

5. Pluralism and Conversion

Conversion may be intellectual, moral, or religious.

By intellectual conversion a person frees himself from confusing the criteria of the world of immediacy with the criteria of the world mediated by meaning. By moral conversion he is motivated primarily not by satisfactions but by values. By religious conversion he comes to love God with his whole heart and his whole soul and with all his mind and all his strength; in consequence, he will love his neighbor as himself.

The authentic Christian strives for intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. Without intellectual conversion he ~~potentially~~ ^{not only} misapprehends the world mediated by meaning but also the word God has spoken within that world. Without moral conversion he pursues not what truly is good but what only apparently is good. Without religious conversion he is in the world without hope and without God (Eph 2, 12).

In any given individual all three types of conversion may be present, or any two, or any one, or none at all. There result eight different possibilities: one of the fully converted; three of the doubly converted; three of the singly converted; and one of the unconverted. Accordingly, the presence and absence of conversion -- intellectual or moral or religious -- gives rise to another variety of pluralism.

Further, the eight possibilities we have listed are no more than an initial sketch of the differences to be encountered. For a conversion is the beginning of a new mode of development. Beyond this beginning, then, there is the development itself. It may be great or average or small. It may be marred by few or by many relapses. The relapses may be completely corrected or they may leave their trace in a subsequent bias, and the bias

world mediated by meaning but also the word God has spoken within that world. Without moral conversion he tends to pursue ^{not} ~~what~~ what truly is good but only what apparently is good. Without religious conversion he is desolate: in the world without hope and without God (Eph 2, 12).

In any individual conversion can be present or absent; it can be present in one or two or all three dimensions; it can be enriched by development, or distorted by aberration, and the development and aberration may be great or small. Such differences give rise to a still further type of pluralism. Besides the pluralism involved in the transition from classicist to more modern culture, and the pluralism resulting from undifferentiated and variously differentiated consciousness, there is the more radical pluralism that arises when not all are authentically human and authentically Christian.

While the relevance and importance of moral and religious conversion will be readily granted, hesitation may be felt about intellectual conversion. Is it not a philosophic issue? Can theologians be expected to solve philosophic problems? Now it is of course a philosophic issue, and theologians cannot be required to ~~master philosophy~~ solve the problems that the philosophers themselves have not mastered. But none the less the issue also is an existential matter. Theologians have minds. They use them. They may use them properly, and they may use them improperly. And unless they are ready to face this issue fairly and squarely, then they will be countenancing a measure of pluralism that allow those that care to to forget about dogmas and doctrines.

While the importance of moral and religious conversion will be readily granted, hesitation may be felt about intellectual conversion. At best it is a philosophic matter, and few philosophers have had anything to say about it. Now I grant that defining intellectual conversion and establishing its importance in the context of contemporary philosophy would be an awesome task. But what is so defined is existential. For intellectual conversion is spontaneous and ~~is~~ implicit or it is reflective and explicit. It occurs spontaneously and implicitly when a boy or girl reaches the age of reason. Then there are superseded earlier criteria of reality. Are you awake? Can you see it? Is it heavy? In their place comes the more fundamental and much broader criterion of sufficient evidence or sufficient reason. However, the superseded criteria can return and function, unless they are explicitly repudiated. It was not in his childhood that Tertullian asked, Who will ~~deny that God is a body? Or as Kant equivalently put it in the first sentence of the Transcendental Aesthetic in the Critique of Pure Reason, Who will deny that immediate knowing is taking a look? now is the time for all good men to come to~~ deny that God is a body? Or as Kant with infinitely more sophistication put it in the first sentence of the Transcendental Aesthetic in the Critique of Pure Reason, Our cognitional operations are immediately related to objects only by Anschauung.

While the importance of moral and religious conversion will be readily granted, hesitation may be felt about intellectual conversion on the ground that it is merely philosophic. But what is ^{immediately} in question is not any philosophic doctrine but an explicit existential change. Intellectual conversion occurs spontaneously inasmuch as the boy or girl reaches the age of reason. In earlier childhood rough and ready criteria had been worked out and they sufficed for distinguishing the real from the imaginary. Reaching the age of reason involves replacing the earlier criteria with the criterion of sufficient evidence^s or sufficient reason. But the earlier can return. It was not in his childhood that Tertullian asked, Who would deny that God is a body?

may be grave or venial.

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PROF. G. B. ...

CONCERNING THE ...

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I think that the full importance of moral and religious conversion will be granted readily enough. But the word, intellectual, is apt to arouse so much passion at the present time, that one cannot but fear that the importance of intellectual conversion will not be grasped and so will be discounted or denied. Let me say, then, that to speak of intellectual conversion is not to deny that Scholasticism has broken down. It is not to restore the Aristotelian over-valuation of speculative intellect. It is not to argue for the enforcement of orthodoxy by the backward. It is not a concern for essences or for abstract principles. It merely points out that believers and, as well, theologians have minds, that they use them, that they can use them properly or improperly, that proper use rests on a clarification that often is lacking. Before reaching the age ^{of} or reason with have rough and ready ways of distinguishing between the real and the merely imaginary. By reaching the age ^{spontaneously} of reason we begin to employ subtler and far more exact criteria. If later on we happen to study philosophy and ask ourselves what we mean by reality, we find it so much easier to objectify the criteria employed in childhood than the subtler and far more exact criteria spontaneously introduced inasmuch as the age of reason is reached.

study of that occasion and the exegetical study of the declaration can one arrive at the proper ~~the~~ meaning ^{of the} ~~of the~~ dogma.

Now such historical and exegetical work is greatly facilitated, inasmuch as the dogmas cluster into a single ongoing context, inasmuch ~~merges~~ ^{as} the context merges into a static, classicist culture and profoundly influences it, inasmuch as there is developed a theoretical theology that integrates the theology and the dogmas with a philosophic view of the cosmos, inasmuch as the philosophy is derived from a single source and is further strengthened in its unity by the dogmas, and finally inasmuch as the scholarly differentiation of consciousness is rarely attained so that cultural and other differences tend to be overlooked.

But this happy situation can change radically. Classicist culture can yield place to modern culture with its dynamic pluralism. The sciences can occupy the whole realm of theory, and thereby compel philosophy to migrate from the realm of theory to the realm of interiority, or religion, or art, or the undifferentiated consciousness of ^{some brand of} common sense. Then philosophic pluralism will be radical with those opting for one differentiation of consciousness well nigh unintelligible ~~to~~ to those opting for another. Scholars can become a large and endlessly diligent group perpetually bringing to light hitherto unnoticed differences. Finally, theologians can desert theology for scholarship; both theologians and scholars can be convinced that recourse to philosophy is foolhardy; and religiously differentiated consciousness can remain assured that religion is a matter not for the head but for the heart.

when it recast Christian belief into a mould derived from Aristotle, deserted ~~the~~ neither divine revelation nor scripture not the councils. And modern theologians, if they transpose medieval theory into terms derived from modern interiority, would do for their age what the Scholastics did for theirs.

There has existed down the ages, then, a notable pluralism ~~of expression. There is currently emerging now is the time for~~ of expression. Currently there is quietly disappearing the old classicist insistence on worldwide uniformity and there is emerging a pluralism of representations and communications. To say that the gospel is to be preached to all nations is to say that it has to be preached to every class in every culture in a manner that accords with the assimilative powers of that class and culture.

But a more fundamental pluralism has to be taken into account. We have distinguished realms of common sense, transcendence, theory, ~~an~~ scholarship, interiority; to them might well be added the realm of the aesthetic, of art. ^{effectively} To move from ~~any~~ the realm of common sense into one or more of the others involves a differentiation of consciousness. The occurrence of such differentiations can result in some ^{, if} sixteen (thirty-two in art is included) different combinations.

Now such a pluralism of types of consciousness calls for ~~another pluralism of communications. Communications differ~~ ~~when one addresses undifferentiated consciousness or an~~ ~~undifferentiated consciousness with a slight tincture of theory~~ ~~another pluralism in communications. There makes now is the time~~

10. Pluralism and the Unity of Faith

There are three sources of pluralism. First, linguistic, ^{almost endlessly} social, and cultural differences generate different brands of common sense. Secondly, consciousness may be undifferentiated; and it may differentiate to deal effectively with such different realms as those of common sense, of transcendence, of theory, of scholarship, of interiority; these differentiations may combine so that, mathematically, there are sixteen distinct ways (thirty-two if the realm of the aesthetic is added) in which consciousness may be structured and its world envisaged. Thirdly, in any individual there may be the mere beginnings, some progress, or the high development of intellectual, of moral, and of religious conversion. Finally, the foregoing differences are cumulative. One is born in a given linguistic, social, and cultural milieu. One's consciousness may remain undifferentiated or it may differentiate in various manners. One may fail to attain any type of conversion or one may become converted in one or two or all three respects.

Now there are two quite opposed manners of dealing with such pluralism. The first is to ignore the facts. The second is to face the facts.

One succeeds in ignoring the facts by conceiving culture normatively. For what is normative also is universal, if not de facto, at least de iure. There exist the simple faithful, the people, the natives, the barbarians. Unfortunately, ~~thave~~ they lack culture. One does what one can for them, in catechetics, in homilies, in the liturgy, in the confessional, in all the more recent developments for the cure of souls. But one would sin by excess of charity if one fancied that they set the

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The root and ground of unity is charity, agape, the fact that God's love has flooded our hearts through the Holy Spirit ^{both} he has given us (Rom 5, 5). The acceptance of that gift constitutes religious conversion and leads to moral and to intellectual conversion.

However, religious conversion, if it is Christian, is not just a state of mind and heart. Essential to it is an intersubjective, interpersonal component. Besides the gift of Spirit within, there is the outward encounter with Christian witness. That witness recalls the fact that of old in many ways God has spoken to us through the prophets but in this latest age through his Son (Heb 1, 1.2).

The function of church doctrines lies within the function of bearing witness. For there are mysteries revealed by God and infallibly declared by the church (DS 3016, 3020). Their meaning is beyond the vicissitudes of human historical process. But the contexts, within which such meaning is grasped and expressed, vary both ^{with} cultural differences and with the measure in which consciousness ~~is~~ is differentiated.

Such variation is familiar to us from the past. For the revelation of the mysteries, according to Vatican II, occurred not through words alone but through words and events. The apostolic preaching was addressed not only to the Jews in the thought-forms of Spätjudentum but also to the Greeks in their language and idiom. The New Testament writings ^{spoke} ~~spoke~~ to the ^{whole} man, but the Christological councils ^{aimed} ~~aim~~ at conveying as exactly as possible just what was true. Scholastic theology,

Now such ongoing contexts are subject to many influences. They are distorted by the totally or partly unconverted that usually are unaware of the imperfections of their outlook. They are divided by the presence of people with undifferentiated or differently differentiated consciousness. They are separated because members of different cultures construct different contexts by finding different questions relevant and different answers intelligible.

Such differences give rise to a pluralism, and the pluralism gives rise to incomprehension and exasperation. The unconverted cannot understand the converted, and the partly converted cannot understand the totally converted. Inversely, because they are misunderstood, the converted are exasperated by the unconverted. Again, undifferentiated consciousness does not understand differentiated consciousness, and partially differentiated consciousness does not understand a fourfold differentiated consciousness. Inversely, because it is met with incomprehension more adequately differentiated consciousness is exasperated by less adequately differentiated consciousness. Finally, our historically minded contemporaries have no difficulty understanding the ghettos in which a classicist mentality still reigns, but the people in the classicist ghettos not only have no experience of serious historical investigation but also are quite unaware of the historicity of their own assumptions.

There exists, then a stubborn fact of pluralism. It is grounded in cultural difference, in greater or less differentiation of consciousness, and in the presence and absence of religious, moral, and intellectual conversion. How such pluralism is to be met within the unity of faith, is a question yet to be considered. But first we must attempt to indicate how to reconcile the permanence with the historicity of the dogmas.