

THEOLOGY AND PRAXIS

If praxis is identified with practicality, then theology becomes an instance of praxis when it is converted into a tool for some distinct and praiseworthy end. So at the present time the conspicuous examples of theology as praxis would be the liberation theologies, whether geared to liberate Latin America from the fetters of capitalism, or to liberate black Americans from the injustice of racial discrimination, or to liberate women from the domination of patriarchal society.

It remains that there is an older connotation to the Greek word, and it is this older connotation that tends to justify the intrusion of ancient Greek into modern English.¹ For in Aristotle there is a contrast between praxis and poiēsis that may be paralleled by an English contrast between doing and making, conduct and product.² Moreover, it is precisely in the contrast that the connotation we desire is to be found. For products pass beyond the maker's control, and the ends to which they ^{are} used depend on the free decisions of others. But one's doing, one's conduct, results from the end which one has oneself chosen and, normally, chosen freely. Our making or producing, for ends we do not control, is guided simply by the know-how of technique. But our doing, our conduct, our praxis result from our own deliberation and choice under the guidance of the practical wisdom that Aristotle named phronēsis and Aquinas named prudentia.³

Now such attention to the responsible freedom of human conduct is very attractive to many at the present time. They are reacting against the behaviorists that deny scientific

validity to explanations unable to reproduce human behavior in a robot or at least in a rat. They are reacting against the positivism that Jürgen Habermas has characterized as basically a refusal to reflect.⁴ They are reacting against industry or again against government as managed by a faceless bureaucracy far too intricate ever to be brought to account.⁵ Nor are they simply reacting, for they are adhering to a philosophic tendency that in the last two centuries has worked itself out in many diverse forms. It appears in Kant's first and second critiques, in Schopenhauer's world as will and representation, in Kierkegaard's reliance on faith and Newman's/^{reliance} on conscience, in Nietzsche's will to power, in Blondel's philosophy of action, in Ricoeur's philosophy of will, in Habermas's juxtaposition of knowledge and human interests.

Now to ask whether theology is a praxis in this second sense, is not to ask whether the views of Kant or Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard or Newman, Nietzsche or Blondel, Ricoeur or Habermas are to be made normative in theology. On the contrary, it is to ask a general question and a rather technical one. It is to ask whether there are basic theological questions whose solution depends on the personal development of theologians. Again, to use a distinction made by Paul Ricoeur, it is to ask whether issues on which theologians are badly divided call for the employment of both a hermeneutic of suspicion and a hermeneutic of recovery, a hermeneutic of suspicion that diagnoses failures in personal development and a hermeneutic of recovery that generously recognizes the genuine personal development that did occur.⁶

Bernhard Welte's Question

Bernhard Welte is professor at Munich of interdisciplinary questions of concern to both theologians and philosophers. In the fifty-first volume of Herder's series entitled Quaestiones Disputatae he has asked whether the Nicene decree marks the invasion of theology by a Heideggerian forgetfulness of being.⁷ In adverting to this question I must say at once that it is not my intention this morning to attempt to resolve it. My sole concern is to provide an instance that in my opinion illustrates a theological issue of some importance yet can be genuinely solved only inasmuch as individual theologians undergo an intellectual conversion.

The question, then, as proposed by Professor Welte, comes out of the history of philosophic and theological thought. In such history it is recognized that in different periods there emerge different approaches to reality and different apprehensions of it. An instance of such emergence and difference is found in a contrast of biblical and conciliar thought. The biblical approach to reality, by and large, is centered on events. Its concern is dynamic. In contrast, at Nicea and in subsequent councils there emerges the static approach of Greek metaphysics, an approach concerned with the present and permanent, and so an approach that Heidegger has criticized as a forgetfulness of being. There arises accordingly the question whether theologians today have on their hands the task of finding a different way of handling the issues that for centuries were thought to have been handled satisfactorily at Nicea.

Now I have no doubt that at different times, or at the same time among different individuals or groups, there exist different approaches to reality and different apprehensions of it. In

fact I have argued for the possibility of some thirty-one distinct differentiations of consciousness;⁸ and I have no hesitation in granting that in the Greek councils there comes into play a differentiation of consciousness that one hardly finds in the biblical authors.⁹

However, I do find a certain ambiguity in the use of the term, static. It may denote an actuality, or an ideal, or a mere possibility. Let me say a few words on each of these.

A doctrine clearly is actually static when it meets the requirements of the Aristotelian account of science (epistēmē) set forth in the Posterior Analytics. There science is described as knowing the cause, knowing that it is the cause, and knowing that the effect cannot be other than it is.¹⁰ But the technical account of the expression of such knowledge is in terms of demonstration (apodeixis) which proceeds from first principles to conclusions in such a manner that every predicate pertains to its subject universally, necessarily, eternally.¹¹ Clearly if such a doctrine exists, it is static. But does such a doctrine exist? Aristotle acknowledged only one possibility: mathematics.¹²

Next there is a static ideal prescribed by a logic that aims at clarity in all its terms, coherence in all its propositions, rigor in all its arguments. Still such an ideal remains ineffective unless it is believed that clarity, coherence, and rigor have been attained or are about to be attained. Such a belief is cancelled when the logical ideal is regarded as only part of a larger methodical ideal. So in the modern sciences the logical ideal is fully acknowledged.

But this acknowledgement does not prevent the occurrence of new discoveries and the consequent correction of previous formulations. Similarly, in thirteenth century theology the endless questions expressed the effort of reflection to attain clarity, coherence, and certain, or at least probable, reasons.¹³ But the questions were only part of the method. There also was the reading of ancient authors, commentaries on their writings, compilations of the opinions of different authors, collations of these opinions with the questions that were being raised. Within that conjunction of research with reflection logic had free play but did not lead to fixity. On the contrary, it acted as a solvent, revealed the flaws in previously entertained views and, along with an ever fuller grasp of the sources, kept the questions on the move.¹⁴ In contrast, in the fourteenth century, when logic and even the Posterior Analytics became dominant, criticism took over and headed theology into what really is static, into skepticism and decadence.¹⁵

Besides the static as actuality and the static as ideal there is the static as mere possibility. This possibility arises when one reaches the age of twelve years. For at that age, according to the educational psychology of Jean Piaget, one becomes capable of operating on propositions. It follows that one can define. For when one operates on propositions, one uses them as objects; when one uses them as objects, one can employ them to define the meaning of one's terms. Now once a meaning is defined, and as long as that definition is retained, the meaning remains the same. It is static. Moreover, the static meaning will yield a static apprehension

of reality, provided the definition is not merely negative, not merely heuristic, not merely provisional, not merely partial, but positive, definitive, and complete. So a definition is merely negative, as when Aquinas asserts that we do not know what the divine essence is but only what it is not.¹⁶ It is merely heuristic when it states what we are attempting to discover but as yet do not know.¹⁷ It is merely provisional when it is proposed within a hypothesis. It is merely partial when it claims to be true as far as it goes but acknowledges that there is much more to be said.¹⁸ It is positive, definitive, and complete, when it differs contradictorily from the preceding. The closest instance I recall occurs in the later stages of the Arian controversy. The Anomoean, Eunomius, is credited with the opinion that if one grasped the notion of the "unbegotten" then one knew God just as well as God knew himself.¹⁹

Let us now ask how static was the approach to reality and the apprehension of it set forth in the Nicene decree. It will suffice to take the key term, homoousios. According to Athanasius this key term means that statements true of the Father also are true of the Son except that the Son is not the Father. Now is this meaning static or dynamic? Obviously we have to consider the statements that Athanasius had in mind. Nor is any difficulty involved, for Athanasius proceeds to quote a number of statements true both of the Father and of the Son. He finds them not in some text of Greek metaphysics but in the scriptures. As understood by Athanasius, then, the Nicene decree was just as static and just as dynamic as what Athanasius found in the bible.²⁰

Such continuity with biblical statement is not peculiar to Athanasius. A preface in the previous Roman missal, recited on a majority of Sundays throughout the year, employed the Athanasian formula in a prayer addressed to God the Father: "What because of your revelation we believe of your glory, the same of your Son, the same of the Holy Spirit we acknowledge without distinction or difference." There seems no disruptive departure from the scriptural mode of apprehension when one and the same Kabod Yahweh is acknowledged in Father, Son, and Spirit.

Eric Voegelin's Alternative

Even though it is granted that Nicea, rightly understood, is quite compatible with a biblical mode of apprehension, none the less Nicea does superpose upon the biblical mode a quite distinct doctrinal mode and, down the centuries, that doctrinal mode has come to dominate not only theological but to a great extent even religious thought.

It remains that this doctrinal mode cannot be combated coherently by setting up against it some anti-doctrinal doctrine. Indeed, as Eric Voegelin has claimed, nothing can be achieved by pitting right doctrine against wrong doctrine,²¹ for that only intensifies preoccupation with doctrine. What is needed, he urges, is the restoration of the search for the meaning of life, a search he would have us recognize no less in fourth century Athens than in the Christian gospel.

A basic symbol for that search was phrased by Euripides when he exclaimed, "Who knows if to live is to be dead and to be dead to live." The symbol was resumed by Plato in the Gorgias (492 E) and elaborated at the end of that dialogue

in the Myth of the Judgment of the Dead. But its most effective setting occurs at the end of the Apology when Socrates concludes, "But now the time has come to go. I go to die, and you to live; but who goes to the better lot is unknown to anyone but God."²²

Obviously what Voegelin is raising is a question not just for philosophers but for everyman. So there is no occasion for surprise when the same symbol comes from the lips of Jesus in Matthew's gospel, "For whoever would save his life (psychēn) will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What then will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world but has to suffer the destruction of his life" (Mt 16, 25 f.). Or again one may read in Paul, "If you live according to the flesh, you are bound to die; but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom 8, 15).²³

Variants can be multiplied but Voegelin finds particular satisfaction in the twelfth chapter of St. John's gospel when it is Greeks that ask to see Jesus and their request evokes the reply, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. In truth, in very truth I tell you, a grain of wheat remains a solitary grain unless it falls into the ground and dies; but if it dies, it bears a rich harvest. The man who loves himself is lost, but he who hates himself in this world will be kept safe for eternal life" (Jn 12, 23 ff.).²⁴

I have been speaking of the double meaning of life and death as a symbol, and Voegelin would stress the point.

~~doctrines at which Plato and Aristotle arrived should be projected back in time as though they were the premises on which their personal development was originally nourished. Rather, he~~

For from the symbol one can either go backward to the engendering experience or forward to the doctrines Plato and Aristotle were later to formulate. The latter course obviously is contrary to Voegelin's intent, and so he directs our attention to the Parable of the Cave.

There Plato lets the man who is fettered with his face to the wall be dragged up (helkein) by force to the light (Rep 515). The accent lies on the violence suffered by the man in the Cave, on his passivity and even resistance to being turned round (periagein), so that the ascent to the light is less an action of seeking than a fate inflicted.²⁵

In brief there are opposite principles at work, and to them Plato adverts. On the one hand, opinion may lead through reason (logos) to the best (ariston),^{and} its power is called self-restraint (sōphrosyne); on the other hand, desire may drag us (helkein) towards pleasures and its rule is called excess (hybris).²⁶

Or as Voegelin illustrates the matter, a young man may be drawn to philosophy but by social pressure be diverted to a life of pleasure or to ^{seeking} success in politics. But if he follows the second pull, the meaning of his life is not settled for him. The first pull remains and is ^{still} experienced as part of his living. Following the second pull does not transform his being into a question-free fact, but into a recognizably questionable course. He will sense that the life he leads is not his "own and true life" (495 C).²⁷

In brief there is a pull or attraction that, if followed, puts an end to questioning; and there are counter-pulls that, when followed, leave questions unanswered and conscience ill at ease. The former alternative is what Voegelin means by a movement luminous with truth, or again ^{by} existing in the truth,[^]

or again ^{by} the truth of existence. The latter alternative is existence in untruth. As he contends, this luminosity of existence with the truth of reason precedes all opinions and decisions about the pull to be followed. Moreover, it remains alive as the judgment of truth in existence whatever opinions about it we may actually form.²⁸ In other ^{words,} there is an inner light that runs before the formulation of doctrines and that survives even despite opposing doctrines. To follow that inner light is life, even though to worldly eyes it is to die. To reject that inner light is to die, even though the world envies one's attainments and achievements.

For Voegelin, then, the classic experience of reason²⁹ in fourth-century Athens was something poles apart from the reason cultivated in late medieval metaphysics and theology,³⁰ from the reason of Descartes and the rationalists, from the reason of the French enlightenment and the German absolute idealists. It took its stand not on logic but on inner experience. Its conflicts were not public disputations but inner trials. Its victory was the saving of one's life, keeping one's soul undefiled, holding ever to the upward way, pursuing righteousness with wisdom, so that we may be dear to ourselves and to the gods (Rep 621 BC).³¹ This, of course, is Plato. But the sobriety of the Nicomachean Ethics does not imply that Aristotle holds a different view.

If reason is divine, he wrote, then ^(in comparison with man) the life according to ^{reason} / is divine in comparison with human life. But we must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, to think of mortal things, but ^{we} / must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with

the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything.³²

If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be the best thing in us. Whether it be reason^(nous) or something else that is this element which is thought to be our natural ruler and guide and to take thought of things noble and divine, whether it be itself also divine or only the most divine element in us,³³ the activity of this in accordance with its proper virtue will be perfect happiness. That this activity is contemplation we have already said.³⁴

It is not only classic philosophy but also the gospel that symbolizes existence as a field of pulls and counter-pulls. Like Plato, the gospel of John uses the word, draw, drag (helkein). Jesus on the eve of his passion can say, "And I shall draw all men to myself, when I am lifted up" (Jn 12, 32). But the power of the crucified to draw men to himself is conditioned by the prior drawing by the Father. "No man can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me" (Jn 6, 44). And that prior drawing is a listening and learning: "Everyone who has listened to the Father and learned from him, comes to me" (Jn 6, 45).³⁵

On the basis of this drawing Voegelin distinguishes between revelation and information. To Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi Jesus answered: "Simon, son of Jonah, you are favored indeed! You did not learn that from mortal man; it was revealed to you by my heavenly Father" (Mt 16, 17). Voegelin comments:

The Matthean Jesus thus agrees with the Johannine (Jn 6, 44) that nobody can recognize the movement of the divine presence

in the Son, unless he is prepared for such recognition by the presence of the divine Father in himself. The divine Sonship is not revealed through information tendered by Jesus, but through a man's response to the full presence in Jesus of the same Unknown God by whose presence he is inchoatively moved in his own existence... In order to draw the distinction between revelation and information, as well as to avoid the derailment from one to the other, the episode closes with the charge of Jesus to the disciples 'to tell no one that he is the Christ' (Mt 16, 20).³⁶

The distinction Voegelin finds in the revelation of Jesus as Christ to Peter, he also finds in the communication by the apostles to their converts. So Jesus prays: "O righteous Father... I know thee and these men know that thou didst send me. I made my name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love thou hadst for me may be in them, and I may be in them" (Jn 17, 25 f.). In similar fashion we also read: "But it is not for these alone that I pray, but for those also who through their words put their faith in me; may they all be one: as thou Father art in me and I in thee, so also may they be in us, that the world may believe that thou didst send me. The glory which thou gavest me I have given to them, that they may be one, as we are one; I in them and thou in me, may they be perfectly one. Then the world will learn that thou didst send me, that thou didst love them as thou didst me" (Jn 17, 20-23).³⁷

Let me conclude. Voegelin agrees with the estimate of Justin Martyr that the gospel, so far from being opposed to the classic philosophy of Athens, is that philosophy brought to the state of perfection.³⁸ Both are responses to the question

set by the twofold meaning of life and death. Both take the issue with the full seriousness of the death of Socrates or the fuller seriousness of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Both know of light and darkness, of pull and counter-pull, of the need of free choice to support the gentle pull of the golden cord, of the inner unrest that remains with those that turn aside.³⁹ But the followers of Socrates speak of conversion (periagōgē) and the followers of Jesus speak of repentance (metanoia).

Theology as Praxis

I have drawn upon Bernhard Welte's question and Eric Voegelin's alternative because between them they raise a series of issues that continuously crop up in doing theology yet are resolved far less by objective rules than by existential decisions.

Welte suspects the Nicene decree to have been forgetful of being because it speaks of ousia and so must mean das beständig Anwesende, das beständig Vorliegende.⁴⁰ In these expressions I would distinguish two elements. There is a perceptual element, the presence (Anwesenheit) of what lies before one (Vorliegende). There is a static logical element (Beständigkeit). Though both tie in with the massive problem Plato expressed symbolically in his Parable of the Cave, they do so in different manners and I shall speak of them separately.

Fourteenth-century scholasticism discussed with considerable acumen the validity of an intuition of what exists and is present.⁴¹ Now you may or may not hold that valid perception is what constitutes human knowledge as objective. But at least

in all probability you did at one time take a perceptualism for granted. And if, by some lucky chance, you succeeded in freeing yourself completely from that assumption, then your experience would have been quite similar to that of the prisoner who struggled might and main against his release from the darkness of Plato's cave.

Is then perceptualism the same as Heidegger's forgetfulness of being? The question supposes Heidegger's meaning to be well known. Let me say very simply that perceptualism is forgetfulness of the inner light, the light that raises questions and, when answers are insufficient, keeps raising further questions. It is the inner light of intelligence that asks what and why and how and what for and, until insight hit's the bull's eye, keeps further questions popping up. It is the inner light of reasonableness that demands sufficient reason before assenting and, until sufficient reason is forthcoming, keeps in your mind the further questions of the doubter. It is the inner light of deliberation that brings you beyond the egoist's question — What's in it for me? — to the moralist's question — Is it really and truly worth while? — and if your living does not meet that standard, bathes you in the unrest of an uneasy conscience.

The ascent from the darkness of the cave to the light of day is a movement from a world of immediacy that is already out there now to a world mediated by the meaningfulness of intelligent, reasonable, responsible answers to questions.⁴²

Are the dogmas caught in the forgetfulness of being? I should say that it all depends on the theologian interpreting the dogmas. When the dogmas are interpreted by one who habitually dwells in the world of the perceptualist,

there would be forgetfulness of the inner light and, as well, forgetfulness of being if by being is meant the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values. But if the dogmas are interpreted by one who habitually dwells in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values, there is forgetfulness of the world of perceptualists but not of the world of those who have not seen but have believed (Jn 20, 29).

Besides presence, the Greek word, ousia, is thought to connote permanence, to forget the dynamic, and point to the static.⁴³ I have expressed the opinion that static thinking has its source, not in Greek or other metaphysics, but in any thought or doctrine that gives one-sided attention to logic. The logical ideal of clarity, coherence, and rigor can be pursued with excellent results, provided the pursuit is only part of a larger ongoing investigation that has other resources and fuller goals than logic alone can attain. Admittedly there is to the Posterior Analytics a one-sidedness that concentrates on necessity and slights verifiable possibility; and it was by concentrating on verifiable possibility that modern science proved its superiority to Aristotelian logic. But that logic is so much less than the whole of Aristotle.

So, I should say, the same distinction is to be applied to metaphysics as was to dogma. For a metaphysics may be modelled on the dictates of the Posterior Analytics and then its doctrine will be static. But it may be conceived as the integration of the heuristic structures of such ongoing investigations as natural science, human studies, theology, and then it will be no more static than such ongoing investigations. Instead of being a dam that blocks the river's flow, it will be the bed within which the river does its flowing.⁴⁴

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If Welte and Voegelin hold contrasting views on the relevance of Greek philosophy to Christian truth, at least both insist upon events. Welte claims, rightly I believe, that by and large the bible is a narrative of events. Voegelin also stresses events, but they are the inner events of pull and counter-pull (helkein, anthelkein) that invite to life and seduce to death.

There also is a further point on which, I think, their agreement may be discerned. For if I argued that Nicea can be taken in a properly biblical manner, I also granted that it has become down the ages the fountainhead of a proliferating doctrinal mode of thought. Now such a mode of thought, in a mind more inclined to logic than to understanding, is a real source of static thinking. Nor may one suppose such minds to be rare, for the easier course is the commoner, and it is far easier to draw conclusions from what one already holds than to deepen one's understanding of what one's convictions mean.

I believe, then, that Welte has a real point in so far as he associates doctrine with a grave risk of congealed minds. But Voegelin makes a similar point though in a quite different manner. He is aware of the self-transcending dynamism of truly human living, of its mythical and symbolic expression, of its philosophic expression, and of its expression in the prophets of the Old Testament and in the writers of the New.⁴⁵ He is aware that only through one's own experience of that dynamism can one advert to its working in others. By a brilliant extension he moves on to his distinction between revelation and information. Items of information are all about us:

they are the stock in trade of the media. But revelation is not just one more item of information. In its essential moment it is a twofold pull: being drawn by the Father, listening to him, learning from him; and being drawn by the Son, crucified, dead, and risen. Again, it is a twofold grace: an inner operative grace that plucks out hearts of stone and replaces them with hearts of flesh; and the outer grace of the Christian tradition that brings the gospel to our ears.

Now I think Voegelin's criticism of doctrines and doctrinization to be exaggerated.⁴⁶ But everyone will expect this of me, so there is no point in my repeating here what I have already said rather abundantly. What I do believe to be important on the present occasion is to insist how right I consider Voegelin to be in what he does say. For what he does say is foundational. It is the kind of knowledge by which people live their lives. It is the kind of knowledge that scientists and scholars, philosophers and theologians, presuppose when they perform their specialized tasks. It is the knowledge of which Newman wrote in his Grammar of Assent, Polanyi wrote in his Personal Knowledge, Gadamer in his Truth and Method. It is the kind of knowledge thematized by ascetical and mystical writers when they speak of the discernment of spirits and set forth rules for distinguishing between pull and counter-pull, between being drawn by the Father to be drawn to the Son and, on the other hand, the myriad other attractions that distract the human spirit.⁴⁷

Indeed it is ⁱⁿ this long history of spiritual writing that one finds the confirmation of Voegelin's "In-Between"

and his "Beyond." For being drawn by the Father is neither merely human nor strictly divine but "In-Between." As movement is from the mover but in what is moved, so the drawing is from the Father but in the suppliant. Again, because the drawing is from the Father, it bears the stamp of unworldliness; it is not just me but from the "Beyond." Finally, because there are not only pulls but also counter-pulls, because the first can dignify the second, and the second can distort the first, there is need for discernment and, no less, difficulty in attaining it.⁴⁸

Now such thematization pertains to experiential or ascetical or mystical theology and Voegelin regrets its separation from school theology.⁴⁹ But separation is one thing and distinction is another. I believe a distinction is to be made between the spiritual life of a theologian and his professional activities: the former is religion in act; the latter is concerned with the interdependence of a religion and a culture.⁵⁰ But separation arises from the controvertialist's need to claim total detachment. It arises from criteria of objectivity such as necessity and self-evidence that seem to imply that our minds should work with an automatic infallibility. It arises from an unawareness that the interpretation of texts and the investigation of history are conditioned by the personal horizon of the interpreter or the historian.⁵¹ It arises from an inadvertence to the dominant role of value judgments in much of theology as in much of human life. Finally, because I consider such grounds for a separation to be no longer tenable, I have assigned in my Method in Theology a key role to two functional specialties, Dialectic

and Foundations. Now Dialectic stands to theology, as pull and counter-pull stand to the spiritual life. And Foundations stands to theology, as discernment stands to the spiritual life where it sorts out pull and counter-pull and does not permit counter-pull to distort the pull or pull to let seep some of its dignity and worth on to counter-pull.

So we arrive at a conception of theology as basically a praxis. In conclusion three points seem to be in order: (1) the structure of individual development, (2) the occurrence of identity crises in the Christian community, and (3) the necessity of a certain doctrinal pluralism.

The structure of individual development is twofold. The chronologically prior phase is from above downwards. Children are born into a cradling environment of love. By a long and slow process of socialization, acculturation, education they are transferred from their initial world of immediacy into the local variety of the world mediated by meaning and mediated by values. Basically this process rests on trust and belief. But as it proceeds more and more there develops the capacity to raise questions and to be satisfied or dissatisfied with answers. Such is the spontaneous and fundamental process of teaching and learning common to all. It is at once intelligent and reasonable and responsible. But while it is consciously intelligent, consciously reasonable, consciously responsible, still these properties attain no more than a symbolic objectification and representation. Even when subjected to higher education, one does well to attain some clear and precise understanding of one's own activities in this or that field of specialization. Few indeed attempt the philosophic task

of coming to grasp the similarities and the differences of the many ways in which basic operations are variously modified and variously combined to yield the appropriate procedures in different fields. And of the few that attempt this, even fewer succeed in mapping the interior of the "black box" in which the input is sensations and the output is talk.

What holds in general for self-understanding in our world mediated by meaning and motivated by values, also holds when that world is transfigured by God's self-revelation in Christ Jesus. The one revelation was made to many and thereby brought about a new type of community. For that community Christ prayed to his Father that they all be one, as thou Father in me and I in thee, that they all be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. It remains that a community is one not only by God's grace but also by a consequent union of minds and of hearts. Again, it remains that that consequent union can be troubled, disturbed, undergo an identity crisis; and then the solution to that crisis will be a common confession of faith. It is such confessions of faith that have been given the name, dogmas. In the older liturgies they often ^{were} enshrined in various manners, but in the recently devised Roman liturgy such confessions tend to be reduced to their scriptural basis.

So there emerges the question of doctrinal pluralism. Its real basis, I believe, is the multiple differentiation of consciousness possible at the present time and often needed to master issues in theology. But the development that may be expected of a theologian is not to be required generally, nor is it easy to defend the mere repetition of

formulas that are not understood. Personally I should urge that in each case one inquire whether the old issue still has a real import and, if it has, a suitable expression for that import be found. For example, at Nicea the real import was whether Christ, the mediator of our salvation, was a creature. Today many perhaps will be little moved by the question whether we have been saved by a creature or by God himself. But the issue may be put differently. One can ask whether God revealed his love for us by having a man die the death of scourging and crucifixion? Or was it his own Son, a divine person, who became flesh to suffer and die and thereby touch our hard hearts and lead us to eternal life?

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NOTES

- ¹ For example, Richard J. Bernstein, Praxis and Action: Contemporary Theories of Human Activity, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.
- ² In the Nicomachean Ethics one reads that praxis is shared neither by animals (VI 2 1139^a20) nor by the gods (X 8 1178^b7-22). It differs from poiēsis and so from techne (VI 4 1140^a1ff). As is phronēsis (VI 7 1141^b16), it is concerned with particulars (III 1 1110^b6). Desire and the logos of the end are the principle of proairesis, and proairesis is the efficient principle of praxis (VI 2 1139^a31ff). As the hypothesis is the principle in mathematics, so the end is the principle in praxis (VII 8 1151^a16)
- ³ S. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae II-II, qq. 48-56.
- ⁴ J. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, 1972. P. 67 ff.
- ⁵ Cf. Richard N. Goodwin, The American Condition, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974. Pp. 197 ff.
- ⁶ A basic presentation is by Don Ihde, Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971. Pp. 140 ff.
- ⁷ Bernhard Welte, "Die Lehrformel von Nikaia und die abendländische Metaphysik," in Zur Frühgeschichte der Christologie, edited by Bernhard Welte, Freiburg: Herder, 1970. Pp. 100-117.
- ⁸ A succinct presentation of the pieces that may be combined in various ways may be found in B. Lonergan, Method in Theology, New York: Herder and Herder (now Seabury), 1972. Pp. 302 ff.

9 The movement has been sketched in B. Lonergan, The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology, A translation by Conn O'Donovan from the first part of De Deo Trino, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977.

10 Aristotle, Posterior Analytics I, 2 79^b9 ff.

11 Ibid. I, 4.6.8.

12 So Sir David Ross, Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949. P. 14.

13 Abaelard's Sic et non is thought to have inspired the videtur quod non and Sed contra of the medieval quaestio. The relevance of probable as well as certain arguments is attested by Aquinas, C. Gent. I, 9.

14 I became vividly aware of this in studying Aquinas on gratia operans. See my articles on the topic in Theological Studies 1941 and 1942, or the better presentation by J. Patout Burns in B. Lonergan, Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, London: Darton, Longman & Todd and New York: Herder and Herder (now Seabury), 1971.

15 The seminal work is Konstanty Michalski, La philosophie au XIV^e siècle: Six études, Edited and introduced by Kurt Flasch, Frankfurt: Minerva, 1969.

16 C. Gent. I, 14.

17 As when Augustine explains what he means by the term, person, as "what there are three of in the Trinity." Cf. De trinitate VII, iv, 7; PL 42, 939. B. Lonergan, A Second Collection, London and Philadelphia 1974, p. 199.

- 18 Hence the rule: Abstrahentium non est mendacium.
- 19 Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche² III, 1182.
- 20 See B. Lonergan, The Way to Nicea, p. 91.
- 21 Eric Voegelin, "The Gospel and Culture," in Jesus and Man's Hope edited by D. G. Miller and D. Y. Hadidian, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971, p. 66.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid., p. 67.
- 24 Ibid., p. 68.
- 25 Ibid., p. 72.
- 26 Phaedrus 238 A.
- 27 Voegelin, op. cit. p. 71.
- 28 Ibid., pp. 72 - 76.
- 29 Eric Voegelin, "Reason: The Classic Experience," The Southern Review, 10 (1974) 237 - 264.
- 30 Cf. "The Gospel and Culture," p. 66.
- 31 Ibid., p. 67.
- 32 Nicomachean Ethics X, 7 1177^b30 ff. The Oxford translation edited by Richard McKeon.
- 33 The passage suggests that Aristotle did not take faculty psychology with the rigidity it acquired in Scholasticism.
- 34 Eth. Nic. X, 7 1177^a12 ff.
- 35 "The Gospel and Culture," p. 77.
- 36 Ibid., p. 90.

37 Ibid., p. 78.

38 Ibid., p. 60.

39 Ibid., p. 73.

40 Welte, op. cit. p. 112: Als das Ständige ist der Gegenstand oder das Seiende nun für das Denken der neuen Zeit in der Weise zeitlich, dass es, in der Zeit stehend, zugleich wie gar nicht von ihr berührt ist. So steht es dem Geschehen oder dem Ereignis als ein Statisches gegenüber. Es wird mit Vorzug Usia genannt. Diesen Ausdruck versteht Heidegger als das beständig Anwesende.

Further, p. 113: Vielmehr entsteht jetzt die ganz anders gestimmte Frage als Leitfrage, was ist? Und diese Frage hat einen offensichtlich Sinn. Sie schliesst die andere, was geschehen ist and was geschieht, nicht aus, aber sie läuft in einer anderen Richtung. Sie fragt doch, was ist in Jesus das beständig Vorliegende.

41 The extreme views of Nicholas of Autrecourt are listed in DS 1028-49. The distinction between divine power itself and divine power as ordered by divine wisdom opened the way to advancing that divine power itself could do anything that did not involve a contradiction. There followed questions of the type, Is there any contradiction in supposing that one can have an intuition of X as existing and present although X neither is present and does not even exist?

42 Again, it is a movement from the horizon of ocular vision to the horizon of being, where the horizon of being is the horizon that is enlarged when one discovers and follows up a significant question, and the horizon that is contracted when one brushes aside a significant question.

43 See note 40 above.

44 See the definition of metaphysics in Lonergan, Insight, pp. 390-394.

45 Voegelin's sweep is breath-taking: in his "The Gospel and Culture" he pulls together Myth, Philosophy, Prophecy, and Gospel.

Myth is not a primitive symbolic form, peculiar to early societies and progressively to be overcome by positive science, but the language in which the experiences of human-divine participation in the In-Between become articulate (p. 76).

The Amon Hymns (to the god above the gods and unknown by the gods) are the representative document of the movement at the stage where the splendor of the cosmological gods has become derivative, though the gods themselves have not yet become false. Seven hundred years later, in the Deutero-^aIsianic equivalent to the Amon Hymns (Is 40, 12-25), the gods have become man-made idols who no longer partake of divine reality, while the unknown god has acquired the monopoly of divinity (p. 85).

The noetic core, thus, is the same in both Classic Philosophy and the Gospel movement (p. 80).

In the historical drama of revelation, the Unknown God ultimately becomes the God known through his presence in Christ (p. 88).

46 His statements (e. g., pp. 74-76) seem to me to go well beyond a repudiation of a doctrinaire carabinier.

47 On this topic for a brief account, Sacramentum mundi, II, 89-91. For a fuller treatment, Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, articles on Consolation spirituelle

(II, 1617-1634), Démon (III, 141-238), Direction spirituelle (III, 1002-1211), Discernement des esprits (III, 1222-1291).

⁴⁸ On the key discriminant in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, consolation without a previous cause, a notable study recommended with a preface by Karl Rahner is: Harvey D. Egan, The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon, St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976.

⁴⁹ The Gospel and Culture, p. 88.

⁵⁰ B. Lonergan, Method in Theology, p. xi.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 195.