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CHAPTER FIVE

F U N C T I O N A L S P E C I A L T I E S

To put method in theology is to conceive theology as a set of related and recurrent operations cumulatively advancing towards an ideal goal. However, contemporary theology is specialized, and so it is to be conceived, not as a single set of related operations, but as a series of interdependent sets. To formulate this conception of theology, first, we shall distinguish field, subject, and functional specializations. Next, we shall describe the eight functional specializations in theology, set forth the grounds for this division, and give some account of its utility. Finally, we shall indicate the dynamic unity linking the functional specialties to religion and to one another.

1. Three Types of Specialization →

Specialties may be distinguished in three manners, namely (1) by dividing and subdividing the field of data, (2) by classifying the results of investigations, and (3) by distinguishing and separating stages of the process from data to results.

Field specialization is the most easily understood. As time passes, as centres of learning increase, as periodicals multiply and monographs follow on one another ever more closely, it becomes increasingly difficult for scholars to keep abreast with the whole movement in their field. For good or ill, a

division of labor has to be accepted, and this is brought about by dividing and then subdividing the field of relevant data. So scriptural, patristic, medieval, reformation studies become genera to be divided into species and subspecies, to make the specialist one who knows more and more about less and less.

Department and subject specialization is the most familiar type, for everyone has followed courses on subjects in a department. Now what is divided is no longer the field of data to be investigated but the results of investigations to be communicated. Again, where before the division was into material parts, now it is a conceptual classification that distinguishes the departments of a faculty and the subjects taught in a department. Thus, where field specialization would divide the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, subject specialization would distinguish semitic languages, Hebrew history, the religions of the ancient Near East, and Christian ~~theology~~.

Functional specialization distinguishes and separates successive stages in the process from data to results. Thus, textual criticism aims at determining what was written. The interpreter or commentator takes over where the textual critic leaves off; his aim is to determine what was meant. The historian moves in on a third level; he assembles interpreted texts and endeavors to construct a single narrative or view.

Again, ~~to~~ take a quite different instance, experimental physicists alone have the knowledge and skills needed to handle a cyclotron. But only theoretical physicists are able to tell what experiments are worth trying and, when they are

tried, what is the significance of the results. Once more a single process of investigation is divided into successive stages, and each stage becomes a distinct specialty.

It is to be noted that such functional specialties are intrinsically related to one another. They are successive parts of one and the same process. The earlier parts are incomplete without the later. The later presuppose the earlier and complement them. In brief, functional specialties are functionally interdependent.

Such interdependence is of the greatest methodological interest. First, without any prejudice to unity, it divides and clarifies the process from data to results. Secondly, it provides an orderly link between field specialization, based on the division of data, and subject specialization, based on a classification of results. Thirdly, the unity of functional specialties will be found, I think, to overcome or, at least, counter-balance the endless divisions of field specialization.

2. An Eightfold Division →

In this section we propose to describe briefly eight functional specialties in theology, namely, (1) research, (2) interpretation, (3) history, (4) dialectic, (5) foundations, (6) doctrines, (7) systematics, and (8) communications. Later we shall attempt to state the grounds for the foregoing division, its precise meaning, and its implications. For the moment, however, we aim at no more than a preliminary indication of the material meaning of functional specialization in theology.

□ (1)] Research makes available the data relevant to theological

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investigation. It is either general or special. Special research is concerned with assembling the data relevant to some particular question or problem, such as the doctrine of Mr. X on the question Y. Such special research operates all the more rapidly and effectively the more familiar it is with the tools made available by general research. 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. Some day, perhaps, it will give us a complete information-retrieval system.

(2) While research makes available what was written, interpretation understands what was meant. It grasps that meaning in its proper historical context, in accord with its proper mode and level of thought and expression, in the light of the circumstances and intention of the writer. Its product is the commentary or monograph. It is an enterprise replete with pitfalls and today it is further complicated by the importation of the problems of cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics. To it we return when later we speak of hermeneutics.

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

Basic history tells where (places, territories) and when (dates, periods) who (persons, peoples) did what (public life, external acts) to enjoy what success, suffer what reverses, exert what influence. So 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.

□ Special histories tell of movements whether cultural (language, art, literature, religion), institutional (family, mores, society, education, state, law, church, sect, economy, technology), or doctrinal (mathematics, natural science, human science, philosophy, history, theology).

□ General history is, perhaps, just an ideal. 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.

□ History, as a functional specialty within theology, 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 and 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.

□ But to history we return later. No less than hermeneutics, contemporary historical thought and criticism, over and above their specific tasks, have become involved in the basic philosophic problems of our time.

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(4) Our fourth functional specialty is dialectic. While that name has been employed in 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. For all movements are at once concrete and dynamic, while Christian movements have been marked with external and internal conflict, 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 centering in Christian movements. But to these must be added the secondary conflicts in historical accounts and theological interpretations of the movements.

Besides the materials of dialectic, there is its aim. This is high and distant. An empirical science aims at a complete explanation of all phenomena, so dialectic aims at a comprehensive viewpoint. It seeks some single base or some single set of related bases from which it can proceed to an understanding of the character, the oppositions, and the relations of the many viewpoints exhibited in conflicting Christian movements, their conflicting histories, and their conflicting interpretations.

Besides the conflicts of Christians and the distant goal of a comprehensive viewpoint, there is also the past and the present fact of the many diverging viewpoints that result in the conflicts. Such viewpoints are manifested in confessions of faith and learned works of apologists. 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, preachers, and the men and women in the pews.

□ Now 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, analysis can be devoted to differences that are serious and profound.

□ By dialectic, then, is understood a generalized apologetic 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, and eliminating superfluous oppositions.

□ (5) As conversion is basic to Christian living, so an objectification of conversion provides theology with its foundations.

□ 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 inter-locking, 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 gaze, pervades his imagination, releases the symbols that penetrate to the depths of his psyche. It enriches his understanding, guides his judgments, reinforces his decisions. But as communal and historical, as 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. Such foundations 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, de vera religione, de legato divino, de ecclesia, de inspiratione scripturae, de locis theologicis. In contrast, foundations present, not doctrines, but the horizon within which the meaning of doctrines can be apprehended. Just as in religious living 'a man who is unspiritual refuses what belongs to the Spirit of God; it is folly to him; he cannot grasp it' (1 Cor_o2, 14), so in theological reflection on religious living there have to be distinguished the horizons within which religious doctrines can or cannot be apprehended; and this distinction is foundational.

□ In due course we shall have to ask how horizon is to be understood and defined and how one horizon may differ from another. 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 need 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 our 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 doctrines, systematics, and communications.

□ (6) 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 of clarification and development from history, their grounds in the interpretation of the data proper to theology.

□ (7) The facts and values affirmed in doctrines give rise to further questions. For doctrinal expression may be figurative or symbolic. It may be descriptive and based ultimately on the meaning of words rather than on an understanding of realities. It may, if pressed, quickly become vague and indefinite. It may seem, when examined, to be involved in inconsistency or fallacy.

□ 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 towards some grasp of spiritual matters both from their own inner coherence and from the analogies offered by more familiar human experience.

□ (8) Communications is concerned with theology in its external relations. These are of three kinds. There are interdisciplinary relations with art, language, literature, and other religions,

with the natural and the human sciences, with philosophy and history. Further, there are the transpositions that theological thought has to develop if religion is to retain its identity and yet at the same time find access into the minds and hearts of men of all cultures and classes. Finally, there are the adaptations needed to make full and proper use of the diverse media of communication that are available at any place and time.

3. Grounds of the Division →

We have indicated in summary fashion eight functional specialties. We have now to explain where this list of eight comes from and what are the principles to be invoked in further clarifications of meaning and delimitations of function.

The first principle of the division is that theological operations occur in two basic phases. If one is to harken to the word, one must also bear witness to it. If one engages in lectio divina, there come to mind quaestiones. If one assimilates tradition, one learns that one should pass it on. If one encounters the past, one also has to take one's stand toward the future. In brief, there is a theology in oratione obliqua that tells what Paul and John, Augustine and Aquinas, and anyone else had to say about God and the economy of salvation. But there is also a theology in oratione recta in which the theologian, enlightened by the past, confronts the problems of his own day.

The second principle of division is derived from the fact that our conscious and intentional operations occur on

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four distinct levels and that each level has its own proper achievement and end. So the proper achievement and end of the first level, experiencing, is the apprehension of data; that of the second level, understanding, is insight into the apprehended data; that of the third level, judgment, is the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses and theories put forward by understanding to account for the data; that of the fourth level, decision, the acknowledgement of values and the selection of the methods or other means that lead to their realization.

Now in everyday, commonsense performance, all four levels are employed continuously without any explicit distinction between them. In that case no functional specialization arises, for what is sought is not the end of any particular level but the cumulative, composite resultant of the ends of all four levels. But in a scientific investigation the ends proper to particular levels may become the objective sought by operations on all four levels. So the textual critic will select the method (level of decision) that he feels will lead to the discovery (level of understanding) of what one may reasonably affirm (level of judgment) was written in the original text (level of experience). The textual critic, then, operates on all four levels, but his goal is the end proper to the first level, namely, to ascertain the data. The interpreter, however, pursues a different goal. He wishes to understand the text, and so he selects a different method. Moreover, he cannot confine his operations to the second level, understanding, and to the fourth, a selective decision. He must apprehend the text accurately before he can hope to understand it, and so he has

to operate on the first level; and he has to judge whether or not his understanding is correct, for otherwise he will fail to distinguish between understanding and misunderstanding.

Functional specializations arise, then, inasmuch as one operates on all four levels to achieve the end proper to some particular level. But there are four levels and so four proper ends. It follows that the very structure of human inquiry results in four functional specializations and, since in theology there are two distinct phases, we are led to expect eight functional specializations in theology. In the first phase of theology in oratione obliqua there are research, interpretation, history, and dialectic. In the second phase of theology in oratione recta there are foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications.

So in assimilating the past, first, there is research that uncovers and makes available the data, secondly, there is interpretation that understands their meaning, thirdly, there is history that judges and narrates what occurred and, fourthly, there is dialectic that endeavors to unravel the conflicts concerning values, facts, meanings, and experiences. The first four functional specialties, then, seek the ends proper respectively to experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding; and, of course, each one does so by employing not some one but all four of the levels of conscious and intentional operations.

This fourfold specialization corresponds to the four dimensions of the Christian message and the Christian tradition. For that message and tradition, first of all, are a range of data. Secondly, the data purport to convey not the phenomena

of things, as in the natural sciences, but the meanings entertained and communicated by minds, as in the human sciences. Thirdly, these meanings were uttered at given times and places and transmitted through determinate channels and under sundry vicissitudes. Fourthly, the utterance and the transmission were the work of persons bearing witness to Christ Jesus and, by their words and deeds, bringing about the present religious situation.

Research, then, interpretation, history, and dialectic reveal the religious situation. They mediate an encounter with persons witnessing to Christ. They challenge to a decision: in what manner or measure am I to carry the burden of continuity or to risk the initiative of change? That decision, however, is primarily not a theological but a religious event; it pertains to the prior more spontaneous level on which theology reflects and which it illuminates and objectifies; it enters ^{explicitly} into theology only as reflected on and objectified in the fifth specialty, foundations.

With such a decision, however, there is effected the transition from the first to the second phase. The first phase is mediating theology. It is research, interpretation, history, dialectic that introduce us to knowledge of the Body of Christ. But the second phase is mediated theology. It is knowledge of God and of all things as ordered to God, not indeed as God is known immediately (1 Cor. 13, 12), nor as he is known mediately through created nature, but as he is known mediately through the whole Christ, Head and members.

In the second phase the specialties have been named in

| inverse order. Like dialectic, foundations is on the level of decision. Like history, doctrines is on the level of judgment. Like interpretation, systematics aims at understanding. Finally, as research tabulates the data from the past, so communications produces data in the present and for the future.

d/ The reason for the inverted order is simple enough. In the first phase one begins from the data and moves through meanings and facts towards personal encounter. In the second phase one begins from reflection on authentic conversion, employs it as the horizon within which doctrines are to be apprehended and an understanding of their content sought, and finally moves to a creative exploration of communications differentiated according to media, according to classes of men, and according to common cultural interests.

4. The Need for Division

The need for some division is clear enough from the divisions that already exist and are recognized. Thus, our divisions of the second phase — foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications — correspond roughly to the already familiar distinctions between fundamental, dogmatic, speculative, and pastoral or practical theology. Nor can the specialties of the first phase — research, interpretation, history, and dialectic — be described as sheer novelties. Textual criticism and other types of research are pursued for their own sakes. Commentaries and interpretative monographs are a well-known genre. To church history, the history of dogmas, and the history of theology there has recently been added

salvation history. Dialectic, finally, is an ecumenical variant on the long-standing controversial and apologetic types of theology.

What, however, is new is the conception of these branches of theological activity as functional specialties, as distinct and separable stages in a single process from data to ultimate results. Accordingly, what has to be explained is the need for this conception of the many existing branches of theology and for the reorganization that this conception brings in its train.

First, then, the need is not simply a matter of convenience. One can justify field specialization by urging that the relevant data are too extensive to be investigated by a single mind. One can defend subject specialization on the ground that the matter is too broad to be taught successfully by a single professor. But functional specialization is essentially not a distinction of specialists but a distinction of specialties. It arises, not to divide the same sort of task among many hands, but to distinguish different tasks and to prevent them from being confused. Different ends are pursued by employing different means, different means are used in different manners, different manners are ruled by different methodical precepts.

Secondly, there exist the different tasks. For once theology reaches a certain stage of development, there becomes apparent the radical difference between the two phases, and in each of the phases the four ends that correspond to the four levels of conscious and intentional operations. If these

eight ends exist, then there are eight different tasks to be performed, and eight different sets of methodical precepts that have to be distinguished. Without such distinctions, investigators will not have clear and distinct ideas about what precisely they are doing, how their operations are related to their immediate ends, and how such immediate ends are related to the total end of the subject of their inquiry.

Thirdly, the distinction and division are needed to curb one-sided totalitarian ambitions. Each of the eight has its proper excellence. None can stand without the other seven. But the man with the blind-spot is fond of concluding that his specialty is to be pursued because of its excellence and the other seven are to be derided because by themselves they are insufficient. From such one-sidedness theology has suffered gravely from the middle ages to the present day. Only a well-reasoned total view can guard against its continuance in the present and its recurrence in the future.

Fourthly, the distinction and division are needed to resist excessive demands. If all of the eight are needed for the complete process from data to results, still a serious contribution to one of the eight is as much as can be demanded of a single piece of work.

What is such a contribution? It includes, I should say, two parts. The major part is to produce the type of evidence proper to the specialty. So the exegete does exegesis on exegetical principles. The historian does history on historical principles. The doctrinal theologian ascertains doctrine on doctrinal principles. The systematic theologian clarifies, reconciles, unifies on systematic principles. But there is,

besides this major and principal part, also a minor part. Each of the specialties is functionally related to the others. Especially until such time as a method in theology is generally recognized, it will serve to preclude misunderstanding, mis~~f~~ interpretation, and misrepresentation, if the specialist draws attention to the fact of specialization and gives some indication of his awareness of what is to be added to his statements in the light of the evidence available to other, distinct specialties.

5. A Dynamic Unity →

The unity of a subject in process of development is dynamic. For as long as further advance is possible, the perfection of complete immobility has not yet been attained, and, for that reason, there cannot yet be reached the logical ideal of fixed terms, accurately and immutably formulated axioms, and absolutely rigorous deduction of all possible conclusions. The absence, however, of static unity does not preclude the presence of dynamic unity, and what this ^{can} ~~does~~ mean we must now consider.

Development, then, seems to be from an initial state of indifferentiation through a process of differentiation and specialization towards a goal in which the differentiated specialties function as an integrated unity.

So initially the Christian religion and Christian theology were not distinguished. Tradition was assimilated. Efforts were made to penetrate its meaning and recast it for apostolic or apologetic ends. Not all were happy. Innovators formed schools that splintered off in various directions and by their very separation and diversity emphasized a main, unchanging

tradition. The main tradition itself was confronted with ever deeper issues. Painfully it learnt from Nicea the necessity of going beyond scriptural language to formulate what ^{was} ~~is~~ considered scriptural truth. Painfully it learnt from Chalcedon the necessity of employing terms in senses unknown both to scripture and to the earlier patristic tradition. But it is in reflection on such developments, as in Byzantine Scholasticism, and in the extension of such reflective consideration to the whole of Christian thought, as in medieval Scholasticism, that theology became an academic subject, at once intimately connected with the Christian religion and manifestly distinct from it.

The validity of this first differentiation is, of course, questioned today. Is not such academic theology merely a cultural superstructure, divorced from real life, and thereby inimical to it? A distinction, I feel, must be made. For primitives and, generally, for undifferentiated consciousness any academic development is not merely useless but also impossible. The differentiation of operations and objects necessitates a differentiation in the consciousness of the operating subject. So for undifferentiated consciousness all that is academic is essentially alien, and any effort to impose it not only is an intolerable and deadening intrusion but also is doomed to failure. Still this is not the whole story. For once consciousness is differentiated, a corresponding development in the expression and presentation of religion becomes necessary. So in an educated and alert consciousness

a childish apprehension of religious truth either must be sublated within an educated apprehension or else it will simply be dropped as outmoded and outworn. To return, then, to the common objection, one must, I should say, ask whose "real life" is in question. If concern is expressed for the real life of primitives and other instances of undifferentiated consciousness, then manifestly an academic theology is utterly irrelevant. But if concern is for the real life of differentiated consciousness, then in the measure that consciousness is differentiated an academic theology is a necessity.

have seen, /
 If I have been attending to the individual aspect of the matter, I am by no means denying its social and historical aspects. As we ~~saw in Chapter 1~~ ^{have seen}, the principal part of human living is constituted by meaning, and so the principal part of human movements is concerned with meaning. It follows more or less inevitably that the further any movement spreads and the longer it lasts, the more it is forced to reflect on its own proper meaning, to distinguish itself from other meanings, to guard itself against aberration. Moreover, as rivals come and go, as circumstances and problems change, as issues are driven back to their presuppositions and decisions to their ultimate consequences, there emerges that shift towards system, which was named by Georg Simmel, die Wendung zur Idee. But what is true of movements generally, also is true of Christianity. The mirror in which it reflects itself is theology.

So religion and theology become distinct and separate in the very measure that religion itself develops and adherents

to religion move easily from one pattern of consciousness to another. Still this withdrawal must not be without a compensating return. Development is through specialization but it must end in integration. Nor is integration to be achieved by mere regression. To identify theology with religion, with liturgy, with prayer, with preaching, no doubt is to revert to the earliest period of Christianity. But it is also to overlook the fact that the conditions of the earliest period have long since ceased to exist. There are real theological problems, real issues that, if burked, threaten the very existence of Christianity. There are real problems of communication in the twentieth century, and they are not solved by preaching to ancient Antioch, Corinth, or Rome. So it is that we have been led to the conclusion of acknowledging a distinction between the Christian religion and Christian theology and, at the same time, of demanding an eighth functional specialty, communications.

Such is our first instance of differentiation and dynamic unity. Religion and theology become distinct and separate. But the separateness of theology is a withdrawal that always intends and in its ultimate stage effects a return.

Our second instance of differentiation and dynamic unity regards the major divisions within theology itself. These are the two phases each containing four functional specialties. For it is within these eight specialties that all theological operations occur, and so field specialization on the one hand and subject specialization on the other turn out to be subdivisions of the eight specialties.

In fact, field specialization subdivides the materials on which the specialties of the first phase operate, while subject specialization classifies the results obtained by the specialties of the second phase.

The subdivisions effected by field specialization vary with the task to be performed. Special research takes a narrow strip of the data, while general research cuts a broad swath. Interpretation will confine itself to some single work of an author or to some aspect of all his works, while history arises only from an array of general and special researches, of monographs and commentaries. Dialectic finally finds its units in the metamorphoses of what is basically the same conflict, now on the level of religious living, now ~~in~~ opposed histories of the prior events, now in opposed theological interpretations.

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The unity of this first phase is manifestly not static but dynamic. The four specialties stand to one another, not in some logical relationship of premiss to conclusion, of particular to universal, or anything of the sort, but as successive partial objects in the cumulative process that inquiry promotes from experiencing to understanding, that reflection promotes from understanding to judging, that deliberation promotes from judging to deciding. Such a structure is essentially open. Experience is open to further data. Understanding to a fuller and more penetrating grasp. Judgment to acknowledgement of new and more adequate perspectives, of more nuanced pronouncements, of more detailed information. Decision, finally, is reached only partially by dialectic, which tends to eliminate evidently foolish oppositions and so narrows down issues,

but is not to be expected to go to the roots of all conflict for, ultimately, conflicts have their ground in the heart of man.

Interdependence is reciprocal dependence. Not only does interpretation depend upon research but also research depends on interpretation. Not only does history depend upon both research and interpretation, but no less history supplies the context and perspectives within which research and interpretation operate. Not only does dialectic depend on history, interpretation, and research, but inversely in so far as dialectic is transcendentally grounded it is able, as we shall see, to provide interpretation and history with heuristic structures, much as mathematics provides the natural sciences with such structures.

Such reciprocal dependence is most easily achieved when the four specialties are performed by a single specialist. For, within the confines of a single mind, the interdependence of experience, understanding, judgment, and decision is achieved spontaneously and without effort. It remains, however, that the more the specialties develop, the more their techniques are refined, the more delicate the operations they perform, the less will it be possible for the single specialist to master all four specialties. Then recourse must be had to team-work. The different specialists must understand the relevance of one another's work for their own. They must be familiar with what already has been achieved and so able to grasp each new development. Finally, they must be in easy and rapid communication, so that all may profit at once from the advances made by anyone,

and each may be able to set forth at once the problems and difficulties that arise in his own specialty from the changes proposed in another.

As the first phase rises from the almost endless multiplicity of data first to an interpretative, then to a narrative, and then to a dialectical unity, the second phase descends from the unity of a grounding horizon towards the almost endlessly varied sensibilities, mentalities, interests, and tastes of mankind.

This descent is, not properly a deduction, but rather a succession of transpositions to ever more determinate contexts. Foundations provides a basic orientation. This orientation, when applied to the conflicts of dialectic and to the ambiguities of history, becomes a principle of selection of doctrines. But doctrines tend to be regarded as mere verbal formulae, unless their ultimate meaning is worked out and their possible coherence revealed by systematics. Nor is such ultimate clarification enough. It fixes the substance of what there is to be communicated. But there remains both the problem of creative use of the available media and the task of finding the appropriate approach and procedure to convey the message to people of different classes and cultures.

I have spoken of foundations selecting doctrines, of doctrines setting the problems of systematics, of systematics fixing the kernel of the message to be communicated in many different ways. But there is not to be overlooked the fact of dependence in the opposite direction. Questions for systematics

can arise from communications. Systematic modes of conceptualization can be employed in doctrines. The conversion, formulated as horizon in foundations, will possess not only personal but also social and doctrinal dimensions.

There is, then, reciprocal dependence within each of the two phases, and this was only to be expected since the four levels of conscious and intentional operations (which determine the four specialties in each phase) are themselves interdependent. Further there is dependence of the second phase on the first, for the second confronts the present and future in the light of what has been assimilated from the past. It will be asked, however, whether there is a reciprocal dependence between the first and the second phases, whether the first depends on the second, as the second on the first.

To this question, the answer must be qualified. There is, perhaps inevitably, a dependence of the first phase on the second. But the greatest care must be taken that this influence from the second phase does not destroy either the proper openness of the first phase to all relevant data or its proper function of reaching its results by an appeal to the data.¹

1) Only concrete instances can convey what is meant by the phrase, "its proper function of reaching its results by an appeal to the data". So I beg any reader not familiar with my meaning to read Stephen Neill, The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1961, London: Oxford University Press, 1964, pp. 36-59, on J.B. Lightfoot's refutation of C.C. Baur's dating of the New Testament writings.

Just what is to be understood by proper openness and proper function is a matter to be clarified in due course. But the point to be made at once is that a second phase, which interferes with the proper functioning of the first, by that very fact is cutting itself off from its own proper source and ground and blocking the way to its own vital development.

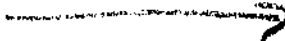
Within the limits of this qualification, however, there is to be acknowledged an interdependence of doctrine and doctrinal history and, as well, of foundations and dialectic. Thus, if one attempted to write a history of mathematics, or of chemistry, or of medicine, without a thorough grasp of these subjects, one's work would be foredoomed to failure. One would ever tend to overlook significant events and to set great store by minor matters. One's language would be inaccurate or out of date, one's emphases mistaken, one's perspectives distorted, one's omissions intolerable. What is true of mathematics, chemistry, medicine, also is true of religion and theology. It is a commonplace today that to understand a doctrine one had best study its history. It is no less true that to write the history one has to understand the doctrine.

Eier
There is a somewhat similar affinity between dialectic and foundations. Foundations objectify conversion. They bring to light the opposite poles of a conflict in personal history. Though we may not hope for a single and uniform account of authentic conversion, still any plausible account will add a dimension of depth and seriousness to the analyses reached by dialectic. That depth and seriousness, in turn, will reinforce

the ecumenical spirit of dialectic and, at the same time, weaken its merely polemical tendencies.

Finally, from the foregoing instances of interdependence there follows a general, if indirect, interdependence of the first and second phases. For the four specialties of the first phase are interdependent. Similarly, the four specialties of the second phase are interdependent. So the interdependence of dialectic and foundations and of history and doctrines involves all eight specialties in, at least, an indirect interdependence.

Such, then, is in outline the dynamic unity of theology. It is a unity of interdependent parts, each adjusting to changes in the others, and the whole developing as a result of such changes and adjustments. Further, this internal process and interaction has its external relations. For theology as a whole functions within the larger context of Christian living, and Christian living within the still larger process of human history.

6. Conclusion 

Christian theology has been conceived as die Wendung zur Idee, the shift towards system, occurring within Christianity. It makes thematic what already is a part of Christian living. Such differentiation and development within Christian living is followed by further differentiations and developments within theology itself. For theology divides into a mediating phase, that encounters the past, and a mediated phase, that confronts the future. Each of the phases subdivides into four functional specialties. These interact with one another as theology

endeavors to make its contribution towards meeting the needs of Christian living, actuating its potentialities, and taking advantage of the opportunities offered by world history.

As this conception of theology starts from the notion of functional specialization, so other conceptions rest on the notions of subject or of field specialization. Subject specialization is presupposed in the Aristotelian division of sciences by their formal objects, and it is in this context that theology in the past has been defined as the science, of God and of all things in their relations to God, conducted under the light of revelation and faith. On the other hand, field specialization is dominant in contemporary thought concerned with biblical theology, patristic theology, medieval theology, renaissance theology, modern theology.

I am not, perhaps, unjust in pointing out that the subject approach tended to emphasize the mediated phase and neglect the mediating phase, while the field approach tends to emphasize the mediating phase and over-simplify the mediated phase. If this is correct, the functional approach must be credited with giving full attention to both phases and, as well, showing how they can possess a dynamic interdependence and unity.