

Regis 69 2A¹ (51700DTE060)

The topic today is functional specialties. To conceive theology in terms of method is to conceive it as a pattern of related and recurrent operations, proceeding cumulatively and progressively towards an ideal goal. We're conceiving theology from the viewpoint of method. Consequently, we conceive it in terms of a pattern of related and recurrent operations with cumulative and progressive results. However, theology is specialized. It is not just one normative pattern, it is a set of normative patterns. We have this fourfold thing not just once: we are going to have it eight times.

1 Three Types of Specialization

There are three types of specialization. There is field specialization, which divides up the data: the whole Old Testament is too much for one man, so one man does the Law, a second does the Prophets, a third the writings; and the Law turns out to be too much for one man, so they divide that up; one man does Deuteronomy, another does Beza Codex, etc., and that proves a little bit too much, so they start dividing that. And similarly they divide up the New Testament: Paul would be too much: no one man could keep up with all the literature on St Paul's epistles, so they divide it up into the great epistles, the pastorals, etc. You divide up the data, and each man confines himself more and more to less and less. Similarly with regard to the Fathers:

1 Corresponds to audio recording 51700A0E060. The first part of the second lecture.

Lonergan begins by correcting several items on a bibliography he had distributed, and then proceeds to respond to a question that was raised the previous evening about unconscious motivation, referring to Ricoeur, Vergote, and Maslow's books on the bibliography.

the apostolic fathers, the apologists, the ante-Nicene fathers, etc.: you keep dividing it up, no one can be responsible for too much. And that is field specialization; it consists in dividing up the data, the field of data for which a man is responsible.

There is also subject specialization. That is a matter of dividing up the results of investigations. Field specialization divides up what you start from; subject specialization divides up what you end up with. So one man does literature, another does science, one is a natural scientist, a third does human science, a fourth does philosophy, a fifth does history, another does theology. And that is just a start; you could not expect one professor to teach the whole of theology; you start dividing up the teaching load, and you get subjects taught in courses, collected in departments: department, subject, course. Subject specialization is dividing up results. So, from the viewpoint of subject specialization, you have some people teaching Semitic languages, and other people teaching Hebrew history, and other people the religions in the ancient near East, and other people teaching Christian biblical theology: all quite different subjects; you are dividing up results.

Besides field specialization which divides up the data, and the subject specialization which divides up the results, there is functional specialization, which divides up the process from the data to the results. The textual critic figures out what was written, and the exegete figures out what was meant; both deal with exactly the same data, fundamentally, but they deal with it in different ways, for different purposes. The techniques of the textual critic are quite different from the techniques of the exegete. After the textual critics and the exegetes are finished, the historians come along and tell you what was going forward; and you get a third slant, but all about the same data: but you approach it from different angles, and you perform different operations. The experimental physicist can run the cyclotron, but the

theoretical physicist would be absolutely lost; but the experimental physicist has to consult the theoretical to find out what experiments would be worthwhile doing, what would be significant perhaps; and when he gets his results, well, What does this mean? There is a division of labor: different specializations, but the data are going to be the same: one man has one angle, another man has another.

There need not be different specialists; it is not a division of specialists: one man may do both. It is only when things become extremely complicated that you have different men doing them. But the thing to understand is that they are different specialties: there are different jobs to be done, and they're done in different ways.

This notion of functional specializations has particular importance, because field specialization tends to endless division: it has no way of putting things together from that viewpoint. But this business of the functional specializations: each one presupposes the others. The exegete will be just talking nonsense, if he has not got a good critical text. He will be explaining things with deep metaphysical theories, and all that has happened is that a scribe was writing things on a Friday, and skipped a couple of lines, as has happened; or the works are falsely attributed to the author, and all the rest of it. The functional specialties are in a series; each later one presupposes the earlier, and complements it. These functional specialties are internally related to one another, and interdependent: you get the unity of a subject by considering its functional specialties. Not the many subjects that can be treated: how they come together isn't too clear; or the many field specialties. But the functional specialties do come together; they reveal a unity of subject.

2 An Eightfold Division

We are going to distinguish eight functional specialties in theology. First, I will give a list, and a brief description of each one, and then we will go on to ask, Why these eight? – the theory behind them. So, first of all, a rough outline of the eight functional specialties. Later on, reasons why we arrive at precisely these eight; so that you can have an explanation, and consequently be able to figure out in the pattern itself just what goes under each specialty. If you just give description, well, it doesn't pin anything down; first a description, and then an explanation to pin things down theoretically. The eight functional specialties in theology are: (1) research, (2) interpretation, (3) history, (4) dialectic, (5) foundations, (6) doctrines, (7) systematics, and (8) communications.

(1) Research makes available the data relevant to theological investigation, makes the data available. It is either general or special. Special research is concerned with settling the data relevant to some particular question or problem, such as the doctrine of x on the question y : the research done on a doctoral dissertation is special research. It is research done with a view to settling some particular question. And special research operates all the more rapidly and effectively the more familiar it is with the tools made available by general research. As a matter of fact, doing the special research, one of the principal values of it, is becoming familiar with the tools there are. General research locates, excavates, and maps ancient cities; it fills museums, and reproduces or copies inscriptions, symbols, pictures, statues; it deciphers unknown scripts and languages; it collects and catalogues manuscripts, and prepares critical editions of texts; it composes indices, tables, repertories, bibliographies, abstracts, bulletins, handbooks, dictionaries, encyclopedias. Someday, perhaps, it will give us a complete

information retrieval system: just press the button, and it will answer your question. The function of research is to make data available, either for people generally, and then its general research; or specially, with regard to a particular question. And the special research is done efficiently, insofar as the man knows how to use the tools of general research.

(2) While research makes the data available, interpretation understands what was meant. Anything relevant to a human science, as we said last night, has a commonsense meaning; and it is up to interpretation to find out what that meaning is. You have to grasp the meaning in its proper historical context, in accordance with its proper level and mode of thought and expression, in the light of the circumstances and intention of the writer. Its product is the commentary, the monograph. It is an enterprise replete with pitfalls, and today it is complicated by the importation of problems of cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics. To it we will return later, when we spend a day on interpretation.

(3) History is basic, special, or general.

Basic history tells us where: places, areas; when: dates, periods; who: persons, peoples; did what: public life, external acts; to enjoy what success, suffer what reverses, exert what influence. It makes as specific and precise as possible the more easily recognized and acknowledged features of human activities in their geographical distribution and temporal succession. It sets up the chronology, the nomenclature: who did what, when, where, etc.: the more obvious facts.

Special histories tell of movements, whether cultural: language, art, literature, religion; institutional: family, mores, society, education, state, law, economy, technology, church, sects; or doctrinal: mathematics and natural science, human science, philosophy, history, theology; what was going forward from cultural, doctrinal, institutional points of view?

General history is perhaps just an ideal. It puts together these basic and special histories. It would be basic history illuminated and completed by the special histories. It would offer the total view, or some approximation to it. It would express the historian's information, understanding, judgment, and evaluation, with regard to the sum of cultural, institutional, and doctrinal movements in their concrete setting. And that in general about history; as a functional specialty within theology, history is concerned in different degrees and manners with basic, special, and general history: in the main, it has to presuppose basic history. Its substantial concern is the doctrinal history of Christian theology, with its antecedents and consequents in the cultural and institutional histories of the Christian religion, the Christian churches and sects. Finally, it cannot remain aloof from general history; for it is only within the full view that can be grasped the differences between the Christian churches and sects, the relations between different religions, and the role of Christianity in world history.

(4) Our fourth functional specialty is dialectic.

While that name can be employed in very many ways, the sense we intend is simple enough. Dialectic has to do with the concrete, the dynamic, and the contradictory. And so it finds abundant materials in the history of Christian movements. Any movement is dynamic. Movement is always concrete; abstractions don't move, they are like Plato's Ideas. And there are contradictions. Christian movements have been marked with external and internal conflicts, whether one considers Christianity as a whole or even this or that larger Church or communion.

The materials of dialectic, then, are primarily the conflicts centered in Christian movements. But to these must be added the secondary conflicts in historical accounts and theological interpretations of the movements. You have conflicts on the first level, the real level, so to speak, the theological

interpretation of it, and historical judgments: you will get different sorts of conflict, you will get conflicting histories, conflicting theologies: they will all be different, but they have something in common.

Besides the materials of dialectic, there is its aim: this is high and distant. Empirical science aims at a complete explanation of all phenomena, and it does not expect to arrive there tomorrow. So dialectic aims at a comprehensive viewpoint. It seeks some single base, or some single set of related bases, from which you can proceed to an understanding of the character, the relations, and the oppositions of the many viewpoints exhibited in the conflicting Christian movements, their conflicting histories, and their conflicting interpretations.

Besides the conflict of Christians and the distant goal of a comprehensive viewpoint, there is also the past and present fact of the many diverging viewpoints that result in the conflicts. Such viewpoints are manifested in confessions of faith and in learned works of apologetics; but they also are manifested, often in a more vital manner, in the unnoticed assumptions and oversights, in the predilections and aversions, in the quiet but determined decisions, of scholars, writers, speakers, and the men and women in the pews.

The study of these viewpoints takes one beyond the fact to the reasons for conflict. Comparing them will bring to light just where differences are irreducible, where they are complementary and could be brought together within a larger whole, where finally they can be regarded as successive stages in a single process of development.

Besides comparison there is criticism; not every viewpoint is coherent, and those that are not can be invited to advance to a consistent position; not every reason is a sound reason, and Christianity has nothing to lose from a purge of unsound reasons, of ad hoc explanations, of the

stereotypes that body forth suspicions, resentments, hatreds, malice. Not every irreducible difference is a serious difference, and those that are not can be put in second or third or fourth place, so that attention, study, and analysis can be devoted to differences that are serious and profound.

Our dialectic, then, is understood as generalized apologetics, conducted in an ecumenical spirit, aiming ultimately at a comprehensive viewpoint, and proceeding towards that goal by acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds real and apparent, eliminating superfluous oppositions. Research can be carried on from a specialized viewpoint. Interpretation can have a bias. Histories can represent particular viewpoints, and the result is you get conflicting interpretations and conflicting histories. And so you need this fourth specialty dialectic at least to acknowledge the existence of those differences and investigate them: not just to have the multitude of opinions, but reflection on the multiplicity and some understanding of it.

(5) Foundations. Conversion is a religious event; it is not something that happens to men and women as theologians, it is something that happens to people as human beings, children of God. However, the object, the objectification, the horizon fixed by a conversion is that within which any religious statement, any religious value, has its meaning and its validity. The spiritual man (1 Cor 2.14) judges all things; the unspiritual man cannot make head or tail of what religious people are talking about. It is that religious horizon that results from conversion that provides foundations. So foundations is conceived, not as a special treatise *De vera religione* or on the Church; it is not a doctrine, it is a horizon, it is a foundation.

By conversion is understood a transformation of the subject and his world. Normally, it is a prolonged process, though its explicit acknowledgement may be concentrated in a few momentous judgments and decisions. Still, it is not just a development, or even a series of

developments; rather it is a resultant change of course and direction. It is as if one's eyes were opened, and one's former world faded and fell away. There emerges something new that fructifies in interlocking, cumulative sequences of developments on all levels and in all departments of human living.

Conversion is existential, intensely personal, utterly intimate; but it is not so private as to be solitary. It can happen to many, and they can form a community to sustain one another in their self-transformation, and to help one another in working out the implications and fulfilling the promise of their new life. Finally, what can become communal can become historical; it can pass from generation to generation, it can spread from one cultural milieu to another, it can adapt to changing circumstances, confront new situations, survive into a different age, flourish in another period or epoch.

Conversion as lived affects all of a man's conscious and intentional operations; it directs his being, pervades his imagination, releases the symbols that penetrate the depth of his psyche; it enriches his understanding, guides his judgment, reinforces his decisions. What is communal and historical has a movement with its own cultural, institutional, and doctrinal dimensions. Conversion calls forth a reflection that makes the movement thematic, that explicitly explores its origins, developments, purposes, achievements, and failures.

Inasmuch as conversion itself is made thematic and explicitly objectified, there emerges the fifth functional specialty, foundations. They differ from the old fundamental theology in two respects. First, fundamental theology was a theological first; it did not follow on four other specialties named research, interpretation, history, and dialectic. Secondly, fundamental theology was a set of doctrines: on the true religion, on the divine legate, on the Church, on the inspiration of scripture, on the topics of

theology (*de locis theologicis*). In contrast, foundations presents, not doctrines, but the horizon within which the meaning of doctrines can be apprehended. Just as in religious living the man who is unspiritual refuses what belongs to the Spirit of God, it is folly for him, he cannot grasp it, so in theological reflection on religious living there has to be distinguished the horizon within which religious doctrines can or cannot be apprehended, and this distinction is foundational.

In due course we will have to ask how horizon is to be understood and defined, and how one horizon may differ from another, and this will come up in our special chapter on foundations. At once, however, we may note, that as conversion may be authentic or unauthentic, so there may be many Christian horizons, and not all of them may represent authentic conversion. Further, while it may be possible to conceive authentic conversion in more than one manner, still the number of possible manners would seem to be far fewer than the number of possible horizons. It follows that foundations contain a promise, both of an elucidation of the conflicts revealed in dialectic, and of a selective principle that will guide the remaining specialties concerned with doctrine, systematics, and communications.

(6) Our sixth specialty is doctrines. Doctrines express judgments of fact and judgments of value. They are concerned, then, with the affirmations and negations, not only of dogmatic theology, but also of moral, ascetical, mystical, pastoral, and any similar branch.

Such doctrines stand within the horizon of foundations. They have their precise definition from dialectic, their positive wealth, clarification, and development from history, their ground in the interpretation of the data proper to theology. So, in the light of foundations, one is able to take sides in the opposition set up by dialectic, and go behind, through the dialectic, to history and interpretation of the data relevant to a Christian theology.

(7) Seventh, systematics. The facts and values affirmed in doctrines give rise to further questions. Doctrinal expression may be figurative or symbolic; it may be descriptive, and based ultimately on the meaning of words rather than on the understanding of realities; it may, if pressed, become vague and indefinite; it may seem, if examined, to be involved in inconsistency or fallacy: the linguistic analyst, in his summer courses, explained to his students the contradictions contained in the Creed. The functional specialty, systematics, attempts to meet these issues. It is concerned to work out appropriate systems of conceptualization, to remove apparent inconsistencies, to move toward some grasp of spiritual matters both from their own inner coherence and from the analogies offered by more familiar human experience. (I won't be able to get on to treating doctrines or systematics in any detail in this two weeks, but in the introductory parts to my *De Deo Trino*, you'll find on doctrines the *Pars Dogmatica* of *De Deo Trino*; on systematics, the introductory part to systematics, the thought on systematic theology.)

(8) Finally, communications. Communications is concerned with theology in its external relations. There are internal communications between theologians, but this is communications outside theology. There are interdisciplinary relations with art, language, literature, other religions, the natural and human sciences, with philosophy and history (the academic relations). Further, there are the transpositions that theological thought has to develop if religion is both to retain its identity and at the same time find access into the minds and hearts of men of all cultures and classes. This point has taken on terrific dimensions at the present time. When I went to school, we were taught Latin, Greek, and mathematics, and that was it; and the classicist culture is finished. Classicist culture was normative: there was just one culture, that had a capital 'C' in front of it; and the barbarians

couldn't learn it; and they were taught Christian religion. Well, they had to learn it. Now, modern culture is a culture that knows about all cultures; and we have to be able to talk to people in all cultures and in all classes in those cultures, and at the same time retain our identity. And besides that type of adaptation in communications there is the further adaptation needed to make full and proper use of the diverse media of communications that are available at any place and time. You do not use the television screen as a teaching medium when you just have a picture of man giving a lecture; you can do all sorts of things on television that are much more communicative than having someone sit there and talk. But how to use these media, how to use them differently, is a terrific problem, and that is our eighth functional specialty of theology.

3 Grounds of the Division

So much then for the general outline of what I mean by the eight specialties. Now, why eight? Where does this list of eight come from? What are the principles to be invoked in working things out more exactly? In delimiting further what each one is, in clarifying the functions of each, and the relations of each one to the others?

The first approximation. Those eight are not entirely new; we have already fundamental theology, dogmatic theology, systematic theology, pastoral theology: pastoral is like communications, systematic like systematics, dogmatic like doctrinal, and fundamental as foundational. Again, we also have research and exegesis, and the history of the Church, the history of dogma, the history of theology; and we have a lot of apologetics and controversial writings, and they are something like research, interpretation, history, and dialectic.

However, what is new is to conceive these eight as related to one another, as interdependent. Now, where do the eight come from? The first step is that theology occurs in two phases. One listens to the Word, but one also bears witness to the Word. There is *lectio divina*, and there are *quaestiones* – what does it mean? Ebeling speaks of *Wort* and *Antwort*: the word of God and the answer, the response to the word of God. There is the assimilation of tradition, and there is passing the tradition on. There is encounter with the past, and taking one's stance towards the future. There is theology *in oratione obliqua*. What did Isaiah and Jeremias really mean? What do John and Paul really mean? I want to know just what they thought. What did Augustine and Thomas really mean, or Luther and Calvin? And so on along the line: what were they holding, what were they expounding? And there is theology *in oratione recta*: what am I to tell people today? There is quite a difference between doctrines and biblical theology. As biblical theology becomes refined and advanced, it comes to know Paul in his individuality, and John in his individuality, and so on for all the other scriptural writers. It moves right down to a precise understanding of what this man in his milieu did. Now, being a Christian is not putting on simultaneously the mentality of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Paul, John, etc. It is what the Church thinks, what we hold as Christians. We learn it from them, but we do not become them; we put on Christ who did not write anything. 'Doctrines' is something quite different from this business of exegesis and history. We become ourselves; we have to work out our own salvation, and help others in their individuality and in our own. So, theology *in oratione obliqua* and *in oratione recta*. We have those two phases of theology: encountering the past, facing the future.

Now, each of those phases divides into four specialties.

DIALECTIC	DECISION -evaluation, choices	FOUNDATIONS
HISTORY	JUDGMENT - what is so	DOGMATICS
INTERPRETATION	UNDERSTANDING intelligibility	SYSTEMATICS
RESEARCH	EXPERIENCE – data	COMMUNICATION

There are four levels of consciousness. Each level has its partial object. Experience is concerned with data; understanding with intelligibility; judgment with what is so, or what can be; decision with evaluation and choices. So you use all four levels to attain the end of one or this or this or this, and you get four specialties. Insofar as you are using all four levels to make available the data, you have research. Insofar as you are using all four levels to attain the end of understanding, you have exegesis, interpretation. Insofar as you are using all four levels to arrive at judgments, to ascertain the facts, you have history. And insofar as you use all four levels to confront yourself with a problem for decision (where do I stand?) you have dialectic. Insofar as you are a converted subject, and objectify your personal commitment, you have foundations. Insofar as you make judgments you have doctrines, in the light of the foundations. Insofar as you understand your doctrines, you have systematics. And insofar as you are a source of further data, you talk and write, you have communications.

So, the rationale of the eight. There are two phases in theology: encounter with the past, facing the future. In each of these you can specialize for the end of a particular level of consciousness. Insofar as the end is data, in one phase you get research, in the other you get communications. Insofar as the end is understanding, you have interpretation and systematics. Insofar as the end is judgment, you have history and doctrines, facts. And insofar as the end is decision, you have dialectic and foundations.