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The final section, beliefs. First of all, what is believing? and secondly, what are the steps in which a belief emerges?

To appropriate one's social, cultural, religious heritage is largely a matter of belief. There are things that we find out for ourselves, but they constitute a very small proportion of what we know. What a genius knows is 98% belief. What we find out for ourselves and what we know through believing are not in two separate compartments, they are interwoven with one another. Your belief will be checked to a certain extent by things you find out for yourself. And the things you find out for yourself will depend an awful lot on things that you believe and have not found out for yourself, and have learnt from others.

An example of such belief is that we know the relative positions of the major cities of the United States. But we didn't find that out for ourselves, we saw maps, perhaps copied maps, saw little circles on the maps where the cities are and from the map we know their relative positions. And the man that made the map, he believed it too. And whom was he believing? Well, ultimately he was believing the surveyors that went over the terrain. However, there were several different groups of surveyors surveying so large a territory. So each group knew the part that it had surveyed, but they believed one another with regard to the rest of the country. And the mapmaker believes them all, and we believe the mapmaker. Now we know that those maps are perfectly accurate; they are the basis of all the buying and selling of property, of all travel, air travel, and travel in cars and trains and buses, and so on, and it always works out fine. So we have endless evidence that these maps are perfectly accurate. Yes, but that endless evidence is a matter of belief because we haven't done all the traveling and all the buying and selling of

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property ourselves, it is just that we haven't heard any complaints against the maps. So there is a terrific confirmation of these beliefs, but still, only a very small part of it is immanently generated knowledge, the rest is belief.

Now science is frequently contrasted with common sense because common sense does an awful lot of believing. In science there is, of course, very consciously immanently generated knowledge; the scientist devises his own experiments, formulates his own hypothesis, he checks it, works out all its implications, performs the experiments, has it confirmed. That is immanently generated knowledge. And if another scientist goes ahead and does exactly the same thing on his own, thinking out the hypothesis in all its details, all its implications, and all its suppositions, doing the experiments himself, he too will have immanently generated knowledge. But the thing is that the other scientists don't do that. They don't spend their time repeating other peoples' experiments; they are out to make their own contribution to the fund of scientific knowledge, to make a name for themselves.

So what we have is an ongoing process. If any scientific result is found wanting, the man is crucified, of course. But fundamentally, they take the other fellow's results as valid, unless something crops up to cause suspicion; and it is an ongoing interdependent process. But besides the direct verification that you have when the man repeats the other fellow's work, you have the indirect verification that consists in his results being presupposed in further work. Galileo dropped weights off the leaning tower of Pisa, working at the rate of falling bodies; and he slid them down a plane, and he directly verified his law of gravity. But every time that law of gravity has been presupposed in industry or in scientific work in the past four centuries there has been an indirect verification. That is like the cloud of witnesses for this law, the accuracy of this law, just as we had the cloud of witnesses for the truth of the maps. It is this endless indirect verification that really establishes something scientifically. But, of course, no individual performs this endless verification, he believes that it takes place, and the longer the law is

accepted and presupposed and used, the greater the confidence placed in it. But they are always ready too to change.

There is, then, in science a greater control and a more precise control over beliefs than you have in common sense. But there is just as much believing in science as there is in common sense. In brief, human knowledge is a common fund, and it is attained by a division of labor. One contributes to that common fund by one's own personal seeing and hearing and attending and understanding and formulating, weighing the evidence and judging; but one also draws on that fund, and one draws on it insofar as one believes. In that common fund there will be oversights and biases and errors. But the way to get rid of them is not to destroy the fund and say, 'Well, I'm not going to believe anything.' Because if you believe nothing you revert two-hundred-thousand years. We have to have that common fund, we have the oversights, the biases and errors, we have to have a technique for eliminating them, and that is the critical stance. When you find yourself having had a mistaken belief, you can ask yourself, 'Well, now, I was wrong in believing that, what else might I be wrong in believing? What were the causes of my believing that, and did that cause other false beliefs?' And you can look around and see if there are more false beliefs that you have. That way what you do is reject not belief, but mistaken beliefs. That can be an ongoing process. You can also correct the mistaken believer; he's the real problem.

At the same time, too, what really eliminates mistaken beliefs is positive development of knowledge. As Newman remarked, if he had to choose – he doesn't have to choose, but if he had to choose – between Descartes's rule, doubt everything, and the opposed rule, believe everything, he would prefer the second. Because the mind by its native vigor would gradually develop in knowledge and cast off the mistaken beliefs, while if you have nothing at all to start from, well, you are back two-hundred-thousand years and it takes two-hundred-thousand years to catch up.

Now the analysis of the process of believing. The first step is that belief is possible because what is true is not private, it is immanently generated knowledge, but it heads for a virtually unconditioned, something independent of the subject, and, consequently, something that can be public. Public knowledge is reached through truth; truth is something that grounds the publicity of public knowledge. To reach the virtually unconditioned is to reach something that is independent of the mind that has reached it. I cannot give another my eyes, but I can truly report what I see or understand or judge, and he can believe it. That is the possibility.

The second step is a general judgment of value. It approves the human division of labor in the development of knowledge. In other words, human knowledge is not primarily an individual achievement; it is an achievement of the society; it is a historical achievement built up over the centuries. One enters into it through belief, and one finds evidence for accepting belief, but most of the evidence for accepting belief is further belief. To approve that process, to say it is a good thing, that on the whole this division of labor in man's acquisition and development of knowledge is a good thing – if you reject that, what you are advocating is a return to primitivism and the permanency of primitivism because you can get beyond that primitivism, learn it all for yourself, only by starting again the process of belief. So there is a general judgment of value; the division of labor in the acquisition of knowledge; and, consequently belief is a good thing.

The third step is a particular judgment of value. This witness is trustworthy; this expert is competent; this leader or statesman or authority or teacher knows his job. The point at issue in that judgment of value is, Is the source of information critical of his sources, did he really make a careful judgment before stating what he did, is there intentional self-transcendence in his judgments of fact, real self-transcendence in his judgments of value? How can you decide such an issue? Well, you can't get into another person's mind. You have to go about it indirectly: the concurrence of experts, the coherence of a statement, the correctness found in all the other statements made by this

particular witness, and so on. There is a mass of indirect indications and also of beliefs that will lead you to say, 'Well, I think I can trust these people or this person.' Believing this testimony or this authority is something that is good. That is a judgment of value. Why is it good? In general, it is good because it is partaking in the general division of labor in the acquisition of knowledge. In the particular case it is good if the evidence goes to show that this person can be trusted.

The fourth step is the decision to believe. The decision to believe follows on the particular judgment of value. It will be worthwhile, it will be sound, I will be doing the right thing in believing this person, in increasing my knowledge in this respect. The general judgment, believing is a good thing; the particular judgment, this can be believed; the conclusion, this ought to be believed. If believing is a good thing and this can be believed, then this ought to be believed.

The fifth step is the act of believing: I'll take your word for it.

Now, an analysis of belief can make you very suspicious of believing. So we will take a concrete instance. An engineer has a problem, and he pulls out a slide rule, he whips it back and forth, and he gives you the answer. He knows just why the slide rule works and why he should proceed in exactly this way in solving this problem. There is no belief there, he knows that this works. However, the slide rule presupposes logarithmic and trigonometric tables, and the engineer never worked out those tables for himself. He believes them. The markings on the rule represent these tables, and he never checked the rule against the tables; he believes that that's right too. He has knowledge generally that these slide rules are satisfactory, he has never been misled, never come to a false conclusion by using one, and so on. But that again is a motive for belief, and insofar as he is depending on other peoples' word for it it is confirmed by belief there. Should the engineer and each and every engineer, in all the world, work out the logarithmic and trigonometric tables for himself? And should he then go about laboriously comparing

every marking on his rule against the tables, or is it all right for him to believe? Well, that is the question about belief and whether one should believe or not.

Finally, you may find this account of belief rather novel. And if you do and find out also that you think it is true, well, then, you have had a mistaken belief about beliefs. And you can start the purging of mistaken beliefs by going into the associations of it.

Question 8: I can understand what you are saying but what if you are in a different culture where they are pathologically suspicious of the next man?

Lonergan: Well, if you are pathologically suspicious of the next man your thing will be breaking down. And, again, you will find that there are a large number of shared beliefs nonetheless. The acquisition of further beliefs may be a problem, but if beliefs are totally eliminated, like Descartes said he was going to doubt everything, but he remained a man of the Renaissance, interested in modern science, on the one hand, and philosophy and certitude on the other, despite all his doubts. In other words, this dropping of beliefs isn't something you can achieve over night; you are brought up in them, and most of what anyone knows is belief.

Question 9: The capability to believe more is related to your knowledge?

Lonergan: Yes.

Question 10: Would you say how what you treated today relates more particularly to theological methodology?

Lonergan: We want to talk about religion, which is a particular type of good, and unless you have a context for it the question will arise, Well, what has this got to do with the real world and the world in which we live, and so on. We want to talk about religious values. Well, what do you mean by values? We want to talk about religious belief. Well, what is belief? And what is the relation of religion to progress and decline? We need

models to handle these materials, and the models can be developed and corrected and modified, and all the rest of it. But, at least, it's a start.

Question 11: Yesterday, in one of our discussion groups, we were discussing your distinction between notion and concept. And the question arose as to where you originally or why you originally came up with the term 'notion,' since *notio* seems to have a different meaning in Scholastic terminology.

Lonergan: Well, I needed another word besides concept, and notion occurred to me. In general, I do not operate out of a fixed vocabulary. As I said in *Insight*, the fundamental communication in philosophy – if you are going to become technical at least you have to start out in the literary style. You can move towards something that is technical, as I do when I start talking about elements of metaphysics, etc., the transcendental notions. But to bring people to that you have to start out with everyday language, or a literary style if it is in a book. We get more on that when we start talking on realms of meaning tomorrow. The realm of commonsense meanings, the realm of scientific meanings, the realm of meanings based upon interiority, what we were talking about yesterday, developing yesterday, and then the realm of the transcendent, of worship, mysticism, and so on.

Question 12: In the distinction between horizontal and vertical liberty, it would seem that horizontal liberty isn't a true liberty?

Lonergan: It is a true liberty. It is within the horizon, it is within the horizon that you have at the present time. If you want to take it this way, St Thomas has a distinction, he speaks of operative grace as the grace that leads to one doing the good that previously one did not wish to do. There is a change in the horizon there, and it is produced by *gratia operans*. That is vertical liberty as a result of God's grace. In general, when your horizon is enlarging, changing, then you are exercising, you are becoming yourself very definitely, and you are doing so freely. But we are not all making progress every minute.

Insofar as you are not changing yourself and your stance in the world, and so on, you are truly free, but you are doing what you have been doing before, you are in a rut perhaps. But freedom is not opposed; human freedom is limited. If you think of freedom as the ability to become completely indifferent every second of the day and do exactly whatever occurs to you, that isn't true of human freedom. Human freedom presupposes – for a person to do things easily, spontaneously, with pleasure and virtue, is an acquired thing; you have to acquire virtue. And until you acquire it, it is difficult for you to do it. And because it is difficult you can't be straining all the time. This is St Thomas, again, on operative grace. See my articles in *Theological Studies*, 1941, 1942, on limitations of human liberty. It is because human liberty is limited that grace can transform a person.