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## **7 Faith**

We think of faith as knowledge born of love, of religious love. We will approach it through Pascal's well-known phrase, 'Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connait point,' the heart has reasons which reason does not know. By 'reason' we will understand man's experiencing, understanding, judging, those first three levels of intentional consciousness. By 'reasons,' the heart has reasons, the reason that the heart has, as intentional response to values, that intentional response to values. The illustration that occurred to me, of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, after our Lord's disappearance, said, 'Did not our hearts burn within us when he expounded the Scriptures on the way?' That is the intentional response to values.

So reason: experience, understanding, judgment; reasons, the reasons that the heart has: intentional responses to values; and, finally, 'the heart' is consciousness on the fourth level, consciousness that is conscience: the level of deliberation, evaluation, decision. That level of deliberation, evaluation, decision has reasons: intentional responses to values and, consequently, an awareness of values which reason (experiencing, understanding, and judging) does not know, they belong to a different realm.

Faith is the eye that comes with God's gift of his love, with that transformation of the heart, of deliberating, evaluating, deciding that comes from God's gift of his love. First of all, it reveals the transcendent value: over and above vital, social, cultural, personal values, there is the religious value that the religious person finds in God and experiences as a fulfilment, in joy and peace, of his capacity for self-transcendence. Since that capacity for self-transcendence is by way of intelligence and reasonableness and

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<sup>1</sup> 17 June 1970, part 2; audio may be found at 59800A0E070.

responsibility, its fulfilment reveals God as absolute intelligence, truth, goodness. That knowledge of God in our hearts is more fundamental, more effective, richer than knowledge of God through our minds. However, since we also have minds, it is good to have knowledge of God through our minds too.

Faith has a relative aspect as well as an absolute aspect. As well as the raising of the human subject towards God, it is related to the whole of human living. First of all, to all other values, which are placed both in the light and the shadow of transcendent value. In the shadow, for the transcendent value is supreme and incomparable. But in the light, for God is the originating value, and the universe are to God the terminal values. So the human good of which we spoke on Tuesday is placed within the context of an all encompassing good. The excellence of man becomes not merely the excellence of man but also the glory of God: the glory of the Father is the excellence of his Son. As St Thomas says in his *Secunda secundae*, q. 132, a. 1, ad 1m, to the first objection: ‘God created the universe for his glory’ means that he created it not for his own sake but for ours; we are the glory of God. The glory of the Son is the Father.

Without faith, without the eye of love, the world is too evil for God to exist. But faith can recognize that God grants men their freedom, that he wills them to be persons and not mere automata, that as he commands us to bring good out of evil, so he too can do so. In fact, faith and progress have a common root in self-transcendence. But to the self-transcendence of progress the love of God and faith adds self-surrendering, self-sacrificing, that can overcome decline, that can deal with unintelligible situations, that can bring good out of evil.

Sin, the decline, the irresponsible, irrational, unintelligent, creates, brings about an objectively unintelligible situation, an objective surd. That surd disrupts society and corrupts cultures. To restore them, the only remedy is self-sacrificing love.

## **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 on Tuesday. But now the structure rests on a different basis, and that basis is faith. For however personal and intimate is religious experience, religious love, religious 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 other-worldly 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, 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**

Besides faith and religious belief, I want to make a technical note, because there are a number of implications in the transition from a basis in theory to a basis in interiority.

First of all, with regard to the well-known dictum, *Nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*, nothing is loved unless it is already known. That ordinarily is true; you don't fall in love with someone you don't know. But if God can give the gift of his love into our hearts, he can do so freely; he doesn't have to wait until we know. That gift can be a form of knowing. Consequently, the problem of God's universal salvific will is greatly reduced; God can give his grace, the gift of his love, despite man's lack of knowledge; it can be the cause of man's seeking knowledge and coming to know.

Further, 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 identify 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 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, that is, they go beyond them, they preserve them, they leave them intact, they bring them to still further perfection, and they set up an entirely new level in which they are integrated. For example, intelligence does not destroy your powers of sense; on the contrary, you can know, observe the sensible world with infinitely greater accuracy when you are able to understand; you can master the sensible world through understanding in a way that the sensible alone never can manage.

If one wishes to transpose this analysis in terms of intentional consciousness 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 adjustments 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 the 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; they are eliminated. First, the notion of pure intellect or pure reason that operates on its own without guidance or control from

responsible decision; it's an illusion. And, secondly, the notion of will as an arbitrary power indifferently choosing between good and evil.

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 a happy 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 account of the Oedipus complex, it is a little hard to recognize; it is p. 192ff. of his *Psychologie religieuse*.) 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 overly simple notion of will as arbitrary power. 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, moral 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 orientation. 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, of 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 is self-justifying. You don't have to justify the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. What you have to do is ascertain whether or not your love is that kind of thing. People in love do not account for their being in love. 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.

**Question 15:** There is some suggestion that our theology of grace suffered from a reification of this theological element. Could you say something about the divine initiative in the relationship between nature and grace?

**Lonergan:** It is an enormous question. What went on was that theology became theoretical; that is the Middle Ages. What occurred in the Middle Ages roughly was: in Anselm you have a person of enormous intelligence, dealing with every fundamental question that a Christian could ask. Practically with a lot of influence, but no theological influence, because he had brilliant theories, but there wasn't enough straw in the bricks to make them last. The straw came for the bricks, a first step, with Peter Abelard, his *Sic et Non*: 158 propositions, and Abelard proved the affirmation and the negation of each one of those propositions from the Scriptures, the Fathers, and reason. 'It is so, and it is not so.' That is the sort of thing that had been done by the Canonists: the *Concordia Discordantium Canonum*, the reconciliation of the laws passed by the various councils. Well, Abelard set up the problem for theologians. Abelard's *Non* became the *Videtur quod non*, and his *Sic* became *Sed contra est*, and you had a general solution or general reconciliation of these opposed statements in the *Corpus Articuli* and then the application of the general principles in the *Ad Primum, Secundum, Tertium*. Now when you are answering a whole flock of questions, reconciling, unless your principles of solution are all coherent, you will be just putting the contradictions from one place to another, contradictions will be arising in your solutions; and to avoid that you have to get in a

system, and they went to Aristotle for a coherent *Begrifflichkeit*, but its basis was fundamentally metaphysical. The account of grace, for example, in St Thomas is highly psychological. I have four articles on it in *Theological Studies*, 1941-1942.

Fundamentally it is psychological. What Thomas is talking about is the limitations of human liberty, and grace removes those limitations. It is a study of operative grace in St Thomas; and operative grace, fundamentally, is God plucking out the heart of stone and putting in a heart of flesh, and the heart of flesh is not something that the heart of stone wanted. That is God's gift of his love. Thomas develops this on the psychological side magnificently. What happened later on was that theologians who were not aware of religious experience or had no concrete apprehension of it said: Well, we can't know the supernatural, we can't have any apprehension of the supernatural qua supernatural. There is a sense in which that is true. But the psychological, intentional side of grace dropped from view in certain schools of theology; it's not in the tradition as such. What I'm doing is, I'm aware of the psychological tradition in the doctrine of grace, but that psychological tradition was expressed, fundamentally, in metaphysical terms; the psychological also is there, it wasn't merely metaphysical. All I'm doing is inverting the order, the metaphysics follows on the psychology. Cognitive theory, epistemology; metaphysics is the integral heuristic structure that comes out of cognitive theory. Natural and supernatural, what's that? That distinction, natural and supernatural, comes out – in the 12th century the theologians were not able to say what was not God's gratuitous gift. It is gratuitous that God creates us, and so on. And when you wanted to get grace into a more specific, narrower form, well, grace given to people who are going to go to hell that isn't a grace, it only makes them worse off, so it is the grace given to the predestined, and so on. They simply couldn't handle that notion of grace, and much less could they treat liberty in conjunction with grace. The philosophers defined liberty as immunity from necessity. For the theologians, liberty is that by which we do good when we have God's grace and evil when we don't. They were caught. In the beginning of the

13th Century, three people gradually got hold of the idea that grace is above nature; faith is above reason; charity is above human friendship; staying good in the eyes of God is one thing and being good in the eyes of mankind is another, and that these are two entitative orders; that is what they mean by the supernatural, and they call the top order the supernatural and the other the natural. When this doctrine gradually emerged, first of all you get theologians who are able to define everything, and when Philip the Chancellor presented the whole thing about 1230 you started getting treatises written on liberty by the theologians. They weren't able to handle it without the distinction; that is where it come from and what it really means. Now insofar as you insert that stuff into a conceptualism, and so on, then you get an impossible mess. But it is the mistaken philosophy that is misusing it – the idea that if there is any relation between grace and nature, well, then, it won't be grace, if there is any intelligible relation. That's nonsense.

**Question 16:** How do you reconcile the relationship between the inner and the outer word, with regard to salvation? The Letter to the Hebrews seems to make faith something different. This is the outer word, I presume. In your analysis of faith, you suggested that this must be something that is accepted on the authority of God, not something we arrive at by ordinary reasoning.

**Lonergan:** That is what I refer to as religious belief. With regard to the passage in Hebrews, and the ways in which it is to be interpreted, I am not prepared to discuss in any detail. But the fact that if a person is in love with God, *de facto*, there is a sense in which he has knowledge of God. A good Hebrew sense: you know God when you do what is right. Doing what is right has to do with the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom, and he rewards the good and punishes the wicked, this comes in through that fear, perhaps. The problem of the salvation of the infidel, as it was discussed, was that they had to have faith, and faith had to be a supernatural act specified by a supernatural object; and how do you get the supernatural object to people who have never heard of

Christianity in any sense or form? Well, you have here a supernatural act, *de facto*, proceeding from the supernatural dynamic state of being in love.

**Question 17:** Would you say: charity, faith, belief?

**Lonergan:** They are tied together. I would say that charity is the fundamental one. And not charity in the sense of acts of love or a habit in the will, but the basic dynamic state in the *apex animae*, the sovereign point of the soul.

**Question 18:** Can this interior word that God speaks to us, can that be expressed exteriorly in an atheistic fashion; and, secondly, could you clarify the relationship or the process of mediation by which the interior word becomes the exterior?

**Lonergan:** With regard to the first, what Rahner calls the anonymous Christian, what a person is rejecting is some idea of God communicated to him from others that he considers unacceptable. Still, his motive for rejecting it is precisely the fact that he has God's grace. That is a possibility, a psychological possibility. When it occurs and when it doesn't occur is another question entirely.

With regard to the second, the objectification, there is the spontaneous objectification in love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, fidelity, self-control, and so on (Galatians 5. 22). That is the spontaneous manifestation of it. Insofar as there is a concern with the *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*, you have the religions of mankind, the hierophanies of early language, the higher world religions, and so on; they are all expressions. Now the external word may simply be a religious tradition but it can be more than that, and that is what we mean by the Hebrew religion and Christianity being historical religions. There you have religion based upon a divine revelation. And then, the external word is not simply an objectification of the internal, it is a divine initiative.

**Question 19:** There is no relationship between this twofold word and the twofold word that you speak of in the *Verbum*?

**Lonergan:** No, no, no.

**Question 20:** In spite of what you say about the importance of the external word, when you start with Professor Heiler's seven areas, and then develop from them the notion of the love of God, and then bring in the external word, I can't get away from the feeling that the historical revelation, through Christ Jesus, becomes something of an afterthought. Can you comment on that?

**Lonergan:** It comes in later. But the interpersonal element, what you mean by God, filling that out, you can fill that out to a certain extent with a philosophy. But philosophy doesn't reveal the God of love the way the Gospel does. And it is precisely that type of revelation that is the mutual expression of love. Christ crucified is God's expression of his love. It is not an afterthought if you conceive love as something interpersonal, a manifested, expressed self-donation, self-surrender. A man and a woman if they are in love and never admit it, never avow it to one another, they are not really in love; there is a whole dimension missing.

**Question 21:** Can you say something on love as constitutive?

**Lonergan:** Love is interpersonal. It is one thing to read and write books, and it is another to meet people. In meeting people there arise elements that are just not in the others. There is a book called *The Phenomenology of the Encounter* by Buytendijk. There is a whole phenomenology of what goes on; like the phenomenology of the smile, that can be multiplied to infinity, all the relations between two persons, all the aspects to it have a concreteness. And if you are reading books and so on it is experience, understanding, judging, but the interpersonal thing is two consciences meeting, two incarnate subjects communicating. I think you just have to reflect on that aspect of things to get the point. I can't say an awful lot about it; I'm not prepared.

**Question 22:** Can there be a historical dialogue with a community of Hinduism?

**Lonergan:** Hinduism can be understood in its general religious elements in terms of God's gift of his love. Now is there an ongoing dialogue? There is a dialectic that goes on in history automatically. But is there a revelation in the sense in which Christians understand it? I don't think they claim it. You will have more of that in Islam, for Mohammed is his prophet. But you have to ask those questions of people who are experts in those fields. Also advert to the fact that at the present time the history of religions is for people who want to write about Islam in a way that the Muslims will understand and recognize themselves, they want to write about Hinduism in a way that the Hindus will find themselves truly represented, what's really good in their religion and so on. The history of religions has advanced beyond the merely phenomenological concerns.

**Question 23:** It seems to me that we have gone to a kind of an empirical understanding of what human knowing is and, then, suddenly we have come to a knowing in love. And then my question is, I think of this and it is a human knowing, i.e., a human subject is knowing but it is not knowing through what we have empirically structured as human knowing. And in that I almost get a sense that the highest form of theology is a form of mysticism, and the highest form of knowing is a kind of intuitionism. Do you see my problem?

**Lonergan:** Well, it isn't an intuitionism.

**Question 24:** What is this knowing which seems to be something prior to the other knowing?

**Lonergan:** Well, it is moving into a philosophy of action. It is not just experiencing, understanding, and judging, but also, and on the highest level, deliberating, evaluating, deciding, doing. Pure intellect is just an abstraction, a mistaken abstraction, and it arises from Aristotle's mistaken notion that mathematics deduced necessary conclusions from necessary premises. In the 19th century, it was discovered that the mathematicians had no

necessary premises. They postulate, and draw rigorous conclusions from what they postulate, but as Polanyi remarks, setting up these premises is like the clown in the circus who plants two posts and hangs gates on the posts and has an enormous padlock closing the gates and goes back, and is just going to walk by the gate on the far side, and he remembers. And he gets out his key and he goes and unlocks the padlock and goes through the gates. In other words, finite intelligibility is contingent intelligibility, it is something that has to be verified. Because it is something that has to be verified it is essentially something contingent. There is not that necessary realm that the Aristotelian presupposes. If you have that necessary realm then, of course, you can have self-evident truths from which you draw necessary conclusions. There is no room for feeling or loving, it doesn't have anything to do with it. But that is not what man is; it is not what human knowing is. There is an exaggerated intellectualism associated with and comes out of Aristotelianism. But in Thomas you will find the opposite. Like Thomas talks about *patiens divina*, he did a lot of commenting on the Pseudo Dionysius, etc. He was aware of all that stuff.

**Question 25:** Wouldn't the way in which you conceive cognitive self-transcendence as operative be a form of real self-transcendence?

**Lonergan:** I'd say this: what occurs most commonly is religious conversion. What results from religious conversion, very slowly, is moral conversion. And what sometimes happens is intellectual conversion, as a result of religious and moral. But the endless philosophies that are just wrong shows how rare intellectual conversion is.

**Question 26:** Would intellectual conversion lead you on to another level, a religious level?

**Lonergan:** No. Intellectual conversion is the discovery that knowing as taking a look is a systematically misleading image. Human knowing is a compound of experiencing, understanding, judging. And you know, in the human sense, when you judge.

**Question 27:** But wouldn't you say also that let's say a person who was an empiricist and then becomes a Kantian that that would be an intellectual conversion too?

**Lonergan:** A half-way house.

**Question 28:** You say that the personal discovery of psychoanalysis is a kind of conversion?

**Lonergan:** It is a liberation.

**Question 29:** Can you say something about the difference between coming on a new science and applying it to what one knows and a true conversion in your sense?

**Lonergan:** A true conversion in the intellectual order: Max Planck in his autobiography – he discovered black-body radiation – said: What is it that makes everyone accept a new physical theory? Is it the clarity of the hypothesis, the exactitude with which every term is defined? Is it the rigor with which all the suppositions and consequences are worked out? Is it the thoroughness with which all [recording ends] the implications are verified? No. It is when the old professors die off and someone else takes their chairs.