where earnest discussions appeared to be taking place, but had seen nothing which I identified as formal classes in any of the disciplines so familiar to me when I was in seminary. Accordingly, I inquired of my host about the lectures in church history, Bible, and theology, assuming that it would be very interesting to enter among a few of them and remark how they differed, if at all from what I had known.

At that he laughed good-naturedly and ushered me into a section of the main building whose appearance resembled that of the language laboratories presently found in many universities. There were perhaps forty or fifty desks or console tops, each mounted by a set of headphones, a small switchboard, and an assortment of viewing screens, the largest of which might easily have been a television screen.

At my guide’s invitation, I sat at one of the desks and fitted the headphones to my ears.

“Now,” he said, consulting a small manual which lay on the surface of the desk, “name a period or person in theological history that fascinates you.”

I believe my first impulse was to name Augustine or Luther, but, fearing that either would seem an obvious and unsophisticated choice, I pronounced the name of Thomas Bradwardine. I had once had a church history professor who had written a thesis on Bradwardine, and he had spent more time on him in classroom lectures than on any of the popular reformers. Now I could recall almost nothing of the man or his thought, so considered him a reasonable choice on which to test the machinery before me.

The guide found the proper reference in the manual, adjusted a few switches on the console, and instantly I was not only hearing about Bradwardine and Gabriel Biel and the whole nominalist controversy in the late medieval church, but was seeing a movie on the screen as well, depicting scenes in which the eminent theologians of that day argued and contended for their positions.

I was amazed. In quick succession, I tuned in to depictions of the councils of Nicaea, Chalcedon, and Trent, the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius, Henry VIII’s proclamation of the Act of Supremacy, and John Wesley’s experience at Aldersgate. “What a way to learn history!” I remarked as I removed the headset.

“Don’t get up,” said my mentor. “There’s more.”
He pressed a button and another area of the console lit up.
“How’s your biblical Greek?” he asked.
“Atrocious, I’m afraid,” I said.
“Then we’ll start with simple verb forms.”