

Gregorianum 50 (1969), 485-505

MIT 125-145

Theology = a set of related and recurrent operations cumulatively advancing
towards an ideal goal

Specialized theology = a set of such sets

Specialization = field, subject, functional

Functional eg textual criticism, interpretation, history

experimental physicist (cyclotron), theoretical (which experiments work
functional specialties intrinsically related to one another
interdependent

Eightfold division: research (general, special)

interpretation

history

dialectic

foundations

doctrines

systematics:

communications

mediating, indirect discourse

mediated, direct discourse

Experience, understanding, judgement, decision

all employed for sake of determining: data or insight or judgement or decision

ground of eightfold division

NEED of Division

foundations doctrines systematics communications roughly

correspond to existing distinctions: fundamental dogmatic systematic pastoral

research interpretation history dialectic

correspond to textual criticism other forms of research

interpretative monographs exegesis

history of church of dogma of theology, salvific history

apologetics controversies

what is new is conception of these eight as distinct stages in a single process

from data to results

NEED is not just convenience: too large a field; too large a subject

not dividing the same sort of task between many hands

but distinguishing different tasks, different procedures, different methods

if one person were to do all eight, still in each of the eight he would

doing a different task, following a distinct method, using different procedures

not a distinction of specialists but of specialties

DIFFERENT TASKS EXIST

/Two phases - Four levels of operation

One pursues experience understanding judgement decision differently

Validity of distinction of Christian religion and Xtian theology questioned

What is the good of it? Has it not caused more harm than good?

Is it not just a cultural superstructure, divorced from real life?

All depends on whose real life you are thinking of

The average man of good common sense is not going to profit from it

The educated person in history in science in philosophy commonly needs some theology otherwise his religion while remain at its childhood stage

while the rest of his personality will be highly cultured

with the result that religion will seem childish to him, and he will drop it.

However his main need is not theology but holiness: real advance in religious living

I have been concentrating on individual aspect of the issue

there also is a social and historical aspect

the principal part of human living is informed by meaning: what counts is

what you do, not when you are asleep, but when you are awake Exp Und Judg Deciding

the principal part of any human movement (literary artistic social political

scientific philosophic religious) lies in the meanings it embodies

the longer any movement lasts and the further it spreads

the greater the need for it to define its own nature and purposes

to prevent other movements from capturing it and diverting it to other ends

As rivals come and go, as circumstances and problems change, as issues

are driven back to their presuppositions and decisions to their ultimate

consequences, there is bound to emerge the shift to system, what Georg Simmel

named the Wendung zur Idee.

If differentiation and development are in the nature of man

so also is integration

Hence as functional specialties are acknowledged, still the last of them

has to effect integration. It does so by communicating what foundations

have grounded and doctrines have declared and systematics have explained

in the appropriate manner to every class in every culture.

The specialties of the first phase are united not statically but dynamically

interpretation depends on research, and research on interpretation

history depends on research and interp, and inversely res and int on hist

dialectic depends on the previous three, inversely they are illum by dialectic

The dependence is not logical (premisses to conclusions) but the relationship

between successive stages in a single process (of exp to und to judg to deciding)

The first phase ascends from almost endless data to an interpretative then narrative then dialectical unity

The second descends from the unity of a grounding horizon through a collection of doctrines towards their unifying and clarifying systematic to the again almost endless variety of classes and cultures of mankind

The descent is not deductive but rather a succession of transpositions into new contexts

Foundations determines the horizon within which religious doctrines have meaning
Doctrines in the light of foundations ~~take their~~ selects from the alternatives presented by dialectic

Systematics clarifies just what doctrines mean and imply

Communications studies the resources of any given language, class, cultures and seeks out the developments to be encouraged to make possible an effective and sufficient communication of the Xtian message

Later depend on earlier specialties, but also reciprocal communications can put problems to systematics

systematics can influence the formulation of doctrines

communications also can influence the formulation of doctrines

all three can ask foundations for clarifications on basic issues

Obviously the first phase influences the second

Generally the second phase should not influence the first = the first phase has its proper procedures methods etc

Stephen Neill, Interpretation of NT 1860-1960, ^{JB}Lightfoot and ^{CC}Baur, Ign Antioch

But reciprocal influence between doctrines and history, dialectic and foundations

To grasp the doctrines one has to understand their history

To understand the history one has to understand the doctrines

The problem of foundations is set by dialectic

Foundations can provide guiding lines for the questions raised in dialectic

Field approach: endless specialties and unresolved problem of unification

Subject approach: unification of a sort achieved but positive theology neglected

Functional approach: relates all with a single interdependent set of processes