

Theology 965 / Boston College
METHOD IN THEOLOGY / Prof. Bernard Lonergan

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

11 September 1980

1. In the introductory lecture it was stated that there is analogy between the "science" of theology and the natural and human sciences.

How far does this analogy extend?

Specifically: In the natural sciences, on the understanding proposed in Method in Theology, a science is specified by (1) a field of data, (2) a method, and (3) a community for which those data and that method are significant.

Presumably, theology too ^{needs} (2) a method; and it is in some sense a function of a community (3). What about (1), a field of data? The science of chemistry, for example, starts from observations about the behavior of chemical substances, and advances (with Mendeleev's periodic table) to knowledge of elements in themselves and in relation to one another.

What, in theological science, is the analogue of such observations? Are the "data" of theology repeatable, as (in principle) the experiments of chemists are repeatable? Are the data, then, data of "religious experience," which can be described and compared among many instances? Or does theology function with different sorts of data -- historical data such as texts, for example?

*"integrated" method
on a sense
of the way things
develop*

QUESTIONS continued on page 2

* * * * *

COURSE INFORMATION

Questions about readings in Method in Theology or class discussions should be submitted in writing not later than noon of the Tuesday before each Thursday's class session. There will be a designated envelope in the bottom row of mailboxes, box G - I for Ph.D. students, in the room to the left and just inside the door of the Theology Department Office on the fourth floor of Carney Hall.

The teaching assistant for this course is:

CHARLES HEFLING
19 Wendell Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
547-0932 495-5508

2. The development of a method that moves one from the negative experience of not understanding to understanding seems to presuppose a certain realist epistemology. Is this the case and, if so, what exactly is your epistemological position? A Thomist realism? Or the so-called Transcendental Thomism (and what precisely is the difference)?

Or: does the move to the subject, with the emphasis on willing and personal responsibility, water down Thomistic realism?

00 9. 11. 80

1. It is true that Aquinas posited an analogy between theology and the science of the blessed in heaven

The blessed see God face to face (1 Cor 13)

Theologians, believing the truths revealed by God, construct a science of God (scientia subalternata dependent on another's science)

Others compared the necessary and universal premises posited by 14th century theory of natural knowledge with the truths revealed by divine knowledge.

I distinguish three ways of conceiving theology:

- 1) seeing how highly competent people work
- 2) picking the successful science (Ar maths)(moderns, nat science) and rating other disciplines as scientific by their approximation to the procedures of natural science
- 3) I propose a preliminary notion, proceed to the formulation of a transcendental method, indicate the functions of transcendental method, and proceed through 13 further chapters to an account of a method in theology

"The science of chemistry for example starts from observations about the behavior of chemical substances and advances with Mendeleev's periodic table to knowledge of elements in themselves and in their relations to one another."

Method 201: Data and facts

Insight 75f.: What are sensible data

Chemistry begins from alchemy which it overrules, rules out,

becomes distinguished from mechanics (Galileo Newton) concentrates on what it termed 'inorganic' matter expressed its findings in some approximation to ordinary

language

gradually advanced to the explanatory viewpoint,

~~including the acceptance of "atoms" as basic building blocks~~

and series of atomic weights

Mendeleev used such series to predict discovery of other atoms

noted periodicity in such series as had been determined investigation of atomic structure and explanation of periodicity were the work mainly of Niels Bohr (ob. 1962)

Man's world is not the world of nature as "already out there" but a world mediated by meaning and motivated by value

Hence Method The Human Good Meaning Religion Functional Specialties in general, in particular.

What does theology do? /History of Theol. /Doubleday 1968
What has it done Congar DTC "Théologie" /tr Hunter Guthrie
What can it do
What should it do

2 "... seems to presuppose a certain realist ~~an~~ epistemology"

If the method is deduced from premises that are prior propositions, C

If the ~~an~~ method is unknown, to be discovered and learnt, follow the way of discovery

in detail: verbum articles, Insight, Method or various ~~xxx~~ shortcuts

"understanding" presupposes an epistemology

"knowing" presupposes an ~~an~~ epistemology

The way of discovery

What am I doing when I am ~~an~~knowing (Insight chap 1 to 10)

Why is doing that knowing c)chapter 11 to 15)

What does one know when one does it chap 14 to 17

Thomist realism: ens per verum cognoscitur
veritas formaliter est in solo iudicio

real being: verum in sensibilibus cognitum
datis consciis cognitum

hypothetical
logical
mathematical

transcendent being: condition of possibility of other being

Transcendental Thomism

Marechal, Rahner, Lotz, Coreth (priority of being)

Lonergan (being prior quoad se; cognitional~~xxx~~ activity prior quoad nos)

The emphasis on willing (Ar. faculty psychology; priority of ens)

Transcendental notions: intelligible Why
true real Is that so
good Is it right or wrong

Does it water down realism

it departs from 14th century interpretation of Organon with little control from Ar, context in other writings
it takes into account post medieval developments in natural science, historical and hermeneutical studies, philosophy, the contemporary problems of theology

So called thomists often talk as though human knowledge was so objective that having a mind is superfluous