

Class 11, *Method* chapter 11 and *What Is Systematic Theology?* chapter 9, sections 1-4

Question 1: What sorts of theological operations constitute the functional specialty 'Foundations?'

One is doing Foundations in theology when (1) one objectifies the horizon within which doctrines, systematics, and communications are being done, and (2) one returns to that horizon to derive the categories that one will employ in these further specialties.

Question 2: What is the operator of the movement from the first phase to the second phase of theology?

The movement to direct discourse is prepared by dialectic and takes place with foundations. Indirect discourse is concerned with what others said and done but direct discourse meets the issue of the theologian's responsibility for his or her own positions, systematic understanding, and efforts at communication. For Lonergan it is one's religious, moral, and intellectual stance that structures one's horizon, and one's horizon ultimately determines what one will say in Doctrines, Foundations, and Communications. The conversions, then, are the ground of direct discourse. *Systematics*

Question 3: Why are the foundations limited explicitly to the second phase? What does Lonergan mean by saying they are not the sole foundation of second-phase work?

One's views on these issues are the ultimate grounds of one's other positions even in the first phase, but in the first phase, these views, implicit or explicit, govern the *results* of one's work, while in the second, which is much more personal, they constitute the very *methods* one will employ. Lonergan writes (268): 'Such conversion is operative, not only in the functional specialty, foundations, but also in the phase of mediating theology, in research, interpretation, history, and dialectic. However, in this earlier phase conversion is not a prerequisite; anyone can do research, interpret, write history, line up opposed positions. Again, when conversion is present and operative, its operation is implicit: it can have its occasion in interpretation, in doing history, in the confrontation of dialectic; but it does not constitute an explicit, established, **universally recognized criterion of proper procedure** in these specialties. Finally, while dialectic does reveal the polymorphism of human consciousness – the deep and unreconcilable oppositions on religious, moral, and intellectual issues – still it does no more: it does not take sides. It is the person that takes sides, and the side that he takes will depend on the fact that he has or has not been converted.'

Again, he writes on p. 271: 'Neither the converted nor the unconverted are to be excluded from research, interpretation, history, or dialectic. Neither the converted nor the unconverted are to follow different methods in these functional specialties. But one's interpretation of others is affected by one's understanding of oneself, and the converted have a self to understand that is quite different from the self that the unconverted have to understand. Again, the history one writes depends on the horizon within which one is attempting to understand the past; the converted and the unconverted have radically different horizons; and so they will write different histories. Such different histories, different interpretations, and their underlying different styles

in research become the center of attention in dialectic. There they will be reduced to their roots. But the reduction itself will only reveal the converted with one set of roots and the unconverted with a number of different sets. Conversion is a matter of moving from one set of roots to another. It is a process that does not occur in the marketplace. It is a process that may be occasioned by scientific inquiry. But it occurs only inasmuch as a man discovers what is unauthentic in himself and turns away from it, inasmuch as he discovers what the fulness of human authenticity can be and embraces it with his whole being. It is something very cognate to the Christian gospel, which cries out: Repent! The kingdom of God is at hand.'

These foundations, however, are not the sole foundation of second-phase work, which depends as well on the first four specialties. But they are needed to catalyze the movement to the second phase; they are (266) 'the added foundation needed to move from the indirect discourse that sets forth the convictions and opinions of others to the direct discourse that states what is so.'

Question 4: What is the distinction between foundational reality and foundations?

The conversions constitute **foundational reality**, and objectifying them is the first task of **foundations**. The real root (**foundational reality**) is a decision (268): 'a decision about whom and what you are for and, again, whom and what you are against ... a decision illuminated by the manifold of possibilities exhibited in dialectic ... **a fully conscious decision about one's horizon, one's outlook, one's world view.**' In such a decision one '**deliberately selects the framework** in which doctrines have their meaning, in which systematics reconciles, in which communications are effective.'

So the theologian is prompted to such decisions, and Lonergan says the following about them:

- (1) They will be **conscious and explicit**, forced out perhaps into the open by the conflicts studied in dialectic.
- (2) They will **not be arbitrary** but the result of discriminating between what is authentic and what is not.
- (3) They are better conceived on the contemporary scene as a matter of **conscience** than as an act of 'will.'
- (4) They are **not easily attained or maintained**. 269: 'For the most part people merely drift into some contemporary horizon. They do not advert to the multiplicity of horizons. They do not exercise their vertical liberty by migrating from the one they have inherited to another they have discovered to be better.' But theologians must explicitly place themselves on the line, stating what responsibilities they have assumed or will assume and what are the grounds of their exercise of that responsibility. When they do that, they are doing foundations.
- (5) While such decisions are **intensely personal**, they are **not private**. They occur within a community that has a history, and they entail responsibility for that community and that history. They may even entail joining a new group or joining one's own in a new way.