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Wednesday, August 10, 1971, lecture 1, part 1

Foundations

Chapter 11 is on our fifth functional specialty, Foundations. It is to be noted with regard to both dialectic and foundations that they occur on the fourth level of conscious intentionality, the level of responsibility and freedom. There has been a tendency in questions to want one's exercise of freedom to be something demonstrated. Where you are free, there are no demonstrations. You are making yourself what you are; it is existential, it is not demonstrable. St Thomas has various grounds of freedom but the ground given in the *Pars Prima* of the *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 83, a. 1, is that a course of action is not something that can be demonstrated. So in this, one cannot carry over one's demand for proofs, demonstrations, critical grounding, and so on from the field of knowledge into this realm of freedom because that is ignoring just what we are, namely, free beings on that fourth level. One decides what one is to do with oneself, and questions for conversion, intellectual, moral, and religious, are also questions of decision because they involve a change in oneself.

The fifth specialty, then, Foundations, is the introduction to the more personal stance taken in the second phase of theology, theology as in direct discourse, as confronting the future: not only as illuminated by the past but as confronting the future. It's foundations not of the whole of theology but of the remaining three functional specialties, insofar as this more personal stance is involved.

In other words, the first four functional specialties also found doctrines, systematics, and communications, but they do so without this personal stance being

an explicit ground. This personal stance becomes an explicit ground in the specialty named Foundations.

First, I shall speak of the foundational reality. Secondly, the sufficiency of the foundational reality. Thirdly, pluralism in its expression. Fourthly, pluralism in theology. Fifth, categories. Sixth, general categories. Seventh, special theological categories. And, eighth, use of the categories.

[Foundational Reality]

The foundational reality, as distinct from its expression, is conversion: religious, moral, and intellectual. It is the subject as converted. Conversion can be and should be, as much as possible, operative in mediating theology, in research, interpretation, history, and dialectic. But it is operative not as an explicit, established, universally recognized criterion of proper procedure. It is the self-understanding of the man who is going to interpret things correctly, but you don't require everyone to have that self-understanding; you let the thing ride.

Similarly, in history, it provides the horizon within which the people who are going to understand the events of the past properly will be operating. But we don't set up that horizon as a prerequisite. The first phase of theology is on the way. We separate the sheep from the goats, we start at that, in dialectic, not before we start doing theology, but in dialectic, when we find the differences, the oppositions.

Foundations, finally, occur on the fourth level, of deliberation, evaluation, decision, of responsibility and freedom, of the existential, where people are explicitly making themselves what they are to be. And while it is free it is also responsible; it is not arbitrary. Conversion is man's realizing the self-transcendence which is the authentic demand of the human spirit.

In a faculty psychology one would be talking of will; in intentionality analysis one speaks of conscience; it is an act of conscience. Will, in a faculty psychology, is apt to be conceived as a source of arbitrariness; conscience is not. A deliberate decision on this level is a high achievement. Most people drift. They drift into an outlook on the world; they have not examined their fundamental assumptions. While it is an intensely personal business it is not so solitary as to be private. Many can have the same conversions; they can recognize themselves in one another, they can supply one another with mutual support, they can initiate a tradition, and, consequently, conversion can manifest itself in social groups and historical movements.

This collective aspect of conversion reveals that conversion is not only a matter of a change of horizon in the individual; individuals do not construct horizons, they derive them from the group in which they are born; they may modify them slightly, but man is a historical being, that is, he is a part in the ongoing of a tradition, of its development or its corruption as the case may be.

Consequently, conversion may mean that one moves from one social group to another. Or, again, it may mean that one becomes a more authentic member of the group one already is in. Foundational reality, then, is something that is a change or the clearer grasp in an individual of his basic stance.

[The Sufficiency of the Foundational Reality]

One may ask whether this foundational reality is sufficient. And that gives us our second topic: the sufficiency of the foundational reality.

Now, foundations can be conceived in two different manners. A foundation is what is first in any ordered set, *primum in aliquo ordine*. But that first may be conceived in two ways. The ordered set may be conceived as a set of propositions.

And then your foundations are the propositions from which all the others may be derived, and one is thinking of a logical universe. But one's foundations may be realities; one's ordered set may consist in realities, and then the foundation is what is first among these realities. And what is first among these realities insofar as there are doctrines, systematics, communications is conversion.

Now why do we place it in conversion? Precisely because we are concerned with method, not with just one system which follows from a certain set of premises but from an ongoing developing; we have developing religion, developing dogma, developing theology. And your foundations have to regard, principally, the developments; it is the integration of the developments that give you the doctrines at any time. What has to be controlled is the movement from one position to the next, and that is controlled by having people converted intellectually, morally, and religiously, because it is at that point that the developments themselves are controlled.

[Pluralism in Expression]

Next, pluralism in expression. The manifestation of conversion in deeds and in words will vary with the manner in which consciousness is undifferentiated or differentiated. The result is a pluralism in expression of some fundamental stance; and that pluralism in expression gives you different theologies.

We have already spoken of four realms of meaning: the realm of commonsense meanings, the realm of theoretical meanings, the realm of meanings based on interiority, and the realm of transcendence. Common sense deals with all realms in a commonsense manner. You get your doctrine of the different meanings: the anagogic, the moral, and so on, insofar as common sense is using commonsense means to express the whole four realms. It is unspecialized; it hasn't

got special techniques for dealing with the different realms; it operates in all with its basic procedures.

Religiously differentiated consciousness – and that is the most common form of differentiated consciousness, whether you think of the East, of India, China, Japan, or you think of the Christian West, or of Islam. There is the worshipful consciousness and the commonsense consciousness. Then there is a theoretically differentiated consciousness that operates in the realm of common sense and the realm of theory: Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas. And theory is not only science but also philosophy. Interiorly differentiated consciousness operates in the realms of common sense and of interiority, and that is the modern philosophic stance; it places philosophy basically on interiority and not in the realm of theory. Cognitional theory is the first, but in the older stance metaphysics was the first because it is dealing with theory.

Then you can have twofold differentiations of consciousness and threefold differentiations of consciousness, and according to the number of differentiations you consider you can get up to thirty-two or sixty-four types of differentiated consciousness. And any type, of course, is just a type. Individually, any type may be incipient, or mature or tending to vanish.

Now there results a pluralism in expression according to the degree to which consciousness is differentiated.

[Pluralism in Theology]

From pluralism of expression due to differentiation of consciousness we can go on to pluralism in theology. There is the radical pluralism that arises from the presence or absence of conversion: religious, moral, intellectual. There is a benign but confusing pluralism that results from the differentiation of consciousness. You

have a symbolic theology. Daniélou has written on the theology of Judaic Christianity. The Son and the Spirit are conceived as angels, very tall angels, about five-hundred feet tall, they are identified with the two seraphim that continuously sing 'Holy, Holy, Holy' in the presence of the Throne. They are very strong in apocalyptic, man's apprehension of the world in which he is, where are the spirits, where are the spirits of the dead? and so on. Apocalyptic is man not only taking a stand within his world but also constituting the world he is in and all its parts. And, at first sight, this Judaic Christianity seems to be hardly Christianity at all; well, it is not Greek Christianity. But as Daniélou has shown against earlier people who thought that the Son and the Spirit were conceived as creatures because they were conceived of as angels, they were conceived of as persons, they called them angels to have them persons.

Mystical theology leads to an apophatic theology. Because one can be deeply absorbed with God in prayer, at that time one doesn't need any concepts of God, and when one is not praying one can be content to say what God is not: God is not this, and not that, and not the other, and you get the apophatic theology.

Theoretical theology, the theology that was incipient in the Greek Councils and some of the Greek Fathers, that became systematic, extended over the whole range in thirteenth-century theology; it is that theology, theoretical type of theology, that is going out at the present time. The influence of Aristotle was not altogether happy. His notions of necessary proof and so on led to skepticism and then to decadence. His lack of distinction between the commonsense language and theoretical language also encouraged a verbalism. I will say something more about medieval theology later, but the attempt to revive it, for example, by Melchior Cano, by having medieval doctrines buttressed by proofs from Scripture, the Fathers, and so on, was a failure to apprehend that most of the theological problems were historical rather than logical.

At the present time what we are aiming at is a methodical theology, that is, a theology guided by a method, theology as an ongoing, not something like a system, a *Summa*, stating everything for all time, but an ongoing process of a historical religion. It sets up its basic terms and relations from the nature of that process. Consequently, while it assures continuity, it does not attain rigidity. So that is a historical succession of pluralism in theology. You can get further differences according to the degree of differentiation of consciousness, and further differences from the presence or absence of conversion.

[Categories]

And so we come to our fifth topic, categories. The transcendental notions represented in questions for intelligence, for reflection, for deliberation, make questions and answers possible. Categories make them determinate.

Theological categories are either general or special. They are general when theology is not the only one that uses them; theology uses them but other disciplines use the same ones. They are special when they are peculiar to theology.

What are the properties of appropriate theological categories? Well, first of all, Christianity requires a transcultural base that has existed for two-thousand years; it is to be preached to all nations; and, consequently, it is not to be confined to a basis in some one culture; it needs a transcultural base. Transcendental method provides a transcultural base. It is concerned with the type of thing not that is generated by a culture but that generates cultures, and, consequently, can be found in any.

Transcendental method provides one part, the general categories. God's gift of his love flooding our hearts also has a transcultural aspect, particularly as we have conceived it, namely, as having a content without necessarily having an

apprehended object: God's gift of his love. Consequently, if you have an apprehended object, that object will be conceived differently in different cultures. But if you haven't got an apprehended object, if it is just the content of being in love, then it can be transcultural.

The validity to be expected in the derivation of categories: with regard to the general categories, you have to distinguish between the formulation of the categories, the expression of them, and, on the other hand, the realities to which such expression refers. The realities: attention, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility, those realities, while they are realized in different ways, still, there is no transition, attention never becomes inattention, or intelligence never becomes stupidity, and so on. They are constants.

On the other hand, the way in which one expresses them, talks about them, will vary in different stages of human development. In faculty psychology you will do things one way, and in intentionality analysis you proceed in another way, in speaking about those realities. Consequently, there can be different modes of expression, and even when you have a fundamentally correct mode of expression, still, you can perfect it always, you can always learn more about those realities.

Again, with regard to the special categories, one has to distinguish between being in love in an unrestricted fashion as it is defined and as it is achieved. As it is defined, religious conversion is its own justification. There is no need to argue, to critically justify the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. As it is achieved, ah yes, the achievement is always dialectical. Man's authenticity is always a withdrawal from unauthenticity; it is overcoming bias, illusion, getting out of traps.

The grounds for the acceptance and the employment of the categories. Here we revert to the notion of the ideal type, of the model. As far as method is concerned we are content to offer models. If you want to go on beyond models to

hypothesis or description, that's up to the theologian. But the methodologist is content to offer a model and then to relate a set of interlocking terms and relations with a basic reference such as transcendental method, being in love with God. So whenever anything more than a model is sought, one has moved from method to theology itself.

So much for the categories in general and the type of validity they are expected to have.

[General Theological Categories]

General theological categories: The base of general theological categories is the theologian as subject and his operations as self-transcending. That theologian as subject and his operations as self-transcending provide a basic net of terms and relations that can be differentiated and expanded in a variety of manners. One can distinguish different kinds of conscious operation and the relations between them, and that is roughly transcendental method. Different patterns of experience: the biological, the aesthetic, the intellectual, the mystical, the dramatic, the practical as discussed in *Insight*, chapter 6. Different qualities of consciousness: empirical, intellectual, rational, responsible. Different manners of proceeding towards goals: common sense, theoretical, interiority, transcendence. Different heuristic structures: classical, statistical, genetic, dialectical. The integration of all methods in a metaphysics, the functional specialties of a theology, the contrast between differentiated and undifferentiated consciousness, and the varieties of differentiated consciousness, the absence or presence of conversion, positions and counterpositions, and not only the operations and the different states in which the subject is but also the objects to which he is related by these operations. So there is

a general mode of developing categories, general theological categories, categories that will be employed not only by theologians but also in other disciplines.

So from the base in the subject and his operations, one can move to a developed account of the human good, values, beliefs, to the question of God, religious experience, its expressions, its dialectical development. Finally, from these terms and their objects one can move to dynamic structures; the various ways in which models change can be worked out. Aristotle conceived fire as an element, one of the four elements. Prior to Lavoisier it was conceived in terms of phlogiston. Today it is conceived of as a process of oxidization. What's common to them? Well, there is nothing common to the answers; the answers are disparate, but it is always the same question that is being asked: what do I know when I understand this phenomenon in front of me? So you have your structure, what will I know when I understand, or as it is more commonly put: what is the nature of ...? So nature means what you will know when you understand. What did Augustine mean when he spoke of three persons in the Trinity? All he meant was a heuristic notion. There are three, not three Gods, not three Fathers, not three Sons, not three Holy Ghosts. Three what? Three persons. What does he mean by a person? I mean by a person what I'll know when I understand what there are three of in the Trinity. And that is all person meant for Augustine.

The next stage in the process was defining person. And you have the definition of Boethius, the definition of Richard of St Victor, and the definition of Aquinas, and they were all metaphysical. Consequently, Scotus and Tiphanus and Suarez and Capreolus and so on, Cajetan, went on to the metaphysics of the person, and disputed about the metaphysics of the person.

With Descartes there comes an interest in the subject, and person began to be conceived in terms of the subject. And with phenomenology we are concerned with intersubjectivity, personal relations, and another aspect of the person comes along.

But these involve differences not in the dogma of the Trinity but in the theology of the Trinity; it is an ongoing process of reflection. And to be able to set up dynamic structures of the way things develop, models of the way things can develop, is fundamental to an understanding of the development of doctrine, just knowing what was going on.

So much for general theological categories. Really, in that last example of the Trinity I was moving on to [special] theological categories.

[Special Theological Categories]

Special theological categories became conceived in the medieval period by the distinction between the natural and the supernatural. During the twelfth century there were as many kinds of grace as there were adjectives employed in Augustine's rhetoric. And the whole problem was: what isn't a grace? After all, if God creates you he doesn't do it because he owes you anything, you are not anything to be owed to yet. And some people were saying they are the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity, but others said, well, surely not the divine virtues in those that are reprobate, that are going to be condemned to hell. Because, after all, they will be all the more guilty because they have had them. So it is divine virtues in the just, those that have been predestined, and so on. It was just a hopeless maze.

And, again, there was, and particularly with regard to liberty, according to Augustine grace was the liberation of liberty. Consequently, the theologians couldn't conceive liberty apart from grace or grace apart from liberty, because grace was the liberation of liberty. So while the philosophers define liberty as immunity from necessity, the theologians had to say that liberty is that by which you do what is right when you have God's grace and what's wrong when you haven't. And to get the two separate, it was gradually developed, there were about three people involved, but the final step was taken by Philip the Chancellor about the year 1230. He distinguished two orders, two entitatively disproportionate orders: grace is above nature, faith is above reason, charity is above human friendship, merit in God's eyes is above the esteem of men. There are two orders, and the first, the lower one, he called the natural and the other one the supernatural. And once he got them separate, well, people could start talking about the two.

Theories, doctrines on grace and doctrines on liberty began to flourish from 1230 on. And that is the fundamental meaning of this distinction between natural and supernatural. When you get it into conceptualist terms well, of course, you get things up tight. That is where the weakness of that distinction lies, putting it into a conceptualist context. But, fundamentally, it was enabling the theologians to consider what was the proper object of theology, of special categories in theology.

You can contrast the difference between theoretical theology, such as it existed in the Middle Ages, which conceives grace in terms of an entitative, absolutely supernatural habit received in the essence of the soul and from it proceeding the operative habits, especially the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, that metaphysical conception of grace that you have in a theoretical theology and, on the other hand, a conception of grace in terms of the purgative, illuminative, unitive way of an ongoing process that becomes relevant within a methodical theology, a theology based fundamentally on interiority.

The fundamental special category is, of course, God's gift of his love. That is the basis of the others, this dynamic state of other-worldly love. It is God's gift of his love, and from it follows man's consent to it. It has its outer determinants in Christianity, and it has its assists insofar as its existence is in a community. A useful book on the topic, Olivier Rabut, *L'expérience religieuse fondamentale*, fundamental religious experience, Castermann, Tournai, about 1969. At one point he says, what is the unassailable fact of religious experience? And he says, it is like an electromagnetic field. You will find it. It is like being in a hall and music fills the air and you can't tell whether it is an orchestra or a gramophone record or there is a third method of sound production from interference, it hasn't been developed commercially, but there is no doubt about the music. You don't know where it is coming from but there is no doubt about it. It consists in this being in love. You

have to let yourself be in love to notice it. But he places there the unassailable element of religious experience.

So while the general categories are derived as from a transcendental method, the special categories are derived from religious experience, from studies of religious experience, from one's own personal development. One passes from a single subject to subjects, the religious community, from our loving to the loving source of our love, to God, from the differentiation of human beings, the passage from unauthenticity to authenticity, and then historically, progress insofar as one is authentic, decline insofar as people are unauthentic, and redemption, the Christian, or what the Christian adds by 'do not overcome evil with evil, but overcome evil with good.' Details of this, of course, are worked out by theologians. The methodologist sets up a model on which one proceeds coherently. Just as the general categories are derived from the subject and his operations, so the special categories are derived from religious and specifically Christian experience.

[Use of the Categories]

The categories have a transcultural base. So one expresses them differently in different cultures. One expresses them in the way appropriate, intelligible, to the members in that culture. The transcultural base is authentic man, for the general categories, and for the special categories the authentic Christian.

The derivation of the categories is through the subject's self-appropriation. The purification of the categories is prepared by dialectic and effected through conversion, through the objectivity that is the fruit of self-transcending subjectivity.

The genesis of the special categories occurs in the dialectic as assembling and comparing and reducing and classifying the terms of conflicts. The special

categories receive further specifications from the data. There is an interaction between the dialectic and further confrontations with the data, in which the data become more clearly conceived and, on the other hand, they demand fuller clarification of the categories.

Finally, this specialty, Foundations, is concerned largely with the origins, the genesis, the present state, the possible developments and adaptations of the categories of a Christian theology.

That will do for this first period. Next we will start in on Doctrines.