

On the minority Report

And the Com. also seems not to agree with the minority alleged fact. G. Report p. 11, § 1

It seems to me necessary to call attention to certain paragraphs of the minority report.

P. 36 • the interrogation was directed so pointedly to the incomprehensibility of the sum total of God's glory & perfections.

To my mind this is not precisely the case. One must remember that the transcript reports an exam. of a few points left over from a previous six or eight hour exam. And the main question was epistemology, or knowledge, not God's Being in general. Had I been asked the definite question, Can ~~man~~ man fully & exhaustively understand ~~at~~ the Being and attributes of God, I should have said simply No. ~~Yes~~ If this question was asked in the main examination, I doubtless said no.

like fact that the extra July exam was not conducted with this as the main question is virtually acknowledged in the minority report just ~~before~~ below: p. 36 § 4.

But the Presby. hardly bears blame, for it must be remembered that the Presby. had been largely satisfied by the previous exam.

yet, though the July exam did not face the question of God's Being as squarely as the minority seems to think, yet the doctrine of incomprehensibility forms the basis, or a part of the basis, of the pertinent answers.

For example, how could I repeatedly affirm that man will never have comprehensive and complete knowledge, if the doctrine of incomprehensibility was not ~~at the basis~~ the premise of the argument.

Note Tr. p. 3, 3-7.

~~the majority~~

~~the majority report~~

Note also the significance of Tr. 15, 12.  
The questioner is asking if man can know God apart from revelation.  
And my answer is that our knowledge of God, in the strict sense of knowledge, is mediated by propositions. Thus I deny that we can know God apart from revelation, and at the same time I assert that our know is always finite.  
This does not directly envisage the sum total of God's Being & glory, but the answer I give presupposes the incomprehensibility that the minority report finds lacking.  
At the same time, however, I also try to make clear, though obviously I failed, but I tried to make clear

7  
that the finite proposition is a knowledge  
of the infinite God. To this end I  
used an illustration that seemed to  
confuse more than enlighten. The  
illustration is: propositions relating  
to infinite series, or to infinite spaces,  
are in themselves finite, but their object  
is infinite. So too our theological  
propositions are finite, but their object  
is infinite. Of course an infinite  
series is a poor illustration of the  
infinite God, and this was seized  
upon and the point of the comparison  
neglected.

Perhaps the most definite question relating  
to the sum total of Gods Being & glory  
is found in Tr 33, 8

now note my answer, so perfectly  
understood by the Committee. Note

that I say there is only one verse in Scripture  
that seems to allow man full comprehension  
of God. I admitted then & confess now  
that I have no satisfactory exegesis of  
that verse. It remains a puzzle - a  
paradox, if you will. But note also  
that I do not allow my confusion on that  
verse to overbalance the remainder of  
Scriptural teaching. It seems to me  
therefore that in the context of the July  
exam. & in response to that one  
specific question, the doctrine of  
incomprehensibility is satisfactorily  
expressed. Naturally it is not a  
comprehensive statement of incompre.,  
but it seems satisfactory in its  
context.

It was in connection with the Incomp. of ?  
that questions were asked about knowing the  
love of God; + the minority report p. 37  
expresses ~~no~~ surprise at the form of the  
answer given.

There I believe the minority has  
failed to grasp my meaning in much the  
same manner as the Compliments. First  
of all, note that the Bible uses the word  
know in every colloquial sense. On  
one occasion I prepared a short list of  
the various meanings of  $\gamma\iota\gamma\iota\varsigma$   
Its usage is entirely colloquial. So also  
for the Greek verbs.

But in the exam. Knowledge + Know  
were being used in just one sense, a  
technical epistemological sense: it  
referred to the relation of the mind to  
truth, + to truths in propositional  
form. Hence it follows that we  
may know propositions in which

The Com. also seems to think I have not used  
an analytical approach. Report p. 10 I want to ask  
> when the Bible has many meanings, a systematic  
discussion of epistemology guides me to choose  
one definite meaning.

know free

or. kn free is  
simple

Love is either subject or predicate; but it is impossible to know a single term. Hence when the Scripture speaks about knowing the love of God, it is using a sense of know ~~not consistent with~~ different from that used in the exam.

Note the Tr. 22, 9. I assert we can know the proposition, God is Love. But the questioner does not wish to talk of a proposition; he wants to ask about knowing just Love, a single term.

In view of the fact that the questioner is obviously using another sense of the term know, I cannot understand why the minority should expect me to give an unqualified No. (p. 37) instead of asking the sense in which the questioner was using the word. I even suggested a possible sense of the word, but the questioner did not

accept my suggestion Tr. 22, 24, and then failed to attach any specific meaning to his term.

Of course on my sense of the word, man cannot know the love of God; but as it was evident that the questioner was using another sense, I did not feel free to answer unqualifiedly in my own terminology.

Note also Minority p. 37 § 4. The minority expects a directly negative answer. But no unqualified answer can be given, for the question has two different meanings. It is ambiguous. In fact it has several meanings: It may mean (a) ~~to me~~ can man know all that God knows. or (b) can man have any knowledge which is the same for him & for God. And it may (c) include or (d) exclude the subjective aspect of the knowledge. Therefore it seems

Appendix



unreasonable for the minority to expect a directly negative answer, when one of the four possible meanings requires a positive answer.

And it is still more surprising that the minority should make this demand, when the next paragraph p 37 § 5 quite correctly reproduces my mind on the matter!

Certainly it is unreasonable to require an unqualified No in answer to a question that has 4 different meanings.

Read

One more remark on the minority report.  
important because it shows the reason  
for hesitant or qualified answers  
that seem to surprise some people.

Cf. minority p. 37. bottom: "There is  
nothing absolutely infinite but God."

would not everyone here agree that  
God is absolutely infinite.

Everyone except one who had  
read Spinoza

If G. is absolutely infinite, then he  
is corporeal i.e. nature i.e. pantheism.  
~~It~~ Obviously the minority does not so intend  
but this language has been so used. Therefore  
a Xn who has read Spinoza might well  
hesitate to say God is absolutely infinite