

LONERGAN WORKSHOP

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION JUNE 15, 1976

1. A question came up this morning about "membership" in Cosmopolis. To what extent does this "membership" depend upon intellectual, moral, and religious conversions?
2. To what extent does moral conversion depend upon prior religious conversion?
3. To what extent does the loss of religious conversion lead to a loss of moral conversion?
4. A basic category among contemporary Catholic moral theologians is the "fundamental option." Would you please say something about how this reality is related to moral and/or religious conversion?
5. Some writers (e.g., Tracy, Curran) speak about a fourth, Christian conversion within your context. Is there a Christian conversion? If so, is there a special realm of transcendence in Christian conversion? Is there a new horizon? Could you specify some references in your writings on this question?
6. To what extent could one accurately say that your understanding of bias is a philosophical explanation of the doctrine of original sin?
7. A question arising out of Fr. Flanagan's paper: In your view, what factors contribute to the formation of a national character? Is it the way the nation originally came into being? Is it the artists, law-makers, thinkers? Is it the nation's part in world history?
8. Fr. Flanagan made reference to the issue of values within the university this morning. Would you please respond to this question: Can a university commit itself to values and still retain its openness to free intellectual enterprise?
9. Fr. Crowe's paper speaks of different schools of spirituality (with differing values and doctrines) all following Christ. Can there be something analogous in Christian denominations--all valid forms of the Christian church, even though they have differing doctrines?

1. "Cosmopolis" as conceived in chapter VII of Insight is an open heuristic structure.

Religion does not enter the picture until chapters XIX and XX; ethics only in chapter XVIII; ~~judgment~~ truth in chapter XVII; the content, grounds, existence, object, and objectivity of judgement in chapters IX to XIII.

The notion of Cosmopolis is a reflection on the human community in the light of the first two transcendental precepts, Be Attentive, Be Intelligent, as contrasted with the oversights and obtuseness of individual, group, and general bias.

Implicitly the moral issue is raised, for overcoming individual and group bias is part of moral development, namely, the shift from the criterion of satisfactions to the criterion of the truly good, the worth while.

Again, the very precepts of Be attentive, Be intelligent, in my book are the first two of the precepts of the natural law, ie conditions of the possibility of being a genuine person.

Finally, the good is never an abstraction; it is always concrete; bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu; the heuristic structure of Cosmopolis in chapter VII has to be filled out by the rest of insight and of Method in Theology and its prologations through interdisciplinary union with other fields of investigation

4. Prof. Moule, who teaches NT at Cambridge England, has argued that the NT does not present any specifically distinct Xtian moral doctrine.

With this I would be inclined to agree (cf also Heiler) on the understanding that religion constitutes a sublation of morality: it introduces a new principle, it goes beyond morality, it directs it to a higher and fuller end, it enriches strengthens, perfects it.

The sublation may be made more specific by considering Max Scheler's doctrine that at the root of the apprehension of values and of adherence to them is love, and at the root of the apprehension of disvalues and of rejection of them there is hatred.

Love and hatred can have a cosmic dimension:

, human
community, /

hatred that extends to the cosmos and to the ground and cause of the cosmos (if there is one) is antireligious: it may be illustrated by the types of existentialism that find the universe absurd (Camus), that with Sartre would hold that l'enfer c'est l'autre, with the nihilism that empties human life/and human history of all meaning and value

inversely, the love of God is solidary with an appreciation of his world, of life, of human community and human history, with faith in its meaningfulness, with hope in its redemption and salvation

On this showing, analysis, the fundamental ~~xx~~ option is between cosmic love and cosmic hatred

However, the option commonly is implicit rather than explicit. It is taken not with the utter radicalness of a John of the Cross or of a nihilist, but with respect to particular issues; it is taken with greater or less regularity, with respect to greater issues rather than minute ones, with greater or less consistency and fidelity.

Moreover, such implicitness, incompleteness, wavering adherence fits in~~x~~ ~~x~~ with the nature of moral and religious conversion. For at ~~xx~~ its inception conversion is conversion in principle, it is the good resolution without as yet the uniform and complete achievement of good per~~xx~~formance, it is St Peter protesting his fidelity ~~xxxxxx~~ unto death at the Last Supper but not yet St Peter exhibiting such fidelity by his martyrdom. Gratia operans.

5 The difficulty here is that, if one speaks of Christian conversion, then is one to say that the anonymous Christian is unconverted

The precept of loving God above all was given not first in Mark but first in Deuteronomy. Were the Hebrews that accepted and ~~xx~~ did their best to fulfil that precept converted on unconverted?

I would say that they were converted in the sense of the universal salvific will gives sufficient grace to everyone. I would also say that that conversion did not have the completeness that results from the coming of Christ.

The Old Law gave the horizon. The New Law puts Christ within that horizon: the revelation of God's love in human flesh and blood, of his redemption in Christ's death and resurrection. Cp. lovers that do not avow their love mutually and lovers that do.

Method, p 112-124g

3. Loss of religious conversion is loss of the cosmic horizon of love. It is Nietzsche's lament of the death of God, of a man's having assassinated God. It is Marx's confinement of the human good to this world and his distinction between crude communism - the horrible actuality - and the true communism which is utopian; it is his conception of

But these are the radical conclusions: l'homme moyen sensuel moves in that direction by easy stages

what a moral man calls self-transcendence as Alienation.

2 Moral conversion up to a point will result from the natural dynamism of the human spirit expressed in the precepts Be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, be in love, and don't think you are Adam

But eventually there emerges the ultimate question of one's attitude to the universe. Is one going to pronounce it too evil for a good God to exist and, if so, will one's moral achievement survive? Is one going to acknowledge beyond the evil evident in humanity an ultimate principle of benevolence and beneficence? If so, one accepts religious conversion

6 Traditional theology distinguishes between peccatum originale ~~et~~ originans and peccatum originale originatum.

What I have to say about bias in Insight VII would be an expression of originated original sin: darkening of intellect and weakening of will

Its theological source in my thought is dissertation on Grace and Freedom

A "philosophical" explanation: really I would drop the word "philosophy" from my vocabulary. For Aquinas the philosophers were pagans. What the theologian needs is method based on an understanding formulation and acceptance of what goes on in his ~~his~~ black box, and that is method

To speak of "philosophy" in the traditional sense is to accept the Aristotelian ~~his~~ conception and hierarchy of the science

8. Cf Aristotle on philia. CAN one and should one be a friend to oneself, love oneself?

It depends on what you consider the good

If by the good one means satisfactions, then being a friend to oneself is just another name for egoism

If one means by the good what is best, wisdom and virtue (excellence), then unless one is a friend to oneself and seeks what is best for oneself, one cannot be a friend to oneself or to anyone else.

Bad to have Voltaire of an enemy but worse to have Rousseau for a friend.

"Neutrality" is the fallacy of supposing that the good is an abstraction.

9 Valid: a de facto Christian community which, whatever its origins whether in good or bad faith, now at least is holding its views in good faith.

That is what ecumenism is about

But ecumenism does not imply or encourage religious indifference

7 National character

Chesterton in his notebooks some where stated that the effective way to communicate a profound truth is to tell a story.

The stories that a people tells about itself, that inform its way of life, is a main ingredient in its national character.

Which stories they tell will come out of their experience, out of their artists, lawyers, thinkers, leaders, and out their own acceptance of them, repetition, adherence.

Hence national character can be destroyed by subservive propaganda