

SEMINAR ON THE NATURE AND METHOD OF THEOLOGY

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING LONERGAN'S *METHOD IN THEOLOGY*

The theme of the seminar and the speakers and readings had to be lined up rather quickly during the year, with little opportunity to poll past and potential participants. Given such exigencies, it was gratifying that thirty-five people attended on the first day and thirty on the second.

Frederick Crowe's presentation on the first day supposed as background an acquaintance with the two phases of Lonergan's theological method, and especially with the "upward" and "downward" movements of human development which are operative in those phases but not fully thematized until some years after *Method in Theology* was published. To that end he had distributed a paper, "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value" (*Loneragan Workshop* 7:35-57), which had studied the upward and downward movements, related them to the two phases and the eight specialities of theology, and offered suggestions on the way this might deepen our understanding of the specialties, particularly on the level of values.

At the CTSA seminar Crowe carried this line of interpretation a step further, focusing in particular on the relation between history and theology (the history that *happens* as well as the history that is *written*). He stressed Lonergan's efforts to introduce history into Catholic theology, and used the upward and downward movements of historical development as a grid for understanding the two phases of theology. The four levels of the second phase correspond to four stages in the history of the church. From the foundational outpouring of the Spirit as God's personal gift of love, there results: (1) an apprehension of the value of the way of the Lord as precious above all other ways and as calling for a witness even unto martyrdom; (2) doctrine as an effort to declare what was implicit in the witness (NT confessions, creeds, councils); (3) faith seeking understanding (medieval theology); and (4) theology mediating between tradition and culture (Thomist influence on Dante, such feasts as Corpus Christi, the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*, and so forth).

In the modern age, however, a history effectively created by the upward movement of the human spirit has, it seems, plunged this movement from above into chaos and darkness. The church did not keep in touch with this upward movement, and so lives in isolation from modern culture even at its best. Reactions from solid right and scattered left can both be understood in terms of a breakdown of the relations of the two phases of theology. The right can overcome its alienation from the upward movement of the human spirit by uniting the phases at their base,

that is, by learning to start with data, to interpret the data in their context, and to study the succession of interpretations: historical consciousness. The left needs to learn to move from the first to the second phase, crossing over "at the top," from a dialectic of positions to renewed commitment to an old faith transposed for our times. If the danger of the right is schism, that of the left is heresy. Lonergan's work enables a resolution of the latter difficulty by rehabilitating the notions of nature and truth and by showing the way to a transposition of doctrines for our time.

The discussion that followed Crowe's presentation enabled the surfacing of several important questions: the relation of individual and community in the movement from above, the nature of transposition, and the question of whether the church's teaching authority can itself be involved in the extremes of the solid right.

On the second day, Matthew Lamb connected with Crowe's presentation a few points from his article, "The Social and Political Dimensions of Lonergan's Theology" (in V. Gregson, ed., *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to Bernard Lonergan's Theology*, Paulist, 1988). Transposition is the ability of a method based on interiorly differentiated consciousness to transpose true understandings from one cultural-historical context into another. Thus one can understand how Lonergan's foundations transpose both the orthopraxis of what Crowe referred to as the foundational origins of Christianity in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and Christian discipleship, as well as how this discipleship was itself transposed in the patristic and medieval contexts. The transpositions are not content-identical but functionally—in Lonergan's sense—similar.

So, for example, in the plan of the *Summa theologiae* of Aquinas the interdependence of the intellectual, moral, and theological virtues is central in the return of creation to God. Given the evil of human history, the theological virtues must inform the intellectual and moral. Lonergan transposes this into the foundational interdependence of intellectual, moral, and religious conversions. Such a transposition has many implications. As an example Lamb referred to issues raised in Alasdair MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1988) regarding the tradition-context dependence of intellectual and moral conceptions. Transpositions can occur if one attends to interiorly differentiated consciousness to provide the terms and relations for the dialectical analysis of contradictory elements, as well as an exploration of how elements in the different traditions might be complementary.

A second set of transpositions which Lonergan's theology has achieved regards the transpositions of the doctrinal contexts of Catholicity. His *De Deo Trino*, with its exposition of the pre-Nicean dialectic, provides important terms and relations for a fuller dialectical analysis of modern historical reconstructions of Catholic doctrinal developments. As John O'Neill indicates in his study of nineteenth-century New Testament scholarship (in volume 3 of *Nineteenth-Century Religious Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1985), a major orientation of that scholarship was aimed at discrediting Catholic Christianity. Moreover, modern social-theoretical categories of sect, institution, church, as variations on dominative power, are very much in need of dialectical criticism. The values and dis-

values of those doing historical reconstructions condition, but do not necessarily determine, their reconstructions. Lamb briefly illustrated this in regard to how most modern reconstructions of Athanasius and the role of monasticism in orthodoxy are inadequate. He indicated how many treatments of Augustine's teaching on eternity and time, including that of Paul Ricoeur in the three-volume *Time and Narrative*, fail to understand Augustine's decisive achievements in this issue. In summary, Lamb said, Lonergan's enormous contributions to the doing of theology have hardly begun to be realized.

Robert Doran distributed a three-page synopsis of his paper, "The Analogy of Dialectic and the Systematics of History" (T. Fallon and P. Riley, eds., *Religion in Context: Recent Studies in Lonergan*, University Press of America, 1988). He spoke briefly to the items on this synopsis. Doran would maintain that contemporary transpositions might best be carried out in terms of a theory of history. A theology that would mediate between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion within that matrix would regard the situation being addressed as a source for theology, and would seek a heuristic structure for the understanding of situations. That heuristic structure would take the form of a theory of history. History is a matter of concrete dialectical processes in the subject, culture, and community. These processes are related to one another in terms of the scale of values suggested in *Method in Theology* (31-32). Doran distinguishes dialectics of contraries from dialectics of contradictories, and grounds this distinction in a psychic conversion that is based in and complements Lonergan's religious, moral, and intellectual conversions. In dialectics of contraries the poles or principles of change can work together in functional interdependence, whereas in dialectics of contradictories (the true and the false, the good and the evil), the only resolution is by way of choice between the opposed principles. The three dialectical processes are analogous in that each is a dialectic of contraries, each is an embodiment of the creative tension of limitation and transcendence, and the integrity of each is a function of a principle of higher synthesis. Grace alone establishes the integral relations of neural demands and dramatically patterned intentionality in the subject. The saving message of the Gospel establishes the integrity of the dialectic of a culture. And authentic cultural values condition the possibility of an integral dialectic of intersubjectivity and practicality in the community's development.

From this analysis Doran suggested how a contemporary systematic theology would regard the situation which it addresses. The relevant social dialectic is a globally distorted dialectic of a crosscultural intersubjectivity and the technological-economic-political effects of competing and escalating imperialistic systems. There is required for its healing and integration a culture open to and promotive of continual crosscultural dialogue and enrichment. Theology should be evoking such a culture, which can be understood as an integral dialectic of the cosmological constitutive meanings of traditional societies and the anthropological constitutive meanings of modern societies. Theology contributes to such a culture by mediating with these cultural values the soteriological constitutive meaning of the Gospel. The scale of values indicates that problems in the effective recurrence of more basic levels call for proportionate changes at more complex levels. Today the global maldistribution of vital goods is constitutive of the entire situation ad-

dressed by a contemporary theology. This inequity can be resolved only by commensurate changes at the level of social values, by the establishment of integrity in a global dialectic of community. But that demands the institution of world-cultural values in the integral dialectic of cosmological and anthropological constitutive meaning. For this there is needed at the level of personal value the self-appropriation of the crosscultural psychic and intentional constituents of personal integrity. And fidelity to this integrity is a function of grace. The heuristic structure anticipating the theory of history that would enable contemporary theological transpositions is thus a matter of the integral relations from above and from below among the levels of value, where three of the levels (social, cultural, and personal) are constituted by analogous dialectical processes.

The presentations of Lamb and Doran were followed by discussion of the points they had raised. Among the various topics suggested for next year's seminar, the question, What makes a theology Catholic? seemed to arouse the greatest enthusiasm, and so this will be the focus of next year's seminar.

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SEMINAR ON CHRISTOLOGY

CHALCEDON IN PATRISTICS AND SYSTEMATICS

Michael Slusser of Duquesne University guided the first session through a presentation of key views of Chalcedon, historically and theologically, among patristic scholars. Background materials consisted in Professor Slusser's own studies of the *acta* of the council, as well as A. Grillmeier's interpretation in his *Christ in Christian Tradition I* (relevant sections) and André de Halleux' "La définition christologique à Chalcédoine," *Revue théologique de Louvain* 7 (1976) 3-23, 155-70. The key events and issues of the conciliar sessions presented were: the rehearsal of the Eutychian problem; the deposing of Dioscorus; the first presentation of the proposed text, judged unacceptable to Pope Leo's delegates, with the consequent need to work out a new symbol in committee; a close reading of the final symbol, following Urbina and Halleux especially, with the latter's suggestion about the important influence of Bishop Basil of Seleucia over the phrase "in two natures"; and the non-christological character of the various canons of the council.

Slusser's summation singled out the following views as rather plausible to him, given the present state of scholarship: (1) The symbol, given its carefully crafted nature, was written by a single bishop-theologian, and modified by two simple additions (see lines 17-21 of the symbol). (2) There appears to be little direct influence from Pope Leo's Tome. (Bishop Basil of Seleucia seems more influential here, at least ultimately. Interestingly, however, Slusser indicated that he was not a member of the committee which drafted the final text.) (3) The symbol appears to be the result of a genuinely free consensus. The evidence indicates a true episcopal debate/discussion, even given the imperial desire for harmony in the empire. (4) The phrase "recognized in two natures" (line 17, continuing into line 18 in the Greek) appears to mean: through a mental act, the mind can perceive two natures, an interpretation rather more Cyrillian than Leonine. (5) The word *hypostasis* is intended to preserve *prosopon* from a Nestorian interpretation. (The Word, according to Halleux, is not clearly designated the *hypostasis* here.)

Slusser's presentation generated a good deal of discussion. Much of this centered upon the word *hypostasis*, with Slusser suggesting that the term is used non-technically (that is, not with a sense precisely given through a philosophical school or system), with a more negative meaning (non-Nestorian). The actual subject (Who/what is the *hypostasis*?) also remains ambiguous. Patristic scholarship seems to be moving in the direction of a more Cyrillian interpretation of Chalcedon, with the crucial phrase "in two natures" being interpreted in a manner rather more compatible with Cyril of Alexandria's thought. The later "reception" of Chalcedon by Constantinople II would seem to confirm this Cyrillian tendency. Slus-