doors, and so on, you would have performed your job very poorly. What was wanted was not just a list of objects but also an account of what they are like and how they are arranged in the room.

Now that’s Pitcher’s explanation. Let me elaborate on it. I think it’s very, very helpful to simply give a grocery list, so to speak, of the objects that you find in the world doesn’t really tell us what the world is like, because we don’t know how those objects are arranged in relationship to one another. If instead, you offer an explanation of what the objects are like and how they are arranged in relation to one another, then you’re really giving an explanation of a state of affairs. You’re not just talking about objects, but you’re talking about a state of affairs. Well, since in the world objects don’t stand in total isolation from one another but they stand in various relationships to one another, then we have to say that the world is the totality of facts or, if you will, state of affairs. It’s not the totality of objects or things. And in that case then, we can see why Wittgenstein has this doctrine that the world is the totality of facts. It’s not the totality of things.

Well, you say *okay I understand that*. But now what does Wittgenstein mean by a *state of affairs or of fact*? What are they? Well, Wittgenstein describes states of affairs or facts as having
four basic characteristics. And I want to discuss each one of those with you. The first characteristic of a state of affairs is that a state of affairs is a combination of objects or things. Wittgenstein makes this point at proposition 2.01. You might also want to see his comment at 2.0272 where he makes similar comment. Wittgenstein then says in proposition 2.03, “In the state of affairs, objects hang in one another like links of a chain.” Now, for Wittgenstein then, objects per se are the fixed, the constant elements of our world. This idea you find in 2.0271. Objects are the substance of the world, proposition 2.021 says. And hence, they are independent of what is the case. That is, they’re independent of states of affairs. They can be combined into states of affairs, but in and of themselves they are independent of a state of affairs. This idea you find in proposition 2.024.

Well, now while objects are the constants, the various configurations of these objects into states of affairs are the variables. That’s what’s changing about the world. This idea you find in proposition 2.0271. So then the first thing about a state of affairs is that it’s a combination of objects or things. The second feature of a state of affairs is that states of affairs are either complex or to use a term that some of the translators use, molecular. Or they are simple, or as some translators translate it, atomic. Now complex facts are of course Wittgenstein would say, reducible to atomic facts. But atomic facts, on the other hand, are irreducible. You can’t get them to lesser states of affairs. Even though Wittgenstein makes this distinction between complex and simple facts or simple states of affairs, he really doesn’t help us to understand it very well because he doesn’t offer us any examples of atomic facts at all.

Well, let me see if I can’t help out a little bit in this respect anyway. What I’m going to offer is probably not exactly what Wittgenstein means by an atomic fact. But if nothing else, it should demonstrate that complex states of affairs can be analyzed. They can be reduced into simpler ones. Take, for example, the following proposition. The cat on the mat is drinking milk from a bowl. Now that proposition can be analyzed, can be broken down into at least the following simpler states of affairs. And I’m going to mention four of them. First one would be there’s a cat on a mat. Second one there’s a bowl on or next to that mat. The third one, there’s milk in the bowl. The fourth one, the cat is drinking the milk. So you can see how propositions that state a complex state of affairs can be analyzed into simpler ones. Norman Malcolm who was a good friend of Wittgenstein and quite a Wittgenstein scholar...
claims that Wittgenstein was never really able to give examples of a simple state of affairs or of simple objects. Wittgenstein wondered if points of the visual field might be simple objects or whether something even like a watch might be a simple object. His final conviction though, Malcolm tells us, was that the existence of simple objects is known purely a priori. That is, they’re known prior to without any interaction with the external world. It’s just a logical idea that seems to be necessitated.

Now, as Malcolm tells us, the logical necessity that Wittgenstein was talking about stems from the requirement that propositions have a definite sense. In the notebooks Wittgenstein says, “The demand for simple things is the demand for definiteness of sense.” You want a sentence to refer and to talk about something definite, something specific so that what it pictures must be something definite, must be something specific. Now in the Tractatus, Wittgenstein makes the point at proposition 3.23. As Malcolm explains to us, an indefinite sense would be no sense at all. A proposition might be ambiguous, but the ambiguity would be between definite alternatives, either this or that. It couldn’t be that you just had no idea as to what the alternative meanings of an ambiguous sentence would be. On Wittgenstein’s understanding of things, if a sentence is ambiguous, the ambiguity has to be between two definite, specific things; because after all, the objects that the sentence is talking about in the world are themselves definite and specific. They aren’t blurry or fuzzy. They are specific things. Well, I think all of this will become clearer shortly when I turn to Wittgenstein’s picture theory of meaning. For now suffice it to say, that for Wittgenstein there are simple and there are context states of affairs.

Now there are two other points that I should make about simple states of affairs. The first one is that, as we’re going to see, this also will go with the point about definiteness of meaning. But this first point is that Wittgenstein held that all simple states of affairs are independent of one another. This you find at proposition 2.061, and you might also want to consult proposition 1.21. Now by this idea, Wittgenstein means that the existence of one simple state of affairs neither entails nor excludes any other simple state of affairs. To go back to my example of the cat and the mat and all the rest, the cat’s being on the mat entails neither that there must be nor that there cannot be a bowl of milk which is also on or next to that mat. Nor does the cat’s presence on the mat and even the milk’s presence on or near the mat necessitate that the cat must drink it, so each of those states of affairs is independent of one
another. The other point about simple states of affairs that I want to make is that even though atomic facts, simple states, cannot be further reduced to simpler facts, Wittgenstein says they are not absolutely simple because they are composed of elements, of components. And those components are objects or things themselves. As Wittgenstein says at proposition 2.02, the object is simple.

Well, then a third point that Wittgenstein makes about states of affairs, the second one that we’ve just been discussing is that states of affairs are either complex or simple. His third description of states of affairs says that they may be either possible or impossible. And when he uses that term, he means logically possible or logically impossible. Wittgenstein says, “Objects contain the possibility of all states of affairs.” This we find at proposition 2.014. You might also want to see 2.0121 and 2.0122. Now as to an object, Wittgenstein also says the possibility of its occurrence in atomic facts is what he calls the form of the object. That’s proposition 2.0141. Some combinations of objects would be possible, and other combinations would be logically impossible. They’d set up a contradiction. As Hudson explains for us, “Wittgenstein offered no examples of objects. But if for example, a note of music were an object, a possible state of affairs would be for it to be loud. An impossible one would be for the note to be read. Possible and impossible then, in this connection, are used in a logical sense. The form of an object is a matter of what it is logically possible for the object to be or do in conjunction with other objects.”

Well, the fourth and final thing that I want to note about Wittgenstein’s concept of a state of affairs is that any possible state of affairs may be true or false of any possible world including the world that is actual. Now as to the actual world, Wittgenstein distinguishes what he calls positive and negative facts. He says, “The existence of atomic facts we also call a positive fact, their nonexistence a negative fact.” That’s proposition 2.06. Now these two kinds of facts tell us the nature of the world. That is what it is and what the world isn’t, and to quote Wittgenstein from proposition 1.12, “The totality of facts determines both what is the case and also all that is not the case. From all of the preceding then it follows that if you know what is and what is not the case, that is if you know the totality of facts, then you know everything there is to know about the world, given of course, that Wittgenstein says that the world is the totality of facts.
Well, that completes my discussion of Wittgenstein’s understanding of reality as it’s portrayed in the *Tractatus*. The next thing we need to do though is to look at his theory of meaning. And we’re ready to do that. We’re ready to look at the picture theory of meaning, and I’m going to turn to that immediately in the next lecture.