

LONERGAN WORKSHOP / Questions for Discussion / TUESDAY / 15 June 1982

1. It has been said that Method in Theology leads to the end of metaphysics, or at least almost to the end of it.

In light of Method's emphasis on historical and hermeneutical categories, and considering your outline on Monday of a Trinitarian analogy using psychological categories, could you say something about how metaphysical categories would be used in the kind of theology envisaged in Method?

2. On Monday morning, Professor McShane remarked off-hand that "Dave Tracy still doesn't know what a 'thing' is." (This remark was made in the context of Insight, chapter VIII.)

If you have read Fr. Tracy's recent works -- Blessed Rage for Order and The Analogical Imagination -- would you consider McShane's remark accurate in regard to Tracy's thought as these books express it?

3. How would you distinguish between man's person and nature in Insight?

How, in Method in Theology?

Can this distinction, or an analogous distinction, be drawn adequately by using intentionality analysis? If so, what would it be? On the other hand, might it require complementation by metaphysical analysis?

An example would be helpful.

4. On more than one occasion you have stated that, for the most part, the question of pluralism can be resolved to the question of the relations between various types of differentiated consciousness. Method in Theology offers some rules for handling the situation (p. 330).

Would you be willing to comment on how far the above applies to 'pluralism' in the sense of different Christian communions, as well as to pluralism within a particular communion?

5. How would you distinguish between a theology that is (a) methodical and (b) theoretical?
Is a methodical theology also theoretical? Is it a particular kind of theoretical theology?

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1. Insight and Method in theology lead to the end, not of metaphysics, but of precritical metaphysics.

Precritical metaphysics conceives metaphysics as the first science: if one does not know being, one does not know anything; therefore, being is first; *primum est esse*.

Critical metaphysics distinguishes three questions: what are you doing when you are knowing; why is doing that knowing; what do you know when you do it. On this showing cognitional analysis is first; the objectivity of human knowledge is second; and the analysis of proportionate being is third.

If you do not know what occurs when one knows, you cannot decide whether human knowing is objective or not; you cannot even say what objectivity is; and if you do not know what objectivity is, you cannot construct an objective and so critical metaphysics.

Insight, chapters 11 to 17.

If you know in detail what it is to know, what it is to now objectively, you cannot show that knowing metaphysics is objective knowing; you can do no more than assert it, appeal to authority, to the wisdom of all the Scholastics, a common but useless argument, for the Scholastics disagree on most questions.

Metaphysics in theology, Insight chap. 16

Distinctions: there are three divine persons

Are there three divine essences, No

What is the ground of the distinction: opposed relations

eg Father and Son; the son is not the Father; and the Father is not the Son

Are the relations really distinct from one another. Yes.

Are they really distinct from the divine essence. No the reality of each is constituted by the divine essence as an intelligibly ordered absolute loving, absolute approval of absolute loving, and the consequent loving resulting from absolute loving and absolute approval of it

Are not the relations just modes of being while the Father is God who is not just a mode of being, and similarly the Son and the Spirit are God and not just modes of being.

Still one is to distinguish with Aquinas between the relations as relations and the relations as subsistent

The relations as relations are objects of our abstractive thinking

The relations as subsistent are the relations as really identical with the divine essence

It remains that the concept of being comes first

What comes first is the transcendental notion of being; what is intended in asking questions and so precedes all answers.

What conceptualists do not know is the transcendental notion that makes questioning possible and is prior to conception.

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2. Tracy teaches at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. Catholic students are the largest number of any group represented by the student body; but they are not a majority group; and even if they were, they would not be the only ones to be taught.

He cannot very well begin by teaching them insight and so he cannot get into a critical metaphysics.

He feels the need of some metaphysics, else he could not claim to be objective.

He seems to me to speak with the Whiteheadians, the process philosophers, but I have not made the effort to pin the thing down with the accuracy that would be expected in a public statement.

3. According to Aquinas a being is a person if it is subsistent, distinct, and with an intellectual nature.

It is subsistent if it is not just a part or a component of something else but a complete whole.

It is distinct if a subsistent A is really distinct from any other subsistent X

It has an intellectual nature if it is human, or angelic, or divine.

One starts from what one knows to be true and applies the principle of metaphysical equivalence, i. e., assigning the metaphysical conditions of the truth of the accepted propositions

The principle of metaphysical equivalence is needed to proceed from true propositions to metaphysical statements

Aristotle defines a nature as an immanent principle of movement and rest

The questions behind all our knowing are questions for intelligence, reflection, evaluation, and salvation

Such questions intend what we are to know, and so they are immanent principles of movement, of inquiry,

When in each inquiry we arrive at a correct answer, that inquiry ends and so we rest.

4. It applies to any pluralism that has been analysed.

We must first come to know its presuppositions and its consequents radical

From this basis one can reduce differences to a differentiation of consciousness or to the a lack of differentiated consciousness.

However, differentiated or undifferentiated consciousness is rather remote from differences produced by passion, party spirit, rivalry, etc. Single issue groups are of people who need to express themselves and cannot get their minds off some single point.

5. Theoretical theology and systematic theology differ as tweedledom and tweedledee. They coincide in a methodical theology with the seventy functional specialty I name systematics.