

## Question for Class 9/21/78

I have several related questions which raise issues concerning:  
a.) the nature of the course and b.) the nature of the class presentations we are each asked to make. On the one hand, The Way to Nicea is a work on the level of dialectic: "...we do not propose to add to erudition by research, or to clarify interpretation by study, or to enrich history with fresh information. Such functional specialties we presuppose. Our purpose is to move on to a fourth, to a dialectic that, like an X-ray, sets certain key issues in high relief to concentrate on their oppositions and their interplay."(p.viii) Consonant with this is our course title "Dialectic in Theological Development."

On the other hand, at our last session Fr. Lonergan indicated that it is our task in this course to catch hold of what was going on in the writers considered, to enter their denkform, to use an historical approach to grasp their mentality. It is at a later stage that we might ask: were they right?

The second description of our task sounds as if we were limited, in the course and in the class presentations, to the functional specialty called history. Why then is The Way to Nicea a dialectical work? Why does our course have the title it does? Granted that dialectic presupposes, sublates, and requires the work of research, interpretation and history, why limit ourselves in our presentations to the level of history? When will it be appropriate as we proceed to address the question of horizon that dialectic reveals?

J.P.

November 13, 1978

Fr. Lonergan:

Attached are:

- 1.) Two questions for discussion this Thursday. One was submitted at the end of the hour last week. The other is an ill-formulated attempt to express an issue raised in the discussion group.
- 2.) Seven proposals for papers with attached comments from me. My comments tended to be practical and repetitive: simplify and focus! I still expect three more proposals to be submitted. I've met with one of the people, have an appointment with the second, and the third is Bill Haynes--so everyone is known to be working on his proposal.

Bill Haynes question from October 10 regarding the relation of the Verbum articles to the "Christology Today" article is still on a back burner. I leave it to you whether to address it Thursday, or on the following meeting, or not at all.

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J.P.

TH 876  
October 5, 1978

Question for Discussion

What is the relation between dogmatic development and the advance of understanding proper to systematics?

Both appear to be the advance in the subject from undifferentiated consciousness to differentiated consciousness and in the object from commonsense to theoretical formulations. Yet dogmatic development terminates in dogmas, whereas systematics terminates in hypotheses about dogmas.

Originally, it seems, the emergence of dogma was the prerequisite for the emergence of systematics. Has this priority reversed so that today advance in systematics is the principal locus of development of dogma?

B.A.H.

October 10, 1973

## Questions for Discussion

1.) According to your commentary on Aquinas, there is affirmed about God an act to act relationship that purports to give us an imperfect glance at the Trinity adorable, inasmuch as man, made in the trinitarian image, discovers in himself the duo-act of understanding (intelligere) and expression (dicere) This utterance is expressed in an "inner word"; and what is expressed is the true. In some sense this inner word seems to be trans-linguistic in that it is the built-in principle of the human mind regardless of cultural upbringing or social heritage. How is understanding separable from yet related to the inner word? (both in God and in the human knower)

Is not the act of understanding the cause of its effect, namely, an inner word? If so, does not the human analogy break down, for in God there are no efficient or final causes except from the creaturely standpoint and in man there is a need to reason to first cause, which in itself is pure act with a potency of absolute zero?

What, more precisely, is the ordering of concepts, two in number that you claim are often erroneously lumped together, which, on the one hand moves from processions through relations to persons and, on the other, from the divine persons to their attributes? How is the systemic differentiation of consciousness related to the soaring upward of religious experience?

If I understand you, you see a need to transpose the traditional concepts of trinitarian doctrine on one nature with three persons to the contemporary context of a single consciousness in three subjects. Equipped with some of the basic tools in modern and contemporary thought patterns, these transpositions might be most illuminating, but how do you yourself understand such terms as "consciousness" and "subject" when exactly applied to trinitarian theory especially in the midst of the pluralism of speakings within the philosophical community? Your terminological shift would seem a sort of transcendental embezzlement from the riches of existentialism and phenomenology. And, if I am correct, does not the analogy again collapse, since within God's own inner life there cannot be an "I" and a "Thou" (though, indeed, in prayer the divine consort is addressed as a personal "Thou")?

How is divine intersubjectivity alike yet different from, the intense moments of an interhuman phenomenology in which gratitude is the act of taking full possession so that knowing and loving go hand in hand?

Finally, you claim more recently that the Son of God is an unrestricted act of value of the Beloved with respect to God the Father, who is love at its source. You have used current biblical scholarship to reinforce the point that theos as used in scripture is applied only to the Father and agape refers specifically to this divine person. No doubt love has many meanings, but there can be no doubt too, of the adage "one cannot love what one does not know" that this same prior knowledge holds true in respect of love within God. For love proceeding is, indeed, shrouded in the mists of obscurity without the prior verification in the procession of truth. Your recent trinitarian ideas seem to read:

Love as source (Father)

Love as unrestricted value (Son)

Love itself (Spirit)

Oddly enough, truth is just knocked out of the picture, and such a standpoint leaves the adult critic and naive child within the believer wondering if Fr. Lonergan hasn't played off current biblical scholarship against speculative knowing. Is one to infer, then, that Bible people

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October 10, 1978

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and speculative people just don't see eye to eye, or that two patterns of consciousness within a single knower and lover just won't mesh? Again, is Lonergan junior (Verbum) at odds with Lonergan senior (recent theory)?

Wm. Haynes

2.) Assume an authentic subject engaged in the functional specialty called dialectic. He or she operates upon the assembled, completed, compared, classified, reduced, and selected data by developing positions and reversing counter-positions. (cf. Method pp. 249-250) He or she perceives moving in and through the data a development which is more than simply the individual positions of specific historical characters. The process of development of this trans-individual reality within history can also be called dialectic. It has its own exigence. Although not automatic, in many ways it resembles Hegel's Absolute Spirit.

Two questions:

- a.) What can legitimately be learned from Hegel and what must be avoided or discarded?
- b.) To what extent would you describe the reality perceived as the providence of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, or some other category of faith?

J.P.

Questions for Discussion

I. (A.) Three Texts:

"All the development of the dogmatic battles which the Church has waged down the centuries appears...as dominated by the constant preoccupation...to safeguard...the possibility of attaining to the fulness of the mystical union. So the Church struggled against the gnostics in defense of this same idea of deification as the universal end...She affirmed, against the Arian the dogma of the consubstantial Trinity; for...if the incarnate Word has not the same substance with the Father, if he be not truly God, our deification is impossible."

Vladimir Lossky, THE MYSTICAL THEOLOGY of the EASTERN CHURCH. London, 1957, p.9

"...unus est Christus: unus autem non conversione divinitatis in carnem, sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum."

"...(he) is one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God."

QUICUNQUE VULT, commonly called the Creed of Saint Athanasius

"We are accustomed to speak of the deification of man and his world, and I wish to stress the fact that the only God there is is a triune God; he communicates himself to us as triune, and therefore the deification of the human world is really its 'trinification'."

Frederick Crowe, quoted in TRINIFICATION OF THE WORLD. Regis, Ontario, 1978, p.259.

(B.) The Question:

On p.103 of The Way to Nicea appears the remarkable remark that the rule of Athanasius is like Maxwell's equations for the electro-magnetic field in that both emerged from images, but have themselves no corresponding images.

The historian of science may follow the progress of physical science that led to Maxwell's equations, and indeed may follow his own wrestling with the problem; beginning from images but finally arriving at equations. Similarly the historian of doctrine can follow the "dialectical development of Trinitarian theology". By so doing, however, we who have read The Way to Nicea can (if we get so far) only affirm the correctness of the historical judgment that this, and not something else, was 'going forward' immediately before and after the Council of Nicea. As a historical judgment, this will presumably be open to revision -say, by the study of new documentary data.

Although the electro-magnetic field is not experiencable, Maxwell's equations can be verified, and they are verified by their implications.

- (1) Is the rule of Athanasius verifiable in the same way?
- (2) If so, what are the implications by which it is tested?

Do they pertain (as Lossky avers) to the life of the soul, the "discernment of spirits"? Or do they pertain (as some of the authors in TRINIFICATION suggest) to the 'trinification' of the human world? Is either or both of these implied in the QUICUNQUE VULT'S affirmation that the unity of the Son with the Father entails the assumption of humanity - individual or corporate- into God?

*individual*  
*Catholicism*  
*verification*  
*implications*  
*to the life of the soul*  
*discernment of spirits*  
*trinification*  
*human world*  
*unity of the Son with the Father*  
*assumption of humanity*  
*individual or corporate-*  
*into God?*

(3) Is there a better way to formulate this question?  
(The author of the question recognizes that the "Athanasian Creed" dates from after Athanasius, perhaps from the fifth century, and almost certainly after Chalcedon.)  
C.H.

II. Referring to the discussion of circles in Insight:

One can gradually come to understand why circles are circular if one begins with the image of a cartwheel, its hubs and spokes. Through insight one arrives at the definition, equality of radii.

How far does the following analogy hold?

"What" question:	What is a circle?	Who is Christ?
"Why" question:	Why is <u>this</u> round?	Why are we monotheists praying to him?
data:	image of cartwheel image of spokes relation of hub to rim etc.	images, titles sayings of Scripturee "Son" "Father" etc.
definition:	A series of points equidistant from a center.	One of whom every- thing that is true of the Father is also true, except the Father's being Father C.H.

III. Please comment on the common usage (e.g. in Karl Rahner) that conceives consciousness in terms of "reflexive" and "pre-reflexive." You yourself speak of "conscious" and "known," but the term "known" means more than just "reflexively conscious."

D.H.

known: beyond (goal of) reflexively conscious

pre-reflexive: possibility of having something to reflect on = conscious



TH 375

November 16, 1978

### Questions for Discussion

1. On page 43, note 41 of "Christology Today" one finds the statement, "In Christ, however, who is both divine and human, there is both a divine and human subjectivity, though but a single identity, and a single human subjectivity."

Please explain the meaning of a "divine subjectivity" and how the dual subjectivities of Jesus can avoid a monophysitism (as may be implied by his "single identity.")

R.F.

2. The sentence on page 58, "It is in the progressive clarification of Christian experience and in the continuous exercise of spiritual discernment in the Christian community that christological doctrine developed." provoked the following caricature: "Lonergan is a Schleiermacher with an added sense of the cumulative clarification offered by tradition."

One could begin to correct the distortion by pointing out that Schleiermacher emphasized a God-consciousness, the feeling of absolute dependence, while you emphasize the experience of Sonship, adoption through the work of the Spirit within us made possible by God's sending his Son.

Please comment on the relation of Schleiermacher's theological program to your own horizon.

J.P.