

What, properly, is theological methodology?

The phrase "theological methodology" is not uncommonly understood so broadly as to be simply synonymous with "prolegomena," or what I call "theology of theology." My own preference, however, is to understand it more strictly to refer to only one of the two main parts of "prolegomena" or "theology of theology."

Prolegomena, in my understanding, is theological reflection on doing theology itself, which always involves asking and answering two main questions: (1) what is it to do theology? (what does it mean to do it? what is there to do?); and (2) how ought theology to be done? (how is it to be done?). By "theological methodology," then, I understand a developed and reasoned answer to the second question—to the "how" question, and, in that sense, the question of method, as distinct from the first "what" question.

Of course, to talk of "theological method" in the singular is to talk at a high level of abstraction; what is really involved are any number of "theological methods" in the plural. And any well-developed theological methodology will need somehow to take account of this plurality if it is at all to do justice to the actual concrete praxis of doing theology.

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