

Chapter six: Religion

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1. The Question of God

The facts of progress and decline raise questions about the character of our universe. Such questions have been put in very many ways, and the answers given have been even more numerous. But behind this multiplicity there is a basic unity ~~in that, at root, the question of God has a trans-cultural meaning~~ that comes to light in the exercise of transcen<sup>d</sup>tental method. We can inquire into the possibility of inquiry; we can reflect on the nature of our reflection; we can deliberate whether our deliberating is worth while. In each case there arises the question of God.

The possibility of inquiry, on the side of the subject, lies in his intelligence, in his drive to know what, why, how, and in his ability to require intellectually satisfying answers. But why should answers that satisfy the intelligence of the subject yield anything more than a subjective satisfaction? Why should they be supposed to possess any relevance to knowledge of the universe? Of course, we all ~~do~~ assume that they do. We all can claim that ~~our~~ experience justifies our assumption. We grant, then, that the universe is intelligible and, once that is granted, there arises the question whether the universe could be intelligible without having an intelligent ground. But this is the question <sup>about God.</sup> Again, to <sup>reflect on reflection</sup> is to ask just what happens when we marshal and weigh the evidence for pronouncing that this probably is so and that certainly not so. To what do these metaphors of marshalling and weighing refer? Elsewhere I have worked out an answer to this question and,

here, I can do no more than summarily repeat my conclusion. Judgement proceeds rationally from a grasp of a virtually unconditioned. In general, by an unconditioned is meant any x that has no conditions. By a virtually unconditioned is meant any x that has no unfulfilled conditions. In other words, a virtually unconditioned has conditions which, however, are all fulfilled. To marshal the evidence is to ascertain whether all conditions are fulfilled. To weigh the evidence is to ascertain whether the fulfilment of the conditions certainly or probably involves the existence or occurrence of the conditioned.

Now this account of judgement implicitly contains a further element. If we speak of the virtually unconditioned, we first must speak of the unconditioned.

~~so too we can speak of the formally ~~and~~ unconditioned~~

The former has no unfulfilled conditions. The latter has no conditions whatever. The former is, in traditional terms, a contingent being. The latter is, in traditional terms, a necessary being. So once more we come to the question of God. Does a necessary being exist?

To deliberate about deliberating is to ask whether it is worth while. We praise the developing subject ever more capable of attention, insight, reasonableness, and responsibility. We praise progress and we pour forth our denunciations <sup>1</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>on</sup> every manifestation of decline. But is the universe on our side, or are we just gamblers and, if we are gamblers, are we not perhaps fools struggling to develop individually and <sup>collectively</sup> to snatch progress from the welter of decline? The questions arise and, clearly,

our attitudes and especially our resoluteness are profoundly affected by the answers. Does there or does there not necessarily exist an intelligent ground of the universe? Is that ground or are we the primary instance of moral consciousness? Are cosmogenesis, biological evolution, historical process basically cognate to us as moral beings or are they indifferent and so alien to us?

Such is the question of God. It is not any matter ~~or~~ of image or feeling or concept or judgement. They pertain to answers but it is a question. <sup>It</sup> ~~that~~ rises out of our conscious intentionality, out of the a priori, structured drive that promotes us from experiencing to the effort to understand, from understanding to the effort to judge truly, from judging to the effort to choose rightly. In the measure that we advert to our questioning and proceed to question it, there arises the question of God.

It is a question that will be manifested differently in the different stages of ~~the~~ man's historical development and in the many varieties of his culture. But such differences of manifestation and expression are secondary. They may introduce alien elements that overlay, obscure, distort the pure ~~question that consists in applying the transcendental notions~~ to the transcendental notions. None the less, the obscurity and the distortion presuppose the pure question that they obscure and distort and, in that sense, there is radically only one question that is the question ~~that~~ of God. Moreover, that question is universal, for every man is capable of asking how understanding can be knowledge, of how the satisfaction ~~of his understanding is knowledge of things,~~ of demanding not merely the virtually unconditioned, that yields

question, the question that questions questioning. None the less, the obscurity and the distortion presuppose what they obscure and distort. It follows that, however much religious (or irreligious) <sup>^</sup> and ~~irreligious~~ answers differ, however much there differ the questions they explicitly raise, still at their root there is the same transcendental tendency of the human spirit that questions, that questions without restriction, that questions <sup>^</sup> its own questioning and so comes to the question of God.

*The significance of*

<sup>Man's</sup> The question of God, then, lies within man's horizon. ~~His~~ <sup>^</sup> transcendental subjectivity is mutilated or abolished unless he is stretching forth towards the intelligible, the unconditioned, the ~~xxi~~ good of value. The reach <sup>^</sup> not of his attainment but of his intention is unrestricted. There lies within his horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. It cannot be ignored. The atheist may pronounce it empty. The agnostic may urge he sees nothing there. But their negations presuppose the spark in our clod, our native orientation towards the divine.

## 2. Religious Values

In our sketch of the human good we said something about vital, social, cultural, and ~~personal~~ personal values, but postponed any elucidation of religious ~~values~~ values. To these we now turn. For the positive answer to the question of God is not only a statement of ~~his nature and~~ his existence and his nature but also a personal response to his goodness. It is not only metaphysics but also ~~morals and religion?~~

morals and religion. It goes beyond the human good to the originating value that is God and the terminal value that is the universe.

Elsewhere I have shown how one may proceed from the human good to a general ontology of the good on the ground that ~~both the good and the real are to be identified with~~ <sup>is to be identified with being and being with the intelligible.</sup> Also I have shown how one may adopt a contemporary scientific and philosophic outlook and still conclude from the things that are seen to the existence, <sup>freedom,</sup> omniscience, goodness, and omnipotence of God. These

Insight, pp. 604-607.

Ibid., chapter XIX.

expositions I shall not repeat here but presuppose. They pertain to a philosophical theology. They take one no further than an intentional self-transcendence, but our present concern is with religious values and so with a real self-transcendence.

The original feature of this real self-transcendence is that by it the existential subject is constituting himself ~~in~~ <sup>in relation,</sup> ~~with regard,~~ not just to the human good, but to God as originating value and the universe as terminal value. In other words the human good becomes absorbed within ~~a larger, universal~~ an all-encompassing good. Where before the only originating values were men, ~~we~~ now there is the supreme originating value, ~~at the~~ creator of cosmic and historical process. Where before only man's achievements could be named terminal values, now the whole created universe is a terminal value.

Where before an account of the human good related men to one another and to nature, now human concern reaches beyond man's world to God and God's world. The limit of human expectation ceases to be the grave. 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.

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 ~~manifestation~~ expression and manifestation of his benevolence and beneficence, his glory. This glory he wills, as Aquinas saw, not for his sake but for ours. ~~For~~ He

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St. Thomas Aquinas, Sum. theol., II-II, q. 132, a. 1 ad 1m.  
—

has made us in his image, for our authenticity consists in being like him, in self-transcending, in being origins of values, in true love.

~~The radical being in love that is to our authentic~~  
existing is being in love with God. It is peace, the peace the world cannot give, the peace into which one enters in prayer. It is the total self-surrender that just waits without image or thought or care in what is experienced by some as the presence of God and by others as quiet or the void. Still withdrawal is for return. As divine love is a self-transcendence expressed in created process, so man's being in love with God is a self-transcendence unto God that expresses itself not only by resting in God but also by collaborating in the achievement of God's glory.

Already I have had occasion to distinguish between acts of loving and being in love. Being in love is a dynamic orientation whence proceeds all one's living. As love of one's neighbor, it unites one with him or her in a common achievement of the good. But as love of God, it refers us back and around and forward. It refers <sup>us</sup> back to God, the self-transcending source of all good, in adoration and repentance, in thanksgiving and praise, in trust and hope. It refers <sup>us</sup> around to all men, for all men are made in the image of God and it is through and with and in them that God's glory is to be achieved. It refers us forward to promote progress and to offset decline, not just for the sake of achievement, not only for the good of ~~mankind~~, but mankind but, at the deepest level, for the greater glory of God.

Our topic is religious values. Value is the true as opposed to the merely apparent good. Its source and its criterion are self-transcendence. Religious values are the values that arise in and from real self-transcendence in response to God. Such values heighten, integrate, unify all other values.

All love is a gift of oneself to another, and so all love involves self-surrender. But only the love of God can be a total self-surrender without any qualifications or conditions or ~~any~~ reserves, and so only the love of God is total loving. Again, only God can be relied on utterly, and so it is only the love of God that gives us ~~us~~ the solid serenity, the peace that the world cannot give, the peace into which one enters when one prays to one's Father in secret.



total loving. Such total loving is full authenticity, a fount of inner, deep-set joy that only failures in loving can sadden. It is basic fulfilment, ~~and~~ and so it gives the solid <sup>S</sup> serenity, the peace ~~that~~ that the world cannot give, the peace of the Lord into which one may almost palpably enter when one prays to him in secret. Such love, such joy, such peace transform a man. They banish the emptiness, the unrest, the alienation, the flight from one's depths that trouble lives lived without God. Full love, joy, and peace enhance all one's virtues and press against one's defects. They make one a power for all good and zealous in achievement. Relating man to God, they also relate him to mankind and to the whole cosmic and historical process. On all persons and things, on all events and deeds, they shed a new dimension of meaning, significance, value.

Religion, then, and progress are bound together. They have a common root in man's intentional and real self-transcendence, so that to promote either is to promote the other indirectly. Again, religion places human efforts in a friendly universe, reveals ~~for~~ an ultimate significance in human achievement, strengthens new undertakings with confidence. Above all, religion can undertake the supreme task of undoing the work of decline.

Decline ~~concepts~~ disrupts a culture with conflicting ideologies. It inflicts on individuals the social, economic, and psychological pressures that for human frailty amount to determinisms. It multiplies and heaps up the abuses and absurdities that breed resentment, hatred, anger, violence. It is not propaganda or 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. Finally, if passions are to quieten down, if wrongs are to be not merely ignored, not merely palliated, but removed, human possessiveness and human pride have to be replaced by religious charity, by the charity of the suffering servant, <sup>by self-sacrificing love.</sup> Men are sinners. If progress is not to be ever distorted and destroyed by decline, men have to be reminded of their sinfulness; they have to acknowledge their real guilt and they have to amend their ways; they have to learn with humility that the task of repentance and conversion is life-long.

Insight, chapter XX, treats at some length the function of faith, hope, and charity in dissolving the effects of decline.

 3. Religious Expression

I have been conceiving religion as simply ultimate concern, as authentic human existence with regard to God and God's world. But the primary and ordinary manifestation of ultimate concern is, of course, not any technically formulated question about God, not any transcendental analysis of ultimate concern, not any ontology of the good or any philosophic proof of God's existence, but the endless variety of the religions of mankind.

These religions are more than ultimate concern. In the measure they are authentic, they do express, ~~what~~ reveal, communicate, share ultimate concern. But by going beyond ~~ultimate concern~~ to its expression they risk <sup>an</sup>authenticity. Moreover, the more primitive the religion, the less <sup>it is</sup> differentiated from the rest of the culture, and so the less is it capable of functioning independently and resisting socio-cultural decline. On the other hand, when religion develops into a separate entity within a culture, it can function ~~and independently~~ with some independence and initiative of its own. But this will not guarantee authenticity and there are <sup>now</sup> the added risks of religion resisting cultural advance <sup>ing</sup> to maintain its authenticity or, on the other hand, seeking integration within a culture and mistakenly joining with the forces of decline.

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First, then, early religious expression is global. Ultimate and proximate concern, the sacred and the profane, are not distinguished, separated, specialized. Each penetrates the other. What we would term profane is sacralized. What we would term sacred seems to us profaned. All activity expresses some concern, but the concern that is expressed is at once ultimate and proximate. Then religious expression is not specifically and exclusively religious but included globally with other types of expression. Moreover, even after differentiation has been slowly and gradually established, one is not to suppose that individuals and groups will not slip back to the forms of expression and the patterns of experience

— On patterns of experience, see Insight, pp. 181-189. —

in which religion as lived, felt, revealed, once more is global.

Religious expression becomes specifically religious by development, that is, by differentiation, specialization, integration. Differentiation sets the object of ultimate concern apart from other objects. The one concern of human authenticity -- the concern to attend, to understand, to judge truly, to choose responsibly -- remains one and the same. But it expresses itself differently with ~~hand~~ respect to different objects. There are developed specialized activities with a religious significance. There is introduced a division of labor in the performance of the activities. So religious expression becomes a distinct part of the cultural statement on the meaning and value of human life, while the ~~maintenance~~ propagation and development of that expression are entrusted to a social institution.

Precisely because it <sup>manifests</sup> ~~is the expression of~~ ultimate concern, religious expression differs from all other expressions. They refer to this world, to the set of objects of possible, immediate, human experience. Its reference is other-worldly. For the object of ultimate concern <sup>is</sup> ~~comes~~ to be known, not by questioning experience, but by questioning questioning itself. Still, this does not imply that the object of ultimate concern is "totally other." On the <sup>t</sup> ~~con~~trary, it is the ground of intelligibility, truth, being, value in the whole universe, and these are ~~totally~~ affine to human concern whether proximate or ultimate. Again, it is that ground alone to whom man can surrender himself totally and thereby ~~achieve~~ achieve the love, joy, and peace of authentic fulfillment. Finally, religious expression has the character of a response. It is man's

See Manfred Frings, Max Scheler, Pittsburgh and Louvain 1965, pp. 156 f., on the phenomenology of religious acts.

self-transcendence answering divine self-transcendence, a finite being-in-love answering divine love.

However profound and powerful, however intimate and personal, that response to God must be expressed, or else it will be incomplete, unfinished, broken off. But now that we have moved to specific religious expression, we must distinguish between whole and part, if we are to avoid the confusions and pitfalls connected with secularization theology.

See Robert Richard, Secularization Theology, New York (Herder and Herder) 1967. Colin Williams, Faith in a Secular Age, New York (Harper and Row) 1966.

The total expression of one's response to God imitates divine love. Just as that love expresses itself by creating the universe, so man's response to that love expresses itself in a love of God's creation now is the time to rub out a line the universe and ~~now~~ by loving and providing for rational creatures, so too man's loving response to God finds its expression and outlet in loving God's creation. Affectively it ~~it loves all that God has done, is doing, will do~~ is a love that extends to all that God has done, is doing, or will do. Effectively it turns to the persons that here and now can be comforted and <sup>present</sup> helped and to the tasks of promoting the human good and offsetting decline.

~~Total response, then~~

Total expression, then, is religious in its source, for its source is loving God with one's whole <sup>heart</sup> and one's whole soul and all one's mind and all one's strength. But its term is the whole of creation. It is not confined to what

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is specifically<sup>1</sup> religious, ecclesiastical, theological. It reaches out to the whole of this world and, in that sense, it may be said to be secular. But it is not to be confined to this life, for its measure is all that God brings about.

However, if total expression is in a sense secular, still it is not secularist. It does not exclude religion or church or theology. On the contrary, it includes them as parts within a larger whole, and it limits them to their functions within that whole. For the fact is that man does not just act. He pauses and reflects on the significance and the value of his acting. He criticizes it and seeks to improve it. Nor is this reflective pause an unworthy deviation from the primary business of acting. On the contrary, it is the source of all development, which proceeds from initial, global, undifferentiated operations through differentiation and specialization to new and more effective integrations. What happens in all other components of human living, also happens in the most basic of all. Man reflects on his love of God. He asks whom he is loving, and whether it is really love, and how it could be ~~strengthened~~ strengthened and refined, and in what ways it could be communicated and shared. Though he holds that love to be God's gift, he also knows that it must be cultivated by human effort. Though he holds that his neighbor is to be loved in every way, still he knows that the greatest ~~benefit~~ benefit he could confer would be to share <sup>with him his</sup> ~~his~~ love of God. So once more we may conclude to the cultivation of the inner life by prayer and mortification, to the mutual support of communal worship, to the specialized functions fulfilled by various members in the social institution named the church. But though we reach that conclusion, we must also stress that such

specifically religious activities are only a functional part of the ~~whole~~ total expression of one's love of God.

There is a further point to be made. Neither total nor specific expression are immutable constants. Total expression, as effective, is always the love of one's neighbor; but the human good progresses and declines, and so the good to be done and the decline to be undone vary with place and time. Similarly, specific expression is fixed in some respects and variable in others. The higher achievements of the inner life tend to transcend image and symbol, concept and system, and on that account have an independence of historical change. But manners of speech, modes of emotional communication, cultural and social forms are historical variables. As they change, specific religious expression has to keep ~~up~~ step, neither resisting progress, nor siding with decline.

This, of course, is a high and delicate task. For it is the lot of specifically religious expression that, while it can promote the development of ultimate concern, the unfolding of benevolence and beneficence, it also can be a carrier of decline. To admit specific expression is to admit cultural activities and social functions in which inattention, incomprehension, unreasonableness, and irresponsibility can find their way. Just as these distort other forms of progress, so too they distort religious development. Then the salt loses its savor. Then the religious man neglects the beam in his own eye to fumble with the mote in his brother's.

I have agreed with secularization theology, then, in so far as I have stressed that specifically religious expression is only a functional part and not the whole manifestation of one's love of God and, as well, in so far as I have granted that specific expression can be antiquated and can be a carrier of decline.

But granting all this



does not lead to the conclusion that Christianity should outgrow specifically religious statements, activities, functions. It has to place love and the human good ahead <sup>of</sup> religion, the church, theology. It has to update its structures, functions, activities, statements. It has ever to watch and pray lest it fall into temptation and, when it fails, it has to repent and make amends. But I see no evidence that it has to exclude specific religious expression and thereby revert to primitivism. In fact, not even the advocates of secular Christianity ~~are~~ have given up technical writing and contented themselves with global religious expression.

Christian atheism is another facet of twentieth-century <sup>confusion -</sup> originality. It is Christian inasmuch as it experiences ultimate concern and gives it at least ~~to~~ its primary and essential expression. It ~~is~~ is atheist because <sup>on</sup> ~~in~~ most up-to-date philosophies there is no way of coming to know about God. Finally, it is Christian and atheist because it deems it absurd to surrender ultimate concern merely because its philosophic abilities or interests are not equal to the task of coming to know about God <sup>or</sup> to believe in him.

I doubt the stability of this position, not merely because I hold that <sup>we</sup> ~~we~~ believe the philosophic issues can be handled, but also because, when God is not acknowledged, ultimate concern ceases to be other-worldly. It ceases to be ultimate. Either it is not a total self-surrender, or else it is ~~an~~ ~~an~~ total dedication to some worldly end or cause. In the former case human living is trivialized. In the ~~late~~ latter it becomes fanatical. In the former case man is alienated from himself. In the latter he ~~is~~ spreads havoc by his passion and his folly.

4. 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 of the first three levels of intentional consciousness, namely, of experiencing, of understanding, and of factual 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 inasmuch as values are apprehended~~ the absolute aspect inasmuch as the feeling is a recognition of value and the relative aspect inasmuch as feelings express preference of some values over others. Finally, by the heart I understand the subject on the fourth, existential level of ~~higher~~ intentional consciousness and in the dynamic state of being-in-love.

Then it

Such being-in-love may be total. ~~It~~ is without conditions, reserves, qualifications. It is other-worldly, for only <sup>of this world.</sup> idolatry would bestow it on anyone or anything ~~material~~. It is a state reached through the exercise of vertical liberty, the liberty that chooses, not among objects within a horizon, but between different horizons. It is a state that, once reached, is distinct from, ~~post~~ prior to, and principle of subsequent judgements of value and acts of loving. It is the fulfilment of man's capacity for self-transcendence and, as fulfilment, it brings a deep-set joy and a profound peace. It radiates through the whole of one's living and acting, opening one's horizon to the full, purifying one's intentional.

responses to values, rectifying one's scale of preferences, underpinning one's judgements of value, simplifying issues by moving them to a deeper level, and strengthening one to achieve the good in the face of evil.

Such being-in-love is religious. Of it St. Paul spoke when he ~~was~~ exclaimed that the love of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that has been given us. Of it Paul Tillich ~~was~~ spoke when he conceived the religious man as one grasped by ultimate concern. But it

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D. M. Brown, Ultimate Concern, Tillich in Dialogue,  
New York (Harper & Row) 1965.

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is experienced in many ways. It can be the quiet under-tow of one's living that reveals itself only in a <sup>deep but obscure</sup> conviction that <sup>trying to be holy.</sup> one cannot get out of <sup>can be</sup> ~~doing what is right~~. It <sup>is</sup> nurtured <sup>transitorily</sup> by a life devoted to prayer and self-denial and can <sup>re-direct</sup> consciousness away from the world mediated by meaning. But however ~~personal~~ personal and intimate, it is not solitary. It 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 love of God above all and love of one's neighbor as oneself. It may be narrative, the story of the  $\phi$  community's origins and development. It may be ascetic and mystical, teaching the way towards 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 two or three or all four. 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 ~~adapt~~ and develop and adapt to different<sup>t</sup> social and cultural situations.

~~Communities endure, as new memb~~

Communities endure. As new members replace old, expression becomes traditional. The religion becomes historical in the general sense that it exists over time. But there is a further § sense in which a religion may be historical. For ~~the~~ the total loving of ultimate concern has the character of a response. It is an answer to a divine initiative, and the divine initiative may be not only the act of creation but also a personal entrance into human history and a communication of <sup>God</sup> ~~himself~~ to his people. Such was the religion of Israel. Such has been Christianity.

~~Faith, then, is not only the power of total loving to fulfill one's being and to reveal and accomplish all gods. It not only~~

Faith, then, takes on a new dimension. It remains the power of total loving to reveal and uphold all that is good. It remains the bond that unites the religious community ~~in~~ in mutual recognition, that directs their common judgements of value, that purifies their beliefs. But it now becomes harkening to the word of Emmanuel, of God with us. The history of its origins and developments becomes doctrine as well as narrative. Faith is also belief. As the subject

Need I recall Karl Rahner's classic, Hörer des Wortes, 1941. 2nd revised edition by J. B. Metz, München (Kösel-Verlag) 1963.

grasped by ultimate concern can discern others similarly grasped, so too it can discern God's expression of his total love.

I have been describing faith as the eye of other-worldly love and doctrinal faith as the recognition of God's own love. ~~Should~~ Such recognition is on the level of <sup>personal</sup> encounter. Its formula is Newman's device, Cor ad cor loquitur. It is true that God's word comes to us not immediately but only through the religious community, but the community, as a fellowship of love at the service of mankind, is the sign raised up among the nations, and its members speaking from the heart will speak effectively to those whose hearts the Spirit fills.

Faith, then, subsists and is propagated on a level quite beyond philosophy or history or human science. They are the work of Pascal's reason, of experience, understanding, and judgement. But faith is the eye of other-worldly love, and the love itself is God's gift. It is on the level of ~~values~~ feelings, values, beliefs, actions, personal encounters, <sup>of</sup> community existence, <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ action, <sup>and</sup> tradition.

However, to say that faith subsists and is propagated on a level beyond experience, understanding, and judgement in no way implies that faith is without experience, understanding, or judgement. The higher levels of man's intentional consciousness do not suppress but presuppose and complement the lower. Without experience there is nothing for us to understand, without understanding there is ~~nothing~~ nothing for us to judge, ~~without judgement there is nothing known to be valued, loved, achieved.~~

without judgement we do not know and so we have nothing to love, value, achieve. Inversely, on the positive side, the many operations come together and cumulatively regard a single identical object so that what is experienced is to be understood, what is understood is to be affirmed, what is affirmed is to be evaluated.

However, this continuity has been disregarded or denied in recent decades, and a few clarifications may be in order here, first, on the notion of object and, secondly, on intersubjectivity.

First, then, God is not an object among the objects acknowledged by positivists, empiricists, and the like; he is not an object of natural or of human science; he is not an object in the naive realist sense in which an object is what is "out there" and a subject is what is "in here." However he is an object for intentional and for real self-transcendence, inasmuch as people think of him, affirm his existence and attributes, fear, worship, love him, speak of him and praise him. For an object is simply the <sup>referred</sup> content of an intentional act and the enumerated acts are intentional and refer to God. Finally, the possibility of God being an object within our horizon ~~is~~ rests on the fact that our conscious intending is unrestricted; we can ask about anything whatever; to place God beyond our horizon would be to deny his existence and his goodness.

Secondly, besides intending subject and intended object, there is also the intersubjective relation ~~between~~ <sup>or more</sup> between two <sup>intending</sup> subjects. So "I" and "Thou" constitute a "We" to make ~~our~~ "Our" plans, do "Our" work, develop "Ourselves."

This relationship is not subject-to-object but subject-to-subject. Now there is something similar in total and so other-worldly being-in-love. For it puts the existential subject in a personal relationship to God. It is not a relationship to God as object for it is prior to all ~~objective~~ objectification whether in judgements of value or beliefs or decisions or ~~deeds~~ words or deeds. It is not similar to human intersubjectivity for that is between persons with a <sup>common</sup> horizon, but this being-in-love determines the horizon of total self-transcendence by grounding the self and its self-transcendence in the divine lover whose love makes those he loves in love with him<sup>so</sup> and with one another. Beyond human intersubjectivity, then, there is a subject-to-subject relationship that is unique and that differs from human intersubjectivity<sup>much</sup> more than it resembles it.

Thirdly, when I think of myself, when we speak of ourselves, then what we think and speak of is a referred content, an object. Still that content is the subject or subjects. It is named, accordingly, the subject as object or the subjects as object. In like manner when total loving thinks of God, affirms him, worships him, speaks of him, God is a referred content, an object. Still for total loving that object is the unique Subject. ~~We may name~~ So we may speak of the Subject as object. On the other hand, inasmuch as there is raised and discussed and perhaps answered the question of God, God is a referred content, an object. Moreover, such discussion ~~does not~~ need not presuppose total loving, and so of itself it regards God just as object. Now between these two cases there are manifest differences in the human subjects, for different levels of operation are involved, and the subject is more himself the

higher the level on which he is operating. Moreover, these differences in operation and level imply that God is ~~a~~ differently apprehended in the two cases. But it does not at once follow, as seems too often to be assumed, that the different apprehensions regard different Gods. On the contrary, that conclusion follows only when the two apprehensions, so far from being compatible, complementary, and mutually enriching, are so incompatible and contradictory that there is no <sup>1</sup> hope of their being brought together by a process of mutual clarification<sup>1</sup> and correction.

I have attempted, then, to make clear the utterly singular aspects of religious faith. But, at the same time, I have argued against those that would so exploit the singularity of faith as to exclude all continuity in religious development and <sup>t</sup> so separate believers <sup>so much</sup> from other men as to force them into a cultural ghetto.

It is also true, of course, that my statements have been confined to the deeper<sup>1</sup> <sup>and so more general</sup> aspects of faith. But it is the task, not of the methodologist, but of the theologian, ~~to~~ to tackle the problem<sup>1</sup> of determining just what believers are to believe. <sup>To</sup> ~~In~~ the performance of that task the present analysis ~~make~~ <sup>may</sup> provide a preliminary basis and even its very generality may have the utility of indicating the possibility of a completely sincere <sup>and</sup> ~~yet~~ honestly ecumenical approach.



5. Conversions and Breakdowns

Conversion may be intellectual, moral, or religious.

Intellectual conversion is a radical ~~conversion and~~ clarification and, consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading set of myths about reality, objectivity, and human knowledge. It distinguishes the world of immediacy and the world mediated by meaning; the distinction, <sup>is made,</sup> ~~occurs,~~ it will be noted, by <sup>an act of</sup> ~~by~~ meaning. It acknowledges the reality and the priority of the world of immediacy; but the acknowledgement, of course, is effected by meaning. It grants that without the world of immediacy we would never arrive at a world mediated by meaning; and granting this is ~~what~~ an act of meaning. It goes on to point out that any questions one asks about the world of immediacy or any answers one gives only serve to make the world of immediacy one of the objects meant within the world mediated by meaning. ~~Finally, it adds that any notions one may form or any criteria one may assign concerning human knowing, its objectivity, and the reality to be known, all result from acts of meaning.~~ Finally, it adds that any account of human knowing, <sup>of</sup> ~~its~~ criteria of objectivity, and of the universe thereby known, must be an account not simply of the world of immediacy but of that <sup>intricate</sup> world and of the process from it to the world mediated by meaning.

~~This brings us to the three basic alternatives in philosophy: empiricism, idealism, and realism.~~

Now the cognitional myth, at least for visual Western man, is that the real is out there now, and that objectivity is a matter of taking <sup>ing</sup> a good look. But from what has been said,

it ~~do~~ follows that among the ~~criteria~~ <sup>criteria</sup> of objectivity there must be some <sup>very</sup> immanent in the <sup>process</sup> ~~of knowing~~ from the world of immediacy to the world mediated by meaning. When those criteria are ignored or rejected as merely subjective, there arises an empiricism. When it is discovered that in fact human knowing is anything but ~~it~~ just taking a good look, there arises an idealism. Only when one ~~one~~ uncovers the intentional self-transcendence of the process of coming to know, does a critical realism become possible.

The matter is not a mere technical ~~point~~ point in philosophy. For empiricisms, idealisms, and realisms name three totally different horizons with no common identical objects. An idealist never means what an empiricist means, and a realist never means what either of them means. So an empiricist ~~concludes that quantum theory cannot be about any physical~~ reality; an idealist adds that that is what he has been saying all along; a critical realist disagrees with both, for quantum theory refers to reality as much as any other verified hypothesis. What affects natural science, more gravely affects human science. The basic problems of philosophy can be and have been all repeated and rehashed, mostly incompetently, within the more concrete and more complicated contexts of psychology, sociology, anthropology, hermeneutics, historiography, ethics, religious ~~and~~ studies, and theology. Nor is one lightly to suppose that this sort of thing will not continue. It took a vigorous and long-sustained campaign to eliminate the flat-earthers. It will take more to put an end to the ~~myth that objectivity is a matter of taking a good look.~~

will argue that quantum theory cannot be about physical reality; it cannot, because it deals not with objects as such but only with relations between phenomena. The idealist will concur and add that, of course, the same is true of all theories and <sup>of</sup> the whole of human knowing. The critical realist will <sup>A</sup> disagree with both: any verified hypothesis probably is true, and what probably is true ~~probably~~ refers to what in reality <sup>probably</sup> is so. To change the illustration, what are historical facts? For the empiricist <sup>1</sup> they are what was out there and capable of being looked at. For the idealist they are mental constructions carefully based on data recorded in ~~the~~ documents. For the critical realist they are events in the world truly mediated by acts of meaning. To take a third illustration, what is a myth? There are psychological, anthropological, philosophic answers to the question. But besides these there are also reductionist answers: myth is a narrative about entities not to be found within an empiricist, an historicist, an existentialist horizon. Enough of illustrations. They can <sup>be</sup> multiplied indefinitely, for philosophic issues are universal in scope and some form of naive realism seems to appear utterly unquestionable to visual Western man. As soon as he begins to speak of knowing, of objectivity, of reality, there crops up the assumption that knowing is a sort of looking. To be ~~liberated~~ liberated from that blunder, to discover the intentional self-transcendence in the human process of coming to know, is to break <sup>often</sup> long-ingrained habits of thought and speech and to acquire the ~~the~~ mastery in one's own house that comes of knowing what one <sup>is</sup> is doing when one is knowing. It is a conversion, a new beginning, a fresh start.

Moral conversion changes the criterion of one's decisions and choices from satisfactions to values. As children or minors we are persuaded, cajoled, ordered, compelled to do what is right. As our knowledge of human reality increases, as our <sup>responses to</sup> ~~perceptions of~~ human values are strengthened and refined, more and more our mentors leave us to ourselves so that our liberty may exercise its ever advancing thrust toward authenticity. So we move to the existential moment when we discover that our choosing affects ourselves more than the chosen objects, and that it is up to each of us to decide for himself what he is to make ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> himself. It is the time for the exercise of vertical liberty and, then, moral conversion ~~now~~ consists in opting for the truly good, for value against satisfaction when value and satisfaction conflict. Such conversion, of course, falls far short of moral perfection. Not only is ~~being~~ willing less than doing. One has to overcome one's individual, ~~individual~~ group, or general bias. One has to keep developing

On this threefold bias, see Insight, pp. 218-242.

one's knowledge of human reality and potentiality in the <sup>decline.</sup> ~~decline~~  
 One has to keep distinct its elements of progress and ~~decline~~  
 existing historical situation. <sup>proper</sup> One has to keep scrutinizing  
 one's intentional responses to values and their implicit  
 scales of preferences. One has to listen to criticism  
 and protest. One must remain ready to learn from others,  
 for moral knowledge is the <sup>proper</sup> possession only of ~~qualifier~~  
 morally good men and, until one has ~~earned~~ <sup>earned</sup> merited that title,  
 one ~~is~~ has still to advance and to learn.

Religious conversion is being grasped by ultimate concern. It is other-worldly falling in love. It is total and permanent self-surrender without conditions, qualifications, reserves. But it is such a surrender, not as an act, but as a dynamic state distinct from, prior to, <sup>and</sup> principle of subsequent acts. It is revealed <sup>in retrospect</sup> as an under-tow of existential consciousness, as a fated acceptance of a vocation to holiness, as an increasing passivity in prayer. It is interpreted differently in ~~different~~ the context of different religions. For Christians it is the love of God poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. It is the gift of grace, and the distinction is drawn between operative and cooperative grace. Operative grace is the replacement of the heart of stone by a heart of flesh, a replacement beyond the horizon of the heart of stone. Cooperative grace is the heart of flesh becoming effective in good works through human liberty. Operative grace is religious conversion. Cooperative grace is the effectiveness of conversion, its full and complete transformation of the whole of one's living and feeling, one's thoughts, words, deeds.

— of operative grace may be found in my  
 A fuller treatment, ~~may be found in my "Gratia operans"~~  
~~"St. Thomas Aquinas,"~~ "now is the time for all good men"  
 "St. Thomas' Thought on Gratia operans," Theological Studies,  
 2(1941) 289-324; 3(1942) 69-88, 375-402, 533-578.

~~Moral conversion goes beyond~~

As intellectual and moral conversion, so also religious conversion is a modality of self-transcendence. Intellectual conversion is to truth attained by intentional self-transcendence; ~~and~~ moral  $\uparrow$  conversion is to values apprehended, affirmed, and realized by a real self-transcendence; ~~and~~ religious conversion is to a total being-in-love as the efficacious ground of all self-transcendence whether in the pursuit of truth or in the apprehension, affirmation, and realization ~~of~~ <sup>other</sup> ~~values~~ of human values or in the orientation man adopts to the universe, its ground, and its goal.

Because intellectual, moral, and religious conversions all have to do with ~~self~~ self-transcendence, it is possible, when all three occur within a single consciousness, to conceive their relationships in terms of sublation. This means that, if one takes moral conversion as higher than

The meaning<sup>s</sup> is Karl Rahner's rather than Hegel's. See K. Rahner, Hörer des Wortes, München (Kösel) 1963, p. 40.

intellectual, and religious conversion<sup>as</sup> higher than moral, then the higher goes beyond the lower, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis yet, so far from interfering with the lower or destroying it, <sup>needs it,</sup> includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context. So moral conversion goes beyond the value, truth, to values generally; it promotes the subject  $\rightarrow$  to <sup>a new, existential</sup> ~~the new~~ level of consciousness and establishes him as an originating value; but this in no way interferes with or  $\downarrow$  weakens his devotion ~~to truth, for one has to know the reality~~

to truth. He still needs truth, for ~~one~~<sup>he</sup> must apprehend reality ~~and~~<sup>and</sup> real potentiality before ~~one~~<sup>he</sup> can respond to its value. The truth he needs is still the truth attained in accord with the ~~exist~~ exigences of rational consciousness. But now his pursuit of it is all the more meaningful and significant because it occurs within <sup>and plays an essential role in,</sup> the far richer context of the pursuit of all values. Similarly, ~~the~~ religious conversion goes beyond moral. Questions for intelligence, for reflection, for deliberation reveal the eros the human spirit, its capacity and its desire for self-transcendence. But that capacity meets fulfilment, that desire turns to joy, when religious conversion transforms the existential subject into <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ subject in love, <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ subject held, grasped, possessed, owned through a total and so other-worldly love. There is then a new basis for all valuing and all doing good. In no way are the fruits of intellectual or moral conversion negated or diminished; on the contrary, all <sup>human</sup> pursuit of the true and the good is included within and furthered by a context and purpose and, as well, there now ~~cosmic process and now there~~ accrues to man the power of <sup>to enable him</sup> love to accept the suffering involved in undoing the effects of decline.

It is not to be thought, however, that religious conversion means no more than a <sup>f</sup> new and more efficacious ground for the pursuit of intellectual and moral ends. Religious loving is without qualifications, reserves, conditions. ~~Its object must be other worldly. now is the time for all~~ This lack of limitation, though it corresponds to the unrestricted character of human questioning, does not ~~pertain to things of this world. It is at once terrible and strange, an opening out to absolute value, a response of~~

pertain to this world. Holiness<sup>s</sup> abounds in moral goodness but it has a distinct dimension of its own. It is other-worldly fulfilment, joy, peace, bliss; in Christian experience these are the epiphenomena of a being-in-love that is the gift of ~~A~~ loving <sup>a</sup> mysterious and uncomprehended God. Sinfulness similarly is distinct from moral evil; it is the<sup>y</sup> privation of total loving, a radical lovelessness. It can be hidden by ~~sustained superficiality, by absorption in the~~ by sustained superficiality, by evading ultimate questions, by absorption in all that the world offers to challenge our resourcefulness, <sup>bodies, and to distract</sup> and to relax our ~~bodies and~~ our minds. But escape may not be permanent. <sup>^</sup> ~~It can be confronted~~ and then instead of fulfilment there is unrest, instead of joy there is fun, instead of peace there is disgust, a depressive disgust with oneself ~~and~~ or a manic, hostile, even violent disgust with mankind.

~~Religious experience has to do with the alternation of sinfulness and holiness. Sin is not a descent but a fall, a defilement that leaves the sinner unclean, an object of loathing, separated from God, rejected, an outcast. His guilt calls for a mediator, inspired by love, that will show the way from death to resurrection, from estrangement to acceptance, from offence to reconciliation, that will make manifest the love that can change lovelessness to love.~~

~~Besides conversions there are breakdowns. Religion can be challenged as illusion; there is too much evil in the world for a good God to exist. Morality can be challenged as hypocrisy, pretentiousness, sentimentality, an ignorance of psychology, of sociology, of human engineering, of the world as it is, of the way things in fact have worked out in the past and, for all we know, will work out in the future. The world mediated by meaning can be brushed~~



Religious conversion is from sinfulness to holiness, from radical lovelessness to other-worldly being-in-love, from captivity to the powers of darkness to redemption and liberation in the kingdom of God. It is the new beginning that looks back on sin with the eyes of ~~repentance~~ contrition. Sin is not just moral fault, but a detestable offence against the goodness of God. The fact that I have sinned calls forth both regret and sorrow for the past and the <sup>firmest</sup> purpose not to sin in the future. But can such detestation, such sorrow, such purpose change anything? The Christian answer is the mediating death and resurrection of Christ, for "in Christ God was ~~at~~ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5, 19).

Besides conversions there are breakdowns. What has been built up so slowly and <sup>so</sup> laboriously by the individual, the society, the culture, can ~~collapse~~ collapse. Intentional self-transcendence is <sup>neither</sup> ~~not~~ an easy notion to grasp nor a readily accessible <sup>datum</sup> ~~fact~~ of consciousness to be verified. That the real is what you feel, may be crude <sup>for most men</sup> but it is convincing. Values have a certain esoteric imperiousness, but <sup>can they outweigh</sup> ~~what~~ of carnal pleasure, ~~or~~ wealth, ~~or~~ power? Religion undoubtedly had its day, but is not that day over? Is it not an ~~illusion~~ illusory comfort for weaker souls, an opium distributed by the rich to quieten the poor, a mythical projection of man's own excellence into the sky? ~~So much of what we know is known, not by immanently generated knowledge, but by belief that such questions have only to be taken seriously for doubt to set in and answers to be awaited in vain.~~

Initially, not all but some religion is pronounced illusory, not all but some moral precept is rejected as ineffective and ~~useless~~ useless, not all truth but some type of metaphysics is condemned as mere talk. The negations may be true, ~~from~~ an effort to offset decline. They may be false, the beginning of decline. In the latter case some part of past cultural achievement is being destroyed. It will cease being a familiar component in cultural experience; it will recede into a forgotten past for historians, perhaps, to rediscover and reconstruct. Moreover, this elimination of a <sup>genuine</sup> part means that a previous whole has been mutilated, that some balance has been upset, that the remainder will become distorted in an effort to fill the vacuum, to take over the functions once performed by the part that has been dropped. Finally, such elimination, mutilation, distortion will have to be ardently admired as the forward march of progress; and while they may give rise to objective grounds for ~~↓~~ further criticism, that can be met by still more progress by way of still more elimination, mutilation, distortion. Once a process of dissolution has begun, it tends to perpetuate itself. Nor is it confined to some single, uniform course. Different nations, different classes of society, different ~~age~~ age-groups can select different parts of past achievement for elimination, different mutilations to be effected, different distortions to be provoked. Increasing dissolution will then be matched by increasing divisions, incomprehension, suspicion, distrust, hostility, hatred, violence. The body social is torn apart in many ways, and its cultural soul has been rendered incapable of reasonable convictions and responsible commitments.

For convictions and commitments rest on judgements of fact and judgements of value. Such judgements, in turn, rest largely on beliefs. For few, indeed, are the people that, pressed on almost any point, must not shortly have recourse to what they have believed. But such recourse can be efficacious only when believers present a solid front, only when intellectual, moral, religious skeptics are a ~~with~~ small and, as yet, uninfluential minority. But their numbers can increase, their influence can mount, their voices can take over the book market, the educational system, the mass media. Then believing begins to work not for but against intellectual, moral, religious self-transcendence. What <sup>had been</sup> ~~was~~ an uphill but universally respected course collapses into the peculiarity of an outdated minority.

### Conclusion

~~Immediate to each of us is oneself as subject of intentional consciousness on its experiential, intellectual, rational, and existential levels. In the present chapter we have <sup>been</sup> appealing to that immediacy, either individually or in successive generations of groups, to clarify and interrelate <sup>a</sup> the set of notions relevant to a characterization <sup>t</sup> of horizons, of their differences, of the changes they undergo. Much could be added. But, as befits a book on theological method, my main ~~inte~~ effort has been to ~~indicate a concrete context for inquiry into religion.~~ <sup>the beginnings of</sup> ~~Had I not written the book, Insight, a much fuller treatment~~~~