

2959ADTE070

Transcription of recording of questions on 29590A0E070; questions are found at 29590DTE070.

Question: Once it is decided that (1) a theology mediates between a religion and a culture and (2) that religion and culture are historical and therefore changing, the conclusion seems to be that theology – and indeed all the sciences – is concerned with ‘the best available hypothesis’ and as such is subject to ongoing revision. Is this statement an accurate reflection of the position of *Method*?

Lonergan: Well, the position of *Method* might, I think, draw certain distinctions. Theology mediates between a religion and a culture, yes. Culture is historical and therefore changes. Theology is historical and therefore changes. Religion is historical and therefore changes. We will reflect on those three.

First of all, what do you mean by ‘historical?’ ‘Historical’ can mean what in fact happened. Was Jesus Christ a historical reality? Did in fact there exist such a man? Or ‘historical’ means ongoing individual and social development or decline, an objective process in human living. And thirdly, [‘historical’ can mean] what can be known by way of scientific history. The question of the historical Jesus is sometimes handled rather ambiguously, meaning both ‘Did he exist?’ and ‘What can scientific history tell us about h?’

First, then, [really second] what is historical changes. If it’s a process of progress and decline, certainly it’s changing. And so Toynbee in his *Study of History* went into the decline and fall of twenty-one civilizations. They came upon the scene and they vanished. But there also were cultures that remained unchanged for ages. He also talked about static civilizations, where development is blocked by circumstances. The Eskimos are very well adapted to an Arctic milieu. But there isn’t much else they can do beyond kayaks and fishing and so on. Conditions are so stringent that any decline would result in extinction. A culture either ceases to exist or it remains as it is. There is such a thing as a static situation. It *can* change. The Eskimos could become different insofar as they enter into contact with other peoples, and other people move into their turf. It isn’t just self-evident that what is historical also is changing. There’s a certain sense of history as ongoing development and decline.

Second [really third], a change in culture involves a change in the expression of a religion. Culture is the expression of the political, social, artistic, intellectual,

moral, religious ideals of a people. It is that expression. It's their language, their literature, their art, their education, their science, their philosophy, their morality, what they praise and blame, and their religion. So religious expression is part of and solidary with cultural expression. Religious expression is going to vary with the culture; otherwise you're no longer talking to anybody when you're talking religion, when you express religion.

Fourthly (sic), a change in the expression of a religion involves a change in the religion itself. As one advances from kindergarten to grammar school to high school to university to graduate school, the mode of expression changes, but it's still the same education. The education is taking place. And the education is taking place not in the professors except accidentally, but in the pupils, in the students. The expression has to change to be meaningful to them. But the expression is changing not in the idea of education – it can may change there, when the educationists come along and say 'You're doing everything wrong' or 'You're doing things that are useless,' and so on, all their profound discoveries. Now, does a change in the expression involve a change in the religion? Well, it depends. It's the whole problem of the development of doctrine, development in the modes of expression. On that you have to be content with one instance of what that question means and how you go about it. I'll take the instance of *The Way to Nicea*, which is the English translation of the first part of the first volume of my *De Deo Trino*, written in Latin. You have first of all the Jewish Christians, who saw Christianity insofar as possible in Old Testament terms and categories and images. And then the Gnostics, who imported elements of the notion of the unknown God and tended to distinguish him very sharply from Yahweh and Elohim of the Old Testament. We have the same tendency in the Marcionites, and so on. It's an extraneous influence ... Was there something that was going forward and something that was developing? One analysis of it is that the Christians at all times differed from the polytheism of the pagans – they didn't believe in many gods – but they also differed from the solitary monotheism of the Jews, of the Hebrews. They were somewhere in the middle, and where on earth that middle was was quite a problem. It took three centuries of fumbling for them to get anything like a common view on the matter. ? was very secure about the year 362 after the Synod of Alexandria. The decree of Nicea created all sorts of difficulties. The difficulties after 337, when Constantius became the emperor favorable to the Arians, kept multiplying. So you have that ... a lot of other histories, and if you're going to be a theologian you have to go into them.

The question whether the religion changes when there are changes in the expression is quite a business, and it became a serious question when people discovered scientific history. Owen Chadwick of Cambridge University in England

has a book on the development of doctrine from Bossuet to Newman. He describes Bossuet's view on the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, that St Paul didn't have the name 'homoousion,' 'consubstantial,' but he understood the thing perfectly well. An American would go into a haberdashery shop in London and ask for a pair of suspenders, and the clerk wouldn't know what on earth he wanted. But the man knew precisely well what he wanted. But what in England would be called braces he calls suspenders. There's a difference in name, but the thing is known perfectly. This was a typical classicist viewpoint. The ideas were the same all along; the concepts didn't change; what changed were the names, the words. When Newman wrote about the development of doctrine, around 1846, he knew a good deal of the Fathers, and he studied the development of doctrine. It was a development. Doctrine grew. He knew about the process. It was hardly the last word on the subject, but at least it was a word on the subject. You couldn't be saying something equivalent to meet different exigences ... So the division of *Method* is a little more complicated than is proposed in that first statement.

Question, continued: If so (i.e., if theology is subject to constant revision), is it a further conclusion that the existence of God is the best available explanation of certain religious phenomena, such as the dynamic state of being in love in an unrestricted way?

Lonergan: Well, the existence of God is a convincing explanation to those that (1) are themselves in the dynamic state of being in love with God in an unrestricted fashion – people can be in that dynamic state and be rather incredulous if they were told they were. So there's first the problem of fact. And second, they're in the state, and they're fully aware of the fact. That's a little more difficult. And thirdly, they're convinced that it's not an illusion or a delusion. After all, Feuerbach held that religion is simply projecting what's best in humanity into the sky. It was an alienation of what was most excellent in man, taking it away from man and giving it to an unknown entity called God: the structure of humanism. A complete humanism is not compatible with Christianity, which is concerned not only with this life as a secularist humanism is. Again, the existence of God, besides appealing to religious experience, admits philosophic or philosophical-theological proof, but differently in different intellectual climates. In the prescientific era, before Newton, scientists suddenly could become fully conscious of what they were doing. There were discoveries in modern physics and so on, mechanics, from the 1400s on, and they were constantly accumulating. But the trouble was that these scientists also were Aristotelians. People that didn't agree them thought they were involved in contradictions. Before they could be coherently scientists, they needed a sufficient body of science to form a complete context. Then they could

speak coherently. And that fundamentally arose in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They got on their feet and were able to speak for themselves. Before that, believers could prove the existence of God by appealing to a principle of causality. But the scientific conception of causality related a previous situation in the world to a subsequent situation. It is true that any scientific law holds, other things being equal. There's always a ... It's abstract. Every object falls, but the apples on the tree aren't falling yet. They have to have a certain amount of weight. When the apple is sufficiently ripe, and a sufficient wind to shake the boughs, it begins to fall. But they fall unless something impedes them. Aristotle didn't have any abstract law of falling bodies. He held that bodies fall for the most part, if nothing's preventing them from falling, in *maiori parte*, and he had other statements about the lesser part, when for the most part the thing didn't hold. Modern science thinks abstractly, and tends to think universally because it's thinking abstractly. Well, what kind of ... (mumbling)? You have to get on to interiority, what you're doing when you're experiencing and trying to understand and trying to weigh the evidence and arrive at truth and estimate what's worthwhile and what's not. And you have to ask yourself, Well, what's the condition of possibility. Supposing what I observe is intelligible, where does the intelligibility come from? [a bit of mumbling here about pragmatism]. And truth: what does the fact that you have sufficient evidence have to do with the thing being really so? Why bother about that? Is man the first instance in the universe of morality, of the distinction between right and wrong, so that the universe itself is indifferent? Nature ... tooth and claw. That's the morality of nature. That's a hard thing to refute. That's the way the thing works. The condition of the possibility of the universe being intelligible and in accordance with truth and of man not being the first instance of morality but of there being something moral to the universe too, that has – if you're going to hold that, you're going to have to go to a ground of morality and truth and intelligibility. And you get an ? that scientists can't abrogate by saying that causality simply means that if the universe is in situation *A*, and there follows situation *B*, then *A* is the cause of *B*. And note the universe in the situation *A*, because things that could interfere with one thing following another could be anywhere in the universe. A motorcar is traveling at 60 miles an hour, and an atom bomb is falling from a great height at far higher velocity. By mathematical calculations the bomb will hit the car when it comes to the next crossing. Will it? Are you certain? Well, there could be something that would interfere. The car could break down before it gets there. And so on and so forth. You would have to know the situation of the universe to predict with absolute certainty.

So there is a philosophy that takes the form of the existence of God being the condition of the possibility of the universe being intelligible, moral, and ultimately appeal to personal relations.

Question: In chapter 2 of *Method*, it is suggested that a religion promotes self-transcendence will have a redemptive role in human society. It is, to put it crudely, a good thing. Now there have been various philosophical critiques of religion grounded in the judgment that it is false or that it is bad. But Nietzsche, for example, criticizes religion because it is good, that is, because it is comforting or fulfilling. What answer does the theologian who is attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible give to such a critique? Does it represent an epistemological counterposition? A metaphysical counterposition – Nietzsche has hard words for metaphysics (most people have) – ‘God is dead?’ A moral counterposition, or some combination thereof?

Lonergan: Well, the fundamental difference between Nietzsche and a Christian is that Nietzsche was not in love in an unrestricted fashion with anything, except perhaps his *Übermensch*. His disapproval of Christianity was that it was a religion of slaves. Slaves suffered and were humiliated, and Christianity ... the humiliation of Christ Jesus. That sort of religion had a great appeal to a slave. Nietzsche belonged to an upper class, and he wanted the upper class to be still more upper.

Now when I suggest that a religion that promotes self-transcendence is a condition of progress or a good thing – well, I don’t quite say it’s a good thing. In *Insight*, in chapter 7, notions of progress and decline in human affairs are worked out in terms of being intelligent and reasonable and responsible, on the one hand, and being inattentive, unintelligent, unreasonable, and irresponsible, on the other hand. Insofar as the latter prevails, things become an ever bigger and more hopeless mess. That’s the nature of decline. Things are so bad that no matter what you do, they’re not going to get better. And people are so bad that you can’t do anything with them. And insofar as they are attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, that’s the first step. In chapter 18 we ... the notion of moral impotence. Ovid said, I approve what is better, but I do what is worse. That is a very common human experience. Augustine, dealing with the Pelagians – the Pelagians held a series of positions in depth, and one of them was that God by his grace could give good will but we by our virtue could give good performance – Augustine’s answer was that God gives both good will and good performance. At the Last Supper he gave Peter the good will to say to our Lord, ‘Even though all deny you, I will not deny you,’ but he didn’t have good performance later on that afternoon or evening. And later on when he died a martyr, he also was willing to die for our Lord. He had the good performance then. They are two things, good will and good performance, and God by his grace is involved with both. I wrote my dissertation on this sort of thing, operative grace in St Thomas, a subject on which St Thomas changed his mind several times. *Grace and Freedom in Aquinas*, Seabury in New

York, Darton Longman & Todd in London, Patout Burns revising the publication of my dissertation in article form in *Theological Studies* 1941 and 1942. The notes are brought up to date.

So that question of moral impotence, how did it arise? If a man is wise and virtuous, if he has those habits of wisdom and virtue, he won't be suffering from moral impotence. The trouble is that he has to acquire the wisdom and the virtue before he has them. And it's pretty hard to acquire them unless he already is wise and virtuous. That's the root of moral impotence. That's why the fall of man. And so on and so forth. It's in that sense that religion is a good thing. It's a self-transcendence, not that man gives himself. The love of God in an unrestricted fashion – Romans 5.5, God's love has flooded our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given us – is a gift of God; it's a grace. It's not a product of our own excellence. It's the cause of any excellence we may happen to have. That's the sense in which religion is a good thing. And it is a factor in religion that Nietzsche was somewhat overlooking when he thought Christianity was a religion of slaves. It redeemed even slaves, but it redeemed others as well, and it was needed by the others just as much as by the slaves.

Question: We have another set of questions. There are seven subdivisions in the first question [Lonergan had turned to another set of questions, to be found in 29600DTE070, the early questions in the set that is picked up on in 2960ADTE070]. Paul Ricoeur, in *The Conflict of Interpretations*, says that 'consciousness is not the ... first reality which we can know but the last. We must arrive at it, not begin with it.'

Lonergan: Now note: the word 'consciousness' in ordinary usage means the same as knowledge. The same holds for *conscience* in French. They have one and the same word for conscience and consciousness. There are two words in German, *Bewusstsein* and *Gewissen*, *Gewissen* for conscience and *Bewusstsein* for consciousness. *Bewusstsein* doesn't correspond exactly to consciousness, though, because *Bewusst* is 'being known.' *Bewusstsein* is ... Consciousness as self-knowledge is arrived at in chapter 11 in *Insight*. That's the first time there's any talk about consciousness. I sneak people into it, ... They're using their consciousness during the first nine chapters but I don't tell them because that would cause difficulties. Pedagogy is a matter of tactics. You don't explain everything at once, because you can't. And you explain the easier things that are presupposed by other things ... And when you get to chapter 11 ... consciousness ... (very much mumbling). Find out for yourself in yourself ... Now, 'we must arrive at it.' The man, of course, who started with consciousness was Descartes: 'I think,

therefore I am.’ Appealing to the fact of thinking and concluding to existence, his own existence, the indubitable truth. And Descartes is the lodestar of subsequent French philosophy. When they want to say something that’s self-evident, they quote Descartes. Gadamer’s attack on method, *Wahrheit und Methode, Truth and Method*, is against Cartesian method.

And then the second point [in the question]:

Question (resumed): Everything that we can say about consciousness after Freud seems to be included in the formula, ‘Consciousness is not immediate, but mediate; it is not a source, but a task, the task of becoming more conscious’ (pp. 323-24).

Lonergan: So that is Ricoeur, his distinction between two hermeneutics, the hermeneutics of suspicion – and of the hermeneutics of suspicion the masters were Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud; everything that’s wrong with society, Marx; what’s the trouble? It’s the capitalists; and Nietzsche, ... the elevation of man by his own power; and Freud finally, it’s probably true he discovered that there is such a thing as displacement: if you’re dreaming of lions that you’re not afraid of, you’re not dreaming of lions; it’s something else you’re covering up with lions; and you can be suspicious of your consciousness, with Freud. But it’s not only a hermeneutic of suspicion, according to Ricoeur. There’s also a hermeneutic of recovery. How much of it is a cover-up, and how much of it is a good idea, really worthwhile? And Jung ... your dreams are always true; they’re very relevant to you as you are, unless you’re in a very bad state ...

Question (resumed): Third, you speak of the labor of objectifying the contents of consciousness. Why do you not speak of objectifying the processes of consciousness?

Lonergan: Well, we speak of both. We speak of the content of intentional acts and the content of the process from one act to the next. I think ... the idea that trinitarian analysis in Aquinas is the *emanatio intelligibilis*, the causality of ‘because.’ One act follows *because of* another. It really is because of another. You see why. And it’s because you see why that there’s the next step. It’s because you understand that you can set up the system. And that accounts for the setting up of the system. It guides the setting up of the system. It tells you when the system is insufficient, when it’s inadequate. The criterion is in the act of understanding. It’s the set of acts of understanding that the system expresses, aims at expressing. And arriving at that expression is fantastic. Maxwell developed his equations for the electromagnetic field ... and he has diagram after diagram ... and the mathematical

equations ... And he went on and on and on, and finally he started to recognize the equations themselves, and he arrived at the solutions. He had no image to correspond to his solution. There is none. The discovery, the process of discovery, finally concludes it is something like this. And then finding a way to express it ... and once he got the equations ... discovered the electromagnetic waves ... these were differential equations, and the solution of them are functions. Well, you have to be aware of both – a person was writing a dissertation on Rahner and Lonergan, and Rahner asked him, what is *emanatio intelligibilis*? Well, Scholastics haven't known since St Thomas wrote it, because they haven't been paying attention to their own acts of understanding, so that a ... compare two concepts, and you'll find that they can be put together. And finding that concepts fit together is understanding. But the point to Thomas is that you abstract the species and from the species you get the terms and the relations ... you need the Scotist expression to be able to say it that way. That's what the *verbum* articles are about.

So the process is in the successive levels, and then within each level, and the relations are spontaneous on the level of sense, they're intelligent on the level of inquiry, they're rational on the level of reflection and judgment, and they're responsible on the level of deliberation. So content is your awareness of what you're intending in intentional acts; the content of the act you also can use as a datum when you're studying what's going on when you're knowing.

Question (resumed): Ricoeur says in the same article that the first truth, 'I think, I am,' remains as abstract and empty as it is unassailable.

Lonergan: Because we took 10 chapters to get to a chapter 11, we distinguish different levels of conscious operations, and the relations between the levels, and the relations between acts on the levels, and we do it with regard to mathematics and physics and common sense and knowledge of things, and judgment. From that you're able to go to the judgment, I am a knower, and know precisely what's required for an affirmative judgment. We've given plenty of evidence with regard to a set of operations. We've shown in what sense there's a unity of consciousness that is not just an insight. It's given; it's part of the data. And so on and so forth ... what you mean by 'I' and what you mean by 'a knower.' A knower is someone who performs these acts, and the 'I' is the one and the same that both understands and observes, and not only observes and understands and conceives accordingly, but also reflects and weighs the evidence and passes judgment ...

Question (resumed): It must be mediated by representations, actions, works, institutions, and monuments that objectify it; it is in these objects, in the largest sense of the word, that the ego must both lose itself and find itself.

Lonergan: But what is the ego in question? It's the Freudian ego, something in between the id and the superego. It's not the experiencing, understanding, judging, deliberating subject. That is not Freudian psychology. If you experience these things in yourself, you will not accept Freud's presuppositions ...

Question (resumed): The notion of the already-out-there-now real is grounded in the mistaken analogy to ocular vision. Is there a parallel mistaken notion of the in-here-now?

Lonergan: Of course there is ... ridiculed introspective psychology. If by introspection you mean taking a look at what's already in here now, you're doing introspective psychology. Is there a good sense of the word 'introspection'? Yes, using the data of consciousness the way the scientist uses the data of sense. He adverts to them and names them and distinguishes them, and so on: all the different operations ... finds the relations that are already there. It already is a structure. It's a dynamic structure insofar as the elements are operations. And it's formally dynamic insofar – formally because one operation leads into the next. You wonder because you're not understanding yet. If you already understand, you don't wonder ... were a very primitive group of rebels from Russia who migrated to Western Canada. A man was describing a boat trip from Vancouver to Victoria. He said everyone on the ship was totally bored except a couple of ... who were amazed at everything. There were a whole lot of things they'd never seen before or experienced before. Your wonder depends upon ... the less you know, the more you can wonder, the more you can be surprised, and the less recondite are your discoveries.

Question (resumed): Must adequate self-knowledge include objectifying the contents of the unconscious? And if so, how is this to be achieved? Does *Method* implicitly respond to this?

Lonergan: Well, Bob Doran has written a book based upon *Insight* and *Method* and his own experience in Jungian analysis, and Rank's *Beyond Psychology*. Rank was a pupil who worked with Freud for twenty-five years and left posthumously a book *Beyond Psychology*: if you want to be a human being, you get beyond all this psychology. He holds that there is needed – in *Method* I have three conversions: intellectual, moral, and religious – and he wants a fundamental psychic conversion,

which consists in free communication between the psyche, its symbols, its feelings, and the subject, between the source of the symbols and feelings and then the symbols and feelings that emerge in consciousness and the subject in the sense ... (mumbling.) Must everyone have an analysis? ... No. We're all off-base anyway.

Question: The notion of authenticity recurs frequently in the chapter on the human good but it seems operationally rather than explicitly defined.

Lonergan: Well, an operational definition is ... the kind we use in *Method*. Verbal, nominal definitions give you the way the words are used appropriately. Linguistic analysis will explain that to you at great length! What counts – the significance to verbal definitions is insofar as they express a system. And the weakness of Euclid is that they do not exclude the images. The weakness in Euclid is that he presupposes something that you gather from the image that doesn't follow from his definitions, axioms, postulates, theorems ...

Question: Authenticity is used in various contexts. It seems to vary from context to context. Could you clarify what in general is meant by the term? Could you provide a brief overview of the concept of authenticity?

Lonergan: Well, I remember I was lecturing once at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, to ... students of religion ... What are the criteria? That's a constantly recurring question ... That is what is meant by self-appropriation, discovering within yourself – if you're given an answer, and you come up with a further question, where does the further question come from? It comes from the criteria in you. You're not satisfied. If you want an explanation and it doesn't explain to you, you'll have further questions. Your own intelligence is the measure whether or not the explanation is satisfactory. Your own rationality is the criterion ... whether or not the evidence is sufficient. Your own responsibility is what gives you a good conscience or a bad conscience when you make a decision or do something. The criteria are in there and operative, and you're authentic insofar as those criteria win. And you're unauthentic insofar as they lose. And that is what is meant by *Existenz*. Heidegger got tired of writing 'Existenz,' and he started writing 'Ek-sistenz,' 'standing out,' 'ek-sistere.' The Latin is 'exsistere.' You exist as a human person insofar as those criteria are operative in you. And you may think that attending is something very simple, yes, but try scientific observation and you discover that you have an awful lot to learn. My brother was studying engineering, and he said to me, You think you can draw a straight line, but when you get to a drawing board you discover that you have a lot of things to learn. Attention is all that you can learn about drawing a straight line and other things, and in general, in

any technique; and understanding, and so on. The criteria are in you, and to become familiar with yourself as possessor of those criteria is the first step in learning to think for yourself and not make a mess of it ... (mumbling.)

Question: In *Insight* you explicate what you call the law of genuineness. ‘The requirement of genuineness is the necessity of avoiding conflict between the conscious and unconscious components of development.’

Lonergan: It’s the Jungian remark, p. 33, saying as much: ‘To take cognizance of one’s feelings makes it possible for one to know oneself, to uncover the inattention, obtuseness, silliness, irresponsibility that gave rise to the feeling one does not want and to correct the aberrant attitude. On the other hand, not to take cognizance of them is to leave them in the twilight of what is conscious but not objectified.’ It’s the Jungian shadow, the real you that you don’t know about, that you don’t advert to. It has its little say on everything without your being aware of it. The conflict between the self as it is and as it is objectified, as it is known explicitly. It’s the cover story, and the cover-up. And how is this acquired, and so on? Well, you have to get hold of your dynatypes and your cognitypes. This is Progoff. The dynatypes: the hummingbird building a nest has a dynatype. And we have our dynatypes. And besides the dynatypes, there are the cognitypes, the images that release the dynatype (end).