

What is theology?

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1. What is meant by asking what this or that is?

a One may be asking for the name

b One may be asking for its classification, definition by genus and specific difference

c One may be asking for an explanation. For Aristotle What is an eclipse? is equivalent to Why is the moon being darkened in this manner.

d Third meaning, Why do theologians think talk act in the fashion they do

2. Now there may be Platonists among you that assume the answer will be the expression of some eternal and immutable idea

Do not expect such an answer from me. Everything human is also historical. ~~It is not possible to have an eternal and immutable idea~~

Apart from certain invariants, what is human develops over time.

Hence the answer to the question, What is theology, will have to be a series of answers.

3. Now a series of answers will form a series only if provided with an overall context or frame work.

My framework will be from the German sociologist, Georg Simmel, who coined the phrase, Die Wendung zur Idee, the turn to reflection.

The meaning of the phrase is that every human movement artistic literary social political cultural religious comes to the point where it has to reflect, to ask itself about its real aims, the means it employs, to distinguish itself from other movements, to correct aberrations, to prevent itself being captured by other somewhat similar movements

Further, the larger the movement becomes, and the further it spreads, the longer it lasts, the greater the necessity for that pause for reflection

In its general sense a theology is the turn to reflection in a religious movement -- a Christian theology -- a Catholic...

4. Such reflection may be incidental, part and parcel of religious living, organizing, preaching and teaching

Again, such reflection may be organized, institutionalized, collaborative, methodical. ~~TOYNBEE - with historical~~ early

When one speaks of biblical, patristic, conciliar theology, one is speaking of incidental reflection

When one speaks of late Byzantine (Damascene, De fide orthodoxa) medieval, later theology, one speaks of theology in the second sense of reflection

5. Understanding of the developments and aberrations of the past as a basis for coping with the present and the future

1 ENCOUNTER WITH BODY OF X^t across the Ages
2 to know God & all things in their relation to God