TH 965 Method in Theology

## Questions for November 1

1.) "...a historical fact...will have the stubbornness of what has been grasped as (approximating the) virtually unconditioned and so as something (probably) independent of the knowing subject." <u>Method</u>, p.202

What is the meaning of the two parenthetical qualifications in this excerpt? Do they indicate:

- (1) that historical knowing doesn't quite measure up to the precision of knowing in mathematical and (natural) scientific inquiry?
- (2) that historical facts either about the reliability of witnesses or about what was going forward - haven't the clarity and distinctness of facts about, say, the boiling point of water at a given atmospheric pressure?

If (1), is there a rebuttal to the (counter-?) position which holds that historians' work is always imperfect, so that even with the cooperation and mutual criticism of many historians, it is always relativistic? It would seem that even when the "crucial experiment" - in the chapter on Dialectic - is added, historical knowledge is relative; relative, that is, to the community of the converted.

If (2), are we as theologians faced with the problem Kierkegaard (among others) raises, namely that it is folly to base eternal salvation on the (unclear and indistinct) knowledge of historical events - Christian revelation being bound in some sense to a historical person?

2.) It has been said of Schleiermacher's methodology (with which <u>Method</u>, perhaps unwisely, has been compared) that it moves from "text to sermon" - roughly from Research to Communications. But Schleiermacher has nothing like <u>Mthod</u><sup>o</sup> sconcern for History ( in the sense of a functional specialty). He calmly passes from the New Testament to categories based on a psychology of religious experience, and ends up with preaching.

It can be inferred from the plan of <u>Method</u> that something is missing in Schleiermacher's procedure - perhaps lots of things, but certainly history as a way of knowing. But if the New Testament is accepted as revelation, it seems reasonable enough <u>prima facie</u> to "translate" its message without bothering about the reliability of witnesses or "what was going forward".

Is there a counterposition lurking in this assumption? Where? ADVOCATUS DIABOLI

- 3.) Why is Mistory the only functional specialty to receive two chapters in Part Two of <u>Method</u>?
- 4.) In the process of self-appropriation, what do you see as the role of the teacher? What sort of a person should the teacher be?

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5.) On pages 434-437 of <u>Insight</u> you distinguish conjugate from central form and the distinction rests upon the differences in the acts of understanding needed to grasp them. Would you illustrate the difference between conjugate form and central form with an example from the functional specialty history?

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(1)

a) Neither natural science nor history need attain certainty.
 What the natural scientist names verification is, in fact,
 no more than the absence, mf for the moment, of falsification.

"If A, then B; but A; therefore B" is valid.

"If A and only A, then B; but A; therefore B" is valid. But " if A then B; but B, therefore A" is invalid.

Scientific verfication commonly is of the third type. "If the hypothesis is true, then p, q, r,..." But experimment and observation reveal p, q, r,... Therefore, the hypothesis is true.

b) Distinguish "relativity" and "relativism."

"Relativism" is the philosophic opinion that there are no true judgments, no true opinions.

"Relativity" is the obvious fact that all judgments are condtioned by a context; in so far as the context is mastered, the judgmnet can be simply true; in so far as the context is probably mastered, the judgment can be probable; in so far as the context probably is not mastered, the judgment probably is doubtful.

Prior to the acceptance of Einstein's special relativity, Newtonian mechankics was assumed by scientiksts to be not only certain but also necessary truth.

Subsequent to Einstein, Newstonian mechanics is not necessary; it is true, other things being equat, when the velocity, v, is was small cokpared to the vexlaocity, c, of light.

c) Necessary truths cannot be deduced from contingent events, C. Contingent truths cannot depend on contingent events, Nego.

The main basis for christian belief is stated in Jn 6 44f: No man can come to me unless the Father draw him.... If any man listen to the Father and learn from him, the same will come to me.

Jn 12 32: When I am lifted up from the earth I shall draw all men to me.

The minor premise is the truth of these statements witnessed by nearly twenty centuries of christian belief.

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Distinguish "believer" and "theologian."

The theologian has the duty (as member of a sceintific

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community) to regaugire of the community the investigation of s christian cources.

The "believer" according to his education and culture should have his questions answered and his doubts solved.

(3)

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There are two chapters on history

(a) because my account of what history is depends on a personal theory of human cognitional activity that is not commonly known and m commonly outlisde the interests of the practising historian
(b) hence a two-step exposition

<u>first</u>, what are the operataions performed by historians specializably the differences between legend, precritical history, and critical history

methodical theology is not possible if all one knows about critical history is doing what historians de facto do; in that case you will not know what you are supposed to be doing.

secondly, some justification from the opinions of historians and their differences for the position that has been taken.

What sort of person should the teacher be?

Increasing in authenticity through an ever fuller and more accurate self-appropriation (existing-in-the-truth)

What is the Xm role of the teacher in communicating selfappropriation and authenticity to his students.

It varies from the kindergarten to the graduate school.

From encmourgaing them (and cornecting them) to act and perform in the manner they would act and perform if they had attained the self-appropriation befitting their age and class.

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By realizing that it is up to pupils and students to do what they can on their on (where what they can keeps increasing)

For undergraduates to gradually open their eyes to their personal responsibility for themselves and, in as far as possible, to communicate a real apprehension and something of a theoretical grasp of what self@-appropriation is.

For graduates, **m** to make up for any deficiency in previous training (not as a princimpal task but as a supplementary bonus).