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5 Religious Development Dialectical

Religious development is not simply the unfolding in all its consequences of a dynamic state of being in love in an unrestricted manner. For that love is the utmost in self-transcendence, and man's self-transcendence is ever precarious. Of itself, self-transcendence involves tension between the self as transcending and the self as transcended. So human authenticity is never some pure and serene and secure possession. It is ever a withdrawal from unauthenticity, and every successful withdrawal only brings to light the need for still further withdrawals. Our advance in understanding is also the elimination of oversights and misunderstandings. Our advance in truth is also the correction of mistakes and errors. Our moral development is through repentance for our sins. Genuine religion is discovered and realized by redemption from the many traps of religious aberration. So we are bid to watch and pray, to make our way in fear and trembling. And it is the greatest saints that proclaim themselves the greatest sinners, though their sins seem slight indeed to less holy folk that lack their discernment and their love.

This dialectical character of religious development implies that the seven common areas or features listed above will be matched in the history of religions by their opposites. Being in love, we said, is being in love with someone. It has a personal dimension. But this can be overlooked in a school of prayer and asceticism that stresses the orientation of religious

¹ The second part of the lecture of the fifth day on what was then conceived as chapter 5 of *Method in Theology*, 'Religion.' The first part of the discussion period of the same day is included with the lecture on audio recording 52400A0E060, but the full discussion period can be found on audio recording 542R0A0E060.

experience to transcendent mystery. The transcendent is nothing in this world. Mystery is the unknown. Without a transcendental notion of being as the to-be-known, transcendent mystery can come to be named nothing at all.

Again, at a far earlier stage, transcendence can be overemphasized and immanence overlooked. Then God becomes remote, irrelevant, almost forgotten. Fr Goetz in the series Faith and Fact, in a book on *Prehistoric and Primitive Religions*, has a section on the distant God (pp. 82-91). Inversely, immanence can be over-emphasized and transcendence overlooked. Then the loss of reference to the transcendent will rob symbol, ritual, recital of their proper meaning to leave them merely idol and magic and myth. Then too the divine may be identified with life as universal process, of which the individual and the group are part and in which they participate. Fr Goetz again, on pp. 117-26 on cosmo-vitalism.

I have conceived being in love with God as an ultimate fulfilment of man's capacity for self-transcendence; and this view of religion is sustained when God is conceived as the supreme fulfilment of the transcendental notions, as supreme intelligence, truth, reality, righteousness, goodness. Inversely, when the love of God is not strictly associated with self-transcendence, then easily indeed it is reinforced by the erotic, the sexual, the orgiastic. On the other hand, the love of God also is penetrated with awe. God's thoughts and God's ways are very different from man's, and by that difference God is terrifying. Unless religion is totally directed to what is good, to genuine love of one's neighbor and to a self-denial that is subordinated to a fuller goodness in oneself, then the cult of a God that is terrifying can slip over into the demonic, into an exultant destructiveness of oneself and of others.

Such, then, is what is meant by saying that religious development is dialectical. It is not a struggle between any opposites whatever but the very precise opposition between authenticity and unauthenticity, between the self as transcending and the self as transcended. It is not just an opposition between contrary propositions but an opposition within the human reality of individuals and of groups. It is not to be defined simply by some a priori construction of categories but to be discovered a posteriori by a discerning study of history. It is not confined to the oppositions we have sketched but down the ages it ranges through the endless variety of institutional, cultural, personal, and religious development, decline, and recovery. To it we return when we come to treat the functional specialty, dialectic.

6 The Word

By the word is meant any expression of religious meaning or of religious value. Its carrier may be intersubjectivity, or art, or symbol, or language, or the remembered and portrayed lives or deeds or achievements of individuals, classes, and groups. Normally all modes of expression are employed but, since language is the vehicle in which meaning becomes most fully articulated, the spoken and written word are of special importance in the development and the clarification of religion.

By its word, religion enters the world mediated by meaning. It endows that world with ultimate meaning and value. It sets itself in a context of other meanings and other values. Within that context it comes to understand itself, to relate itself to the object of ultimate concern, to draw on the power of ultimate concern to pursue the objectives of proximate concern all the more fairly and all the more efficaciously.

Before it enters the world mediated by meaning, religion is the prior word God speaks to us by flooding our hearts with his love. That prior word pertains not to the world mediated by meaning, but to the world of immediacy, to the unmediated experience of the mystery of love and awe. The outwardly spoken word is historically conditioned: its meaning depends upon the human context in which it is uttered, and such contexts vary from place to place and from one generation to another. But the prior word in its immediacy, though it differs in intensity, though it resonates differently in different temperaments and in different stages of religious development, withdraws man from the diversity of history by moving out of the world mediated by meaning and towards a world of immediacy in which image and symbol, thought and word, can lose their relevance and even disappear.

One must not conclude that the outward word is something incidental. For it has a constitutive role. When a man and a woman love each other but do not avow their love, they are not yet fully in love. Their very silence means that their love has not reached the point of self-surrender and self-donation. It is the love that each freely and fully reveals to the other that brings about the radically new situation of being in love and that begins the unfolding of its life-long implications. What holds for the love of a man and a woman, also holds in its own way for the love of God and man. Ordinarily the experience of the mystery of love and awe is not objectified. It remains within subjectivity as a vector, an undertow, a fateful call to a dreaded holiness. Perhaps after years of sustained prayerfulness and self-denial, immersion in the world mediated by meaning will become less total, and experience of the mystery become clear and distinct enough to awaken attention, wonder, inquiry. Even then in the individual case there are not certain answers. All one can do is let be what is, let happen what in

any case keeps recurring. But then, as much as ever, one needs the word – the word of tradition that has accumulated religious wisdom, the word of fellowship that unites those that share the gift of God’s love, the word of the gospel that announces that God has loved us first and, in the fullness of time, has revealed that love in Christ crucified, dead, and risen.

The word, then, is personal. *Cor ad cor loquitur*: love speaks to love, and its speech is powerful. The religious leader, the prophet, the Christ, the apostle, the priest, the preacher announces in signs and symbols what is congruent with the gift of love that God works within us. The word, too, is social: it brings into a single fold the scattered sheep that belong together because at the depth of their hearts they respond to the same mystery of love and awe. The word, finally, is historical. It is meaning outwardly expressed. It has to find its place in the context of other, non-religious meanings. It has to borrow and adapt a language that more easily speaks of this world than of transcendence. But such languages and contexts vary with time and place to give words changing meanings and statements changing implications.

It follows that religious expression will move through the stages of meaning and speak in its different realms. When the realms of common sense, of theory, of interiority, and of transcendence are distinguished and related, one easily understands the diversity of religious utterance. For its source and core is in the experience of the mystery of love and awe, and that pertains to the realm of transcendence. Its foundations, its basic terms and relationships, its method are derived from the realm of interiority. Its technical unfolding is in the realm of theory. Its preaching and teaching are in the realm of common sense.

Once these realms are distinguished and their relations are understood, it is easy enough to understand the broad lines of earlier stages and diverse developments. Eastern religions stressed religious experience. Semitic religions stressed prophetic monotheism. Western religion cultivated the realm of transcendence through its churches and liturgies, its celibate clergy, its religious orders, congregations, confraternities. It moved into the realm of theory by its dogmas, its theology, its juridical structures and enactments. It has to construct the common basis of theory and of common sense in interiority and use that basis to link the experience of the transcendent with the world mediated by meaning.

But if hindsight is easy, foresight is difficult indeed. When expression is confined to the realm of common sense, it can succeed only by drawing upon the power of symbols and figures to suggest or evoke what cannot adequately be said. When the realm of theory becomes explicit, religion may take advantage of it to bring about a clearer and firmer delineation of itself, its objects, and its aims. But insofar as intellectual conversion is lacking, there arise controversies. Even where that conversion obtains, there emerge the strange contrast and tension between the old commonsense apprehension instinct with feeling and the new theoretical apprehension devoid of feeling and bristling with definitions and theorems. So the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is set against the God of the philosophers and theologians. Honoring the Trinity and feeling compunction are set against learned discourse on the Trinity and against defining compunction. Nor can this contrast be understood or the tension removed within the realms of common sense and theory. One must go behind them to the realm of interiority. For only through the realm of interiority can differentiated

consciousness understand itself and so explain the nature and the complementary purposes of different patterns of cognitional activity.

7 Faith

Faith is the knowledge born of religious love. First, then, there is a knowledge born of love. Of it Pascal spoke when he remarked that the heart has reasons which reason does not know. Here by reason I would understand the compound of the activities on the first three levels of cognitional activity, namely, of experiencing, of understanding, and of judging. By the heart's reasons I would understand feelings that are intentional responses to values; and I would recall the two aspects of such responses, the absolute aspect that is a recognition of value, and the relative aspect that is a preference of one value over another. Finally, by the heart I understand the subject on the fourth, existential level of intentional consciousness and in the dynamic state of being in love. The meaning, then, of Pascal's remark would be that, besides the factual knowledge reached by experiencing, understanding, and verifying, there is another kind of knowledge reached through the discernment of value and the judgments of value of a person in love.

Faith, accordingly, is such further knowledge when the love is God's love flooding our hearts. To our apprehension of vital, social, cultural, and personal values, there is added an apprehension of transcendent value. This apprehension consists in the experienced fulfilment of our unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence, in our actuated orientation towards the mystery of love and awe. Since that thrust is of intelligence to the intelligible, of reasonableness to the true and the real, of freedom and responsibility to the

truly good, the experienced fulfilment of that thrust in its unrestrictedness may be objectified as a clouded revelation of absolute intelligence and intelligibility, absolute truth and reality, absolute goodness and holiness. With that objectification there recurs the question of God in a new form. For now it is primarily a question of decision. Will I love him in return, or will I refuse? Will I live out the gift of his love, or will I hold back, turn away, withdraw? Only secondarily do there arise the questions of God's existence and nature, and they are the questions either of the lover seeking to know him or of the unbeliever seeking to escape him. Such is the basic option of the existential subject once called by God.

As other apprehensions of value, so too faith has a relative as well as an absolute aspect. It places all other values in the light and the shadow of transcendent value. In the shadow, for transcendent value is supreme and incomparable. In the light, for transcendent value links itself to all other values to transform, magnify, glorify them. Without faith the originating value is man and the terminal value is the human good he brings about. But in the light of faith, originating value is divine light and love, while terminal value is the whole universe. So the human good is taken up in an all-encompassing good. Where before an account of the human good related men to another and to nature, now human concern reaches beyond man's world to God and to God's world. Men meet not only to be together and to settle human affairs but also to worship. Human development is not only in skills and virtues but also in holiness. The power of God's love brings forth a new energy and efficacy in all goodness, and the limit of human expectation ceases to be the grave.

To conceive God as originating value and the world as terminal value implies that God too is self-transcending and that the world is the fruit of his

self-transcendence, the expression and manifestation of his benevolence and beneficence, his glory. As the excellence of the son is the glory of his father, so too the excellence of mankind is the glory of God. To say that God created the world for his glory is to say that he created it not for his sake but for ours. St Thomas, *Summa theologiae*, 2-2, q. 138, a. 1, ad 1m. ‘Deus vult gloriam suam non propter se sed propter nos’ because we are his glory. He made us in his image, for our authenticity consists in being like him, in self-transcending, in being origins of values, in true love.

Without faith, without the eye of love, the world is too evil for God to be good, for a good God to exist. But faith recognizes that God grants men their freedom, that he wills them to be persons and not just his automata, that he calls them to the higher authenticity that overcomes evil with good. So faith is linked with human progress and it has to meet the challenge of human decline. For faith and progress have a common root in man’s cognitional and real self-transcendence. To promote either is to promote the other indirectly. Faith places human efforts in a friendly universe; it reveals an ultimate significance in human achievement; it strengthens new undertakings with confidence. Inversely, progress realizes the potentialities of man and of nature; it reveals that man exists to bring about an ever fuller achievement in this world; and that achievement because it is man’s good also is God’s glory. Most of all, faith has the power of undoing decline. Decline disrupts a culture with conflicting ideologies. It inflicts on individuals the social, economic, and psychological pressures that for human frailty amount to determinism. It multiplies and heaps up the abuses and absurdities that breed resentment, hatred, anger, violence. It is not propaganda and it is not argument but religious faith that will liberate human reasonableness from its ideological prisons. It is not the promises of men

but religious hope that can enable men to resist the vast pressures of social decay. If passions are to quieten down, if wrongs are to be not exacerbated, not ignored, not merely palliated, but acknowledged and removed, then human possessiveness and human pride have to be replaced by religious charity, by the charity of the suffering servant, by self-sacrificing love. Men are sinners. If human progress is not to be ever distorted and destroyed by the inattention, oversights, irrationality, irresponsibility of decline, men have to be reminded of their sinfulness. They have to acknowledge their real guilt and amend their ways. They have to learn with humility that religious development is dialectical, that the task of repentance and conversion is life-long.

8 Religious Belief

Among the values that faith discerns is the value of believing the word of religion, of accepting the judgments of fact and the judgments of value that the religion proposes. Such belief and acceptance have the same structure as other belief, already described in chapter 3. But now the structure rests on a different basis, and that basis is faith. For however personal and intimate is religious experience, love, faith, still it is not solitary. The same gift can be given to many, and the many can recognize in one another a common orientation in their living and feeling, in their criteria and their goals. From a common communion with God, there springs a religious community.

Community invites expression, and the expression may vary. It may be imperative, commanding the love of God above all things and the love of one's neighbor as of oneself. It may be narrative, the story of the community's origins and development. It may be ascetic and mystical,

teaching the way to total otherworldly love and warning against the pitfalls on the journey. It may be theoretical, teaching the wisdom, the goodness, the power of God, and manifesting his intentions and his purposes. It may be a compound of all four or of any two or three of these. The compound may fuse the components into a single balanced synthesis, or it may take some one as basic and use it to interpret and manifest the others. It may remain unchanged for ages, and it may periodically develop and adapt to different social and cultural conditions.

Communities endure. As new members replace old, expression becomes traditional. The religion becomes historical in the general sense that it exists over time and that it provides basic components in the ongoing process of personal development, social organization, cultural meaning and value.

But there is a further and far deeper sense in which a religion may be named historical. The dynamic state of being in love has the character of a response. It is an answer to a divine initiative. The divine initiative is not just creation. It is not just God's gift of his love. There is a personal entrance of God himself into history, a communication of God to his people, the advent of God's word into the world of religious expression. Such was the religion of Israel. Such has been Christianity. Then not only the inner word that is God's gift of his love but also the outer word of the religious tradition comes from God. God's gift of his love is matched by his command to love unrestrictedly, with all one's heart and all one's soul and all one's mind and all one's strength. The narrative of religious origins is the narrative of God's encounter with his people. Religious effort towards authenticity through prayer and penance and religious love of all men shown in good deeds become an apostolate, for '... you will recognize them by

their fruits.’ Finally, the word of religious expression is not just the objectification of the gift of God’s love; in a privileged area it also is specific meaning, the word of God himself.

So we come to questions that are not methodological but theological, questions concerning revelation and inspiration, scripture and tradition, development and authority, schisms and heresies. To the theologians we must leave them, though something will be said on the method of resolving them in our later chapters on Dialectic and on Foundations.

We may note, however, that by distinguishing faith and belief we have secured a basis both for ecumenical encounter and for an encounter between all religions with a basis in religious experience. For in the measure that experience is genuine, it is orientated to the mystery of love and awe; it has the power of unrestricted love to reveal and uphold all that is truly good; it remains the bond that unites the religious community, that directs their common judgments, that purifies their beliefs. Beliefs do differ, and the difference is important; but behind this difference there is a deeper unity. For beliefs result from judgments of value, and the judgments of value relevant for religious belief come from faith, the eye of religious love, an eye that can discern God’s self-disclosures.

9 A Technical Note

Where we distinguish four realms of meaning, namely, common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence, an older theology distinguished only two, common sense and theory, under the Aristotelian designation of the *priora quoad nos* and *priora quoad se*. Hence, the older theology, when it spoke of inner experience or of God, either did so within the realm of

common sense – and then its speech was shot through with figure and symbol – or else it did so in the realm of theory, and then its speech was basically metaphysical. One consequence of this difference has already been noted. The older theology conceived sanctifying grace as an entitative habit, absolutely supernatural, infused into the essence of the soul. On the other hand, because we acknowledge interiority as a distinct realm of meaning, we can begin with a description of religious experience, acknowledge a dynamic state of being in love without restrictions, and later identifying this state with the state of sanctifying grace.

But there are other consequences. Because its account of interiority was basically metaphysical, the older theology distinguished sensitive and intellectual, apprehensive and appetitive potencies. There followed complex questions on their mutual interactions. There were disputes about the priority of intellect over will or of will over intellect, of speculative over practical intellect or of practical over speculative. In contrast, we describe interiority in terms of intentional and conscious acts on the four levels of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. The lower levels are presupposed and complemented by the higher. The higher sublate the lower; they go beyond them, they preserve them, they add to their range and significance, and they set up a new principle. If one wishes to transpose this analysis into metaphysical terms, then the active potencies are the transcendental notions revealed in questions for intelligence, questions for reflection, questions for deliberation. The passive potencies are the lower levels as presupposed and complemented by the higher. While these relationships are fixed, still they do not settle questions of initiative or precedence. Significant change on any level calls for adjustment on other

levels, and the order in which the adjustments take place depends mostly on the readiness with which they can be effected.

The fourth level, which presupposes, complements, and sublates the other three, is the level of freedom and responsibility, of real self-transcendence and in that sense of existence, of self-direction and self-control. Its failure to function properly is the uneasy or bad conscience. Its success is marked by the satisfying feeling that one's duty has been done.

As the fourth level is the principle of self-control, it is responsible for proper functioning on the first three levels. It fulfils its responsibility or fails to do so in the measure that we are attentive or inattentive in experiencing, that we are intelligent or unintelligent in our investigations, that we are reasonable or unreasonable in our judgments. Therewith vanish two notions: the notion of pure intellect or pure reason that operates on its own without guidance or control from responsible decision; and the notion of will as an arbitrary power indifferently choosing between good and evil.

In fact, the emergence of the fourth level of deliberation, evaluation, choice is a slow process that occurs between the ages of three and six. Then the child's earlier affective symbiosis with the mother is complemented by relations with the father who recognizes in the child a potential person, tells him or her what he or she may and may not do, sets before him or her a model of human conduct, and promises to good behavior the later rewards of the self-determining adult. So the child gradually enters the world mediated by meaning and regulated by values and, by the age of seven years, is thought to have attained the use of reason. This is Antoine Vergote's transformation of the Oedipus complex. You will find it in his *Psychologie religieuse*, Bruxelles: Dessart, 1966, pp. 192 ff. Still, this is only the beginning of human authenticity. One has to have passed well beyond the

turmoil of puberty before becoming fully responsible in the eyes of the law. One has to have found out for oneself that one has to decide for oneself what one is to make of oneself; one has to have proved oneself equal to that moment of existential decision; and one has to have kept on proving it in all subsequent decisions, if one is to be an authentic human person. It is this highly complex business of authenticity and unauthenticity that has to replace the overtly simple notion of will as arbitrary power. Arbitrariness is just another name for unauthenticity. To think of will as arbitrary power is to assume that authenticity never exists or occurs.

Again, what gives plausibility to the notion of pure intellect or pure reason is the fact that cognitional self-transcendence is much easier than real self-transcendence. But this does not mean that cognitional self-transcendence is easy. Primitive peoples live under a regime of myth and magic. Only slowly and reluctantly do the young master grammar, logic, method. Only through deliberate decision do people dedicate themselves to lives of scholarship or science, and only through the continuous renewal of that dedication do they achieve the goals they have set themselves. A life of pure intellect or pure reason without the control of deliberation, evaluation, responsible choice is something less than the life of a psychopath.

Let us now turn to a further aspect of the matter. It used to be said, *Nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*, Knowledge precedes love. The truth of this tag is the fact that ordinarily operations on the fourth level of intentional consciousness presuppose and complement corresponding operations on the other three. There is a minor exception to this rule inasmuch as people do fall in love, and that falling in love is something disproportionate to its causes, conditions, occasions, antecedents. For falling in love is a new beginning, an exercise of vertical liberty in which one's world undergoes a

new organization. But the major exception to the Latin tag is God's gift of his love flooding our hearts. Then we are in the dynamic state of being in love. But who it is we love is neither given nor as yet understood. Our capacity for real self-transcendence has found a fulfilment that brings deep joy and profound peace. Our love reveals to us values we had not appreciated, values of prayer and worship, or repentance and belief. But if we would know what is going on within us, if we would learn to integrate it with the rest of our living, we have to inquire, investigate, seek counsel. So it is that in religious matters love precedes knowledge and, as that love is God's gift, the very beginning of faith is due to God's grace.

On this showing, not only is the ancient problem of the salvation of non-Christians greatly reduced, but also the true nature of Christian apologetic is clarified. The apologist's task is neither to produce in others nor to justify for them God's gift of his love. Only God can give that gift, and the gift itself is self-justifying. The person that is in love doesn't try to explain it or account for it; he just acts. The apologist's task is to aid others in integrating God's gift with the rest of their living. Any significant event on any level of consciousness calls for adjustments elsewhere. Religious conversion is an extremely significant event and the adjustments it calls for may be both large and numerous. For some, one consults friends. For others, one seeks a spiritual director. For commonly needed information, interpretation, the formulation of new and the dropping of mistaken judgments of fact and of value, one reads the apologists. They cannot be efficacious, for they do not bestow God's grace. They must be accurate, illuminating, cogent. Otherwise they offer a stone to one asking for bread, and a serpent to one asking for fish. In other words, the apologist's task is fundamentally an intellectual task. It presupposes that God gives grace to the

person. It doesn't intent to produce it. It presupposes that orientation exists. Similarly, it is within this context that one is to understand the question of the proofs of God's existence. The person in love with God is in love, but they don't know with whom. The question, Is there a God? is a fundamental question following on religious experience, and what you're trying to do in your so-called natural theology is to find an answer to that, to conceive and affirm what it is that you are in love with. In other words, the subject-to-subject relation that results from the gift of God's love – it is a relation to God as mystery, as unknown. That relationship becomes a relationship to the subject as object insofar as we conceive and affirm, perform acts of will with respect to God. There is the subject-to-subject relationship between human beings: intersubjectivity. We objectify it when we talk about 'we.' As soon as you say 'we,' you have objectified this subject-to-subject relationship, and you have the subjects as objects. Similarly, the subject-to-subject relationships of religious experience is objectified by inquiry and acts of will and so on. That will have to be the end of this because that's as far as this chapter has gotten.

Question period 5

The first question has to do with religion. You put a great stress on religion in the strict sense of the word as a relation between the person and God. Several phrases came up in our discussion: the problem of the apparent contemporary experience of the difficulty among young people of a direct religious experience, since it seems to be more of a stress on mediated religious experience and the love of neighbor, the whole question of religious secularity, and related to that, transcendence and immanence,

which you mentioned at a recurring problem in the history of religion – you stressed in the history of Western religion – and we have had a very strong stress on transcendence, where you gave the example of dogma, canon law, and you mentioned specifically the celibacy question, which I think is a very practical dimension to it in terms of the secular priesthood in our city. Could you talk a bit more about that area as opened up by those phrases?

Celibacy is a witness to the transcendent; isn't it fairly obvious?

But there is the difficulty with young people who seem to be less open to a direct experience of transcendence.

Yes. People can have a direct experience of transcendence without knowing they have it. Theology has been plagued for centuries with the opinion that sanctifying grace and the supernatural is something that lies totally outside experience. And the ground for saying that is that introspective psychology is something extremely difficult. It is very easy to identify such an experience as seeing, because you can open and close your eyes. But you can have people who are faithful to their vocation and still say that they have nothing at all of religious experience in their lives. It is just that they don't know anything about it; they don't know what you are talking about, and they wouldn't know how to go about identifying what religious experience they have. To get them to understand what it is you have to have them look back over their lives in a very broad way. Why have you been doing this? Why have you been carrying on? And they will gradually perhaps come to discern God's grace as a fundamental influence in their lives. But it isn't something easy. When people start getting prayer or quiet they get incredibly disturbed. They think that it is all wrong. But it is the same experience in a more intense form that they've been having all along without

being able to advert to it. Contemporaries who get into more advanced form of prayer want to go to psychiatrists. But think of it in terms of peace and joy, fundamental peace and joy. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, and so on (Galatians 5.22). Paul wasn't talking about something that those Galatians did not know about; and he wasn't talking about something that we don't know about. We have our faults; we commit sins; but we also repent. Why? Because of God's grace.

What do you make of the secularization movement?

The fundamental problem, I think, is the fact that religious development is dialectical. People single out the defects in religious people and in religious organizations and call that religion. The defect is always the more obvious thing. In a secular society it is the defects alone that are noted because the good points are not thought to be good; and they are not good from secularist viewpoint. Then again, there has been in the churches a tendency to make the church an end in itself; that was corrected in Vatican II. The man who taught me *De ecclesia* identified the Kingdom of God with the Church. That was corrected in Vatican II. People like Karl Barth ruled out religion; Christianity has nothing to do with religion; there is a similar strain in Bonhoeffer. What they meant is a matter of very difficult and complex exegesis. But these things become slogans and get repeated, and so on. People are dissatisfied with inadequacies; people are dissatisfied with talk that does not get across. All that is true. This is worse in some countries than in others. The first man I directed in a doctoral thesis at the Greg was a Frenchman. I said to him that you don't expound a thesis in dogmatic theology when you preach a sermon. But he said: in France you do. Or you hear about it. There are difficulties in certain countries that are unknown to

us, and reactions to those difficulties. And there's the danger of them being transported. Certain movements that were good in France in the 1930s were brought to the French Canada. In France they were first-class things, meeting the needs of the country. I did my tertianship in France, and people came in from these movements and talked to us, people who had organized the communion classes and taught the children catechism and so on. We asked them, What good does it do? And they said, They know their religion the way the Greeks and Romans knew their mythology. They were dealing with very special problems in France. They brought these movements to Quebec and liquidated the Ladies of St. Anne, St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, all sorts of things that were going concerns and meeting the problems in Quebec. All these things were old hat and had to be dropped so they could bring in the things from France. Well, if you identify things of this sort as religion, people get browned off.

What I identify religion with is God's gift of his love, and when you do it that way you have something you don't have to defend really. You have people who ask, What is religious experience? But you wouldn't be here if you didn't have it in some form. It can be a concealed vector, a component, an undertow in your life; but it is there. Otherwise, you would find something better to do than to listen to a talk about theology. To identify it psychologically is not easy. However, it is not important either: by their fruits you shall know them.

What about the term 'secularization'? In some representatives there is room for religious experience, and in others there isn't.

It isn't a clearly used term. 'Secularization' can mean that the Church is no longer the central organizing power in Christendom, insofar as you have

expropriation going on for centuries, and that it no longer is accumulating endless property. It can mean specialization. In a small European country I visited, the big politician in the country was a priest. I asked about this, and they said the only educated people are the priests. There's something entirely different when you have a highly educated laity. The role of the priest changes; things like psychiatry, counseling, all these things come in and do things the priest alone used to do, insofar as they were done. All that specialization, consequently, narrows down the role of the religious man. Then with regard to the priesthood, if you want a definition of how the priest differs from the rest of the people you will end up with the priest as much like a sacristan; and there is a danger in that approach. Since antiquity, the Temple States, the priests have been the principal molders of the culture, and they still have that function of putting the religious dimension in the culture in one way or another. Revelation is God's entry into the world mediated by meaning.

Secularization, on the other hand, can be where you have people like Altizer talking about the death of God; you can know something about Christ but nothing about God. Most of the philosophies make it impossible to talk about God. It's a figurative expression for a very real state of affairs. You can lump all these things under the name of secularization. Colin Williams has a very powerful statement on this in a little book on secularization and theology. It's not altogether good, but it's a very illuminating little book on secularization theology.

I would sum up the next question in terms of the discontinuity of the religious horizon, that transition. It comes up in various parts of what you

said. You take about the prior word and the flooding of our hearts. It seems it hasn't got a content. Has that got a content?

Yes. It has a content, but it hasn't got an object; this is Rahner's way of putting it. This is how he puts it in *The Dynamic Element in the Church*. Here he discusses this consolation without any cause that Ignatius talks about as the discernment of spirits; and he says that 'without a cause' means without an object. Insofar as it is unrestricted it is out of this world; it is otherworldly; there are no conditions or qualifications to that love, and it is with all one's heart and soul and mind and strength. Because it is conscious without being known, it is mystery; you can call its object mystery. Because it is love it is fascinating; because it is unrestricted it is *tremendum*; it is awe as well as love. Now, is that continuous? It is continuous with our capacity for self-transcendence; it is the fulfilment of our capacity for self-transcendence; it is something ultimate in self-transcendence, in the line of self-transcendence. And because it is a fulfilment of a capacity it is a source of joy and peace. It is a joy and peace that are quite different from any other.

The subject-to-subject also has a subject-to-object: I am not Thou.

Yes. But that is on the objective side. In other words, you know the person otherwise. In this way, to connect the subject-to-subject relationship with the relationship you have to God through knowledge of him through some kind of proof of his existence and through God as worship – those identifications are not easy. That is why I mention that people who start off with lower forms of mystical prayer do not succeed in identifying the experience, or are not sure about it. They're all right when they are praying; it is when they stop and think that they wonder what on earth is going on.

The identification is not easy, and that is the importance of the religious tradition.

How does this relate to the possibility of natural knowledge of God?

I have an article on natural knowledge of God in last year's Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America. There I show, based on a man that did a thesis under me on Vatican I, the *Dei Filius* session, that the meaning of Vatican I is not that man, fallen man, can prove the existence of God. *Ab homine lapsa* was in the original decree and was removed from it. It was not that you can prove the existence of God if you live outside some religious tradition. That statement was in the original decree but was removed – in other words, the difference between strict traditionalism and moderate traditionalism. In other words, what is stated simply and what alone is meant by Vatican I is the possibility of a proof that is not an entitatively supernatural act. In other words, there is a valid proof, and apprehending that proof in itself is not supernatural *quoad substantiam*. I state quite openly that it is people with grace that can carry out the proof. The proof I offer in *Insight* means that all obscurantism is eliminated. You have to be willing to put the questions right to the end; that is where people cut you off. To be willing to eliminate all obscurantism is most easily understood if a person is already in the state of grace. As for St Thomas on that point, a thesis I directed shows that there are different ways Thomas talks about whether the intellect is darkened by original sin, the different ways the intellect is darkened. It is a dynamic of events. It's not that there is something done to the intellect but the conditions of actuality are such that it doesn't work out unless people have grace. So natural theology is possible. You can prove the existence of God. When you make that statement, what

you mean is that there is a valid argument and apprehending that valid argument is not apprehending any object that is beyond man's natural capacity. But actually to carry out the proof and to accept it is another matter, because the key point is the elimination of all obscurantism, the readiness to ask all questions, the refusal to brush questions aside arbitrarily.

A question about the mysterium of God and the notion of God as understanding.

An act of unrestricted understanding is something we don't understand, and that is mystery in the sense of something that surpasses our understanding. Mystery in the present sense is something of which you're conscious but don't know and something that relates you out of this world. Now, to identify them – it isn't certain; you don't tell mystics, 'You're all right.' You tell them, 'Well, if you're charitable and do all things right and properly and so on, and you can't help this, well, it's OK.'

The relation between the elimination of obscurantism and Blondel.

I don't know enough about Blondel to discuss that, but this whole setup is action, method; it's talking about doing things. The question is, What are you doing when you're doing theology? It's entirely in terms of action, ultimately the fourth level, so it's in the wake of Blondel.

With regard to that question of proving the existence of God, do you mean that persons who approach the question of God are either doing it as persons who are in love seeking to understand that of which they are conscious, or they are unbelievers seeking to escape.

That's supposing a person has been given the grace and turns away from it. He's been given it. Either he accepts it or turns away from it. If he accepts it,

then he wants to know. If he doesn't accept it, he provides a market for people who tell him not to worry about it.

On the possibility of natural theology. There's the refusal arbitrarily to brush aside questions, but there's also that what we want to know is not beyond our capacity. (Question not clear.)

Yes, it's not nothing.

My problem is that what I don't know is nonetheless within my horizon.

Do you mean that natural theology ends up with 'We can't handle this?'

It's beyond my capacity to know, the identification of the term of my drive or thrust with -- . (Question not clear.)

When you go on from natural theology to faith as explicit, we've had in the past the idea that you deduce the whole thing, you start from the miracles and prove the whole business. That deductivist setup is quite out. This is not a deductivist approach. It's an approach through a method. Deductivism is within logic; this includes fundamental elements that are non-logical. A deductivist will try to get everything in a logical approach. Now, what happens is that you talk of theoretical possibility – Let us suppose someone who does refuse arbitrarily to brush questions aside comes to know God as creator, ground of the universe, end of the universe, and asks the question, Is God good? He has a further question there. I did it in *Insight* in terms of an ontology of the good in terms of intelligibility. But doing that is one thing, and saying the author of this universe is good, as an existential statement, is quite another thing. It's when people are able to recognize the goodness of the world through grace that you move on to the fourth level. When you do, you're not eliminating any of the properties that you established in your

natural theology, you're completing them, carrying them further through your religious beliefs. But that whole process is a hypothetical process. I'd say it starts in a subject-to-subject relationship, and you're interested in the question of God because of this subject-to-subject relationship, and you're approaching it through the object.

With regard to people having religious experience but not knowing what it is

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Because the experience is consciousness, and knowledge is a series of other things as well.

In light of that I wish you'd expand on something you said this morning, when you said that to explain to them what's going on is not important or important only in certain situations. Also you said that some distinctions help apologetics.

I think you have — two people will have grace, or two people having initial graces. I don't think other people are going to be interested. The one convert I received into the Church was a man who came to me and was enthusiastic about Gilson and Maritain — he'd read himself into the Church. I didn't have to teach him anything about the Catholic religion. I had to hold him back in some of his ideas on Christian morality. God's grace was doing this. That's why he was interested in reading these books. The fundamental function of the apologist is that there are personal questions — religious event occurs, and it calls for adjustments. You need help how to handle this. There are questions that you'll put to friends. There are questions you'll put to a spiritual director or a confessor. They're general questions in the way of information, correcting previous questions of fact and value, and making

more correct ones, and so on. To help out with those judgments and the understanding needed for those judgments is the function of the apologist.

A person can have religious experience and still have certain theoretical obstacles –

Here we have the Paulist Center. They give courses of instruction on the Catholic Church. That is apologetics. There are people who want to know more about Catholicism, who want some sort of information, guidance, and so on, and it's supplied to them, in a group: the general sort of thing that one can say to many. That's a conception of apologetics. I don't say it's the only one. It's the one that fits in with the line I've been approaching.

Now, you referred before to what I said that knowing what's going within one isn't important. That isn't true, but what isn't important is acquiring proficiency at introspection. I don't think everyone should try for that or can fruitfully try for it. But I think it's important. The more one knows oneself, the better, to know what's going on. The more one is able to be suspicious too, not being credulous.

You were speaking this morning about sanctifying grace, and you brought in these three worlds of common sense, theory, and interiority. Can you elaborate on that, how the notion of sanctifying grace fits with these worlds?

The identification occurs through scripture, the sort of text you use when you're setting up the categories, the texts you appeal to are very similar to the texts I was employing when I was talking about religious experience. Sanctifying grace is present if you have charity and it isn't present if you haven't got charity, and I was talking about charity. The medieval notion of sanctifying grace was quite a brilliant discovery. All during the twelfth century, they were unable to handle grace and liberty in the same context.

The philosophers could define liberty as immunity from necessity, but the theologians had to say freedom is that by which you do good when you have God's grace and evil when you haven't. They couldn't get the two separate. That was one of one of the big blocks. They had all sorts of difficulty, too, with what on earth you meant by grace. After all, what was not a free gift of God? If you wanted to call about what we call grace, well, it was the grace given to the just, the people who are going to be saved, not to the people who are going to be damned. That just makes them worse off at the final judgment. And so on and so forth. Around 1230 – there had been starts before that – they got hold of the idea that as grace is above nature, as faith is above reason, as charity is above ordinary human friendship, and as merit before God is above the esteem of men, there are two distinct orders, and you put liberty in one and grace in the other. They started writing treatises on liberty right away. They also made the discovery of act and habit. In 1210 there's the decree of Innocent III to the effect while all infants have the remission of sin at baptism even though they don't make an act of faith, still there are two opinions on how this remission of sin occurs. Some say they don't have grace because they make no acts of charity or faith, and others say they have grace *quoad habitum*; and that was the less popular opinion, the minority opinion that regarded the Aristotelian distinction between habit and act. But when they got hold of this notion of the two orders, they pumped for the habit and tried to explain all grace as habitual grace. So that's why Thomas in his *Sentences* is quite Pelagian on a number of points. He tries to explain everything by habitual grace without any actual grace properly so called. There's quite a development in Thomas on the business. Now you have grace conceived there as an Aristotelian habit, not an operative habit but an entitative habit, an absolutely supernatural habit

received in the essence of the soul, not in the potencies. The whole setup is metaphysical. When you start out from a description of the gift of God's love, and a certain ability to identify it in one's experience or the experience of people, religious experience as described generally, you're having a different starting point. You're talking interiority fundamentally, not metaphysics. You can objectify this and identify it with what was called sanctifying grace in the medieval period. But your fundamental meanings are of a different kind. They're meanings based upon experience. They are not meanings that have their roots in a metaphysics. That's one of the big problems in theology at the present time – to make all we can of meanings based upon interiority. Then we will have what Rahner calls theocentricity and anthropocentricity as identical. It is through religious experience that you can get that identity.

Does this enable you to bridge the gap between the natural and the supernatural?

The gap between the natural and the supernatural arises from a conceptualist, deductivist viewpoint. Everything has to be a gap on the viewpoint. It's all angles and sharp edges. And of course, that conceptualist deductivist viewpoint has been endemic in theology. It's the difference between a horizontal finality and a vertical finality. Vertical finality does not mean an exigence. The matter on the moon could be the matter that was informed by a human soul, but it has no exigence for that.

What is the relationship of religious experience to faith, and of religious experience to prayer?

To faith: religious experience is the gift of God's love, and that love is the fundamental source of the recognition of positive values. And insofar as

something is opposed to your love or the values that love detects, they become objects of hatred and disvalues. Consequently, because of that new discernment of values that comes out of love, as I try to expound it in terms of Pascal, the heart has reasons that reason does not know, where ‘reason’ is the first three levels of conscious intentionality, the ‘heart’ is the fourth, and its reasons are apprehensions of values, discernment of values. Faith, then, is that love as discerning.

The relation of religious experience to prayer is that prayer is an exercise in that dialectic that is religious development. In prayer, you have, on the one hand, the pull of grace and, on the other hand, the tension that pull creates, and things are evening themselves out. Private prayer, prayer to your heavenly Father in secret – go to your chamber and pray to your heavenly Father in secret. So prayer is loving attention to the beloved, but at the same time it is dealing with the resistance. That tension is the religious growth.

Can we speak of something that is not yet known by man as real?

You can’t know and not know. But you can use the word ‘know’ in quite different senses. You can use the word ‘know’ in a generic sense, in which you see you know, and when you hear you know, and when you taste you know, and when you understand you know, and when you judge you know. Or you can use the word ‘know’ as the compound that results from a patterned corresponding set of experiences, acts of understanding, and judgments. Religious experience as experience is just conscious. It is not yet knowledge, not yet understood. You can have the experience without understanding it, identifying it, putting a label on it, saying ‘This is it!’ In that sense it’s not known. Consequently, what that experience is directed to,

to connect it with God, the connection will come up when you're in an exteriorly religious attitude, when you're trying to say your prayers, when you're trying to do good, when you're repenting of your sins, and so on. This experience occurs. Or when it occurs, it prompts you to praying. Or it makes prayer easy, consolation as opposed to desolation – although there can be a desolation that is just a stage in the ongoing experience.

If there's no consciousness whatsoever, is there reality?

Well, you have no grounds for saying anything, if there's no consciousness whatever. But for a person to say that, he's want to be very, very expert at knowing what's going on. People can be highly intelligent and doubt that there exist any insights. The Scholastic tradition is full of people that are conceptualists. Understanding is something that occurs after you have concepts, when you see the nexus between concepts. It's not something that occurs before and posits both the nexus and the concepts, posits the concepts with the nexus. They were quite intelligent people, but they never adverted to their experience of understanding.

Is that religious experience real until it's known?

When it's conscious it's real. Consciousness is something that's real. Unless you mean by 'real' something sensible. To identify it and to say, 'This is religious experience,' is something else.