

Donald Mathers Lectures: Religious Studies and Theology

Introduction and Lecture 1: Religious Experience

Thank you, Dr Cook. Ladies and Gentlemen, When the committee in charge of the Donald Mathers Memorial Lectures very generously invited me to give the 1976 lectures, for many reasons I was prompted to accept. First of all, the invitation was charmingly phrased, and of course that puts one in a good mood. But further, it reminded me of Donald Mathers himself, whom I met and with whom I collaborated, very happily indeed, some nine years ago at the International Theological Congress held in Toronto in the centenary year of Canadian confederation.

I was drawn to Queen's University, then, both by the committee's encouraging invitation and by my own memory of the man they wish to honor. But motives alone are not enough. One has to have something to talk about. Fortunately, there came to hand an issue of *Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses* in which appeared Charles Davis's paper on 'The Reconvergence of Theology and Religious Studies.' Moreover, the paper was preceded by a stimulating editorial and followed by the comments and rejoinders of no less than five professors from across Canada. It seemed to me that there did exist a topic of notable interest to those engaged in Canadian schools of theology and/or religious studies. More to the point, I can see the possibility of my making some contribution to the issue. For I had recently published a book on method in theology. I had conceived that method along interdisciplinary lines. It occurred to me that from an interdisciplinary viewpoint religious studies and theology would be regarded not as simply identical nor again as alternative and mutually exclusive options but as at once distinct and complementary.

There is, I think, a certain plausibility to this approach. Religious studies and theologies are not identical but distinct. The theologies tend to be as many and diverse as the religious convictions they express and represent. In contrast, religious studies envisage all religions, and so far from endeavoring to arbitrate between opposed religious convictions, commonly prefer to describe and understand the rituals and symbols, the origins and distributions, the history and influence of religions.

If many, I feel, will readily grant the distinctness, some will hesitate before acknowledging complementarity. I myself would agree with their hesitation if it arises from complementarity, not as an ideal for the future but as an account of common practice in the past. But precisely because my personal interest is method, I am inclined to see in the practice of the past the beginnings of a new practice for the future. Insofar as religious studies have been shifting from detached description to understanding and even empathy, insofar as Friedrich Heiler has been able to view the history of religious as a cooperation for the cooperation of religions, insofar as such cooperation has begun to be realized in ecumenical dialogue, in the clustering of diverse theological schools, in Christian ascetics frequenting Zen monasteries, in that measure there have emerged the signs of the times that invite a methodologist to explore the foundations for an interdisciplinary approach to religious studies and theology.

My purpose, then, in these lectures will not be to demonstrate what is necessary. It will not be to forecast what is probable. It will be to invite you to share in an exploration of a proposal. For issues in method are practical issues. They regard possible courses of action. They set forth objects of free choice. They have their pro's and their con's. Only with time do they advance in clarity and precision. Only with a lag do they begin to gain acceptance. Only when

they are put in practice and the fruits of practice are found to be good does acceptance spread and performance become common.

I have been attempting a general introduction, and now I must try briefly to be specific. The three lectures have the three titles: first, 'Religious Experience,' second, 'Religious Knowledge,' and third, 'Religious Studies and/or Theology.' In all three lectures the ultimate concern is the complementarity of religious studies and theology, but this theme is treated directly and explicitly only in the third lecture. The first, on religious experience, tonight, is concerned to work out those aspects of religious studies that favor Friedrich Heiler's view of the history of religions as a preparation for the cooperation of religions. The second, on religious knowledge, turns to those aspects of theology that underpin its capacity for developing an interdisciplinary viewpoint and so for extending contemporary ecumenical and universalist interests to include familiarity and interdependence with religious studies. The first lecture, then, on religious experience.

Traditionally man was defined by the Greeks as the *zoon logikon*, in Latin *animal rationale*, and in English the rational animal. More concretely today he is regarded as the symbolic animal, whose knowledge is mediated by symbols, whose actions are informed by symbols, whose existence in its most characteristic features is constituted by a self-understanding and by commitments specified through symbols. On the abstract view man was understood as nature. On the relatively recent view man is understood as historic. For the symbols that inform his being vary with the cultures into which he is born, and the cultures themselves change with the passage of time. They emerge, they develop, they flourish, they influence one another, they can go astray, vanish with their former carriers, only to reappear with fresh vitality and vigor grafted upon new hosts.

The symbolic animal in his endless manifestations is the object of human studies. In the multiplicity of human studies one department is religious studies. It is a singular department, for its symbols are human indeed, for they express the spirit of man, yet at the same time commonly they purport to refer to what is beyond man, what is beyond anything in this world that man can observe and therefore come to study and to know.

It is the singularity of religious symbols that gives rise to the distinction between religious studies and theology. For religious studies leave to theology questions concerned with what is believed to be more than man, what is not of this world. They confine their attention, as does the whole of modern science, to what is within this world, to the things men experience, and even, exceptionally, to human experiencing itself. Nor is there any doubt, in my opinion, about the general soundness of this restriction. For modern sciences are defined by their methods and their fields and, clearly enough, the same method cannot be employed both in investigating what lies within human experience and in investigating what lies beyond it.

The paper falls into three sections: first, the ambiguity of experience; secondly, the development of religious experience; and thirdly, the context, the immanent context, of religious experience.

1 The Ambiguity of Experience

The distinction I have drawn raises further questions. Some of them are philosophic or theological. But the one that calls for immediate attention has to do with the ambiguity of the word 'experience.' For that word commonly is used as a synonym for knowledge and, indeed, for thorough and especially for practical knowledge. We speak of men of experience and thereby

we mean men who have long been engaged in some trade or profession, some art or craft, and have come to possess a full and balanced knowledge of the ins and outs of their calling.

But there is another meaning at times given to the word 'experience,' and it is this meaning that concerns us here. It occurs in certain analyses of the various components that together make up human knowing. It is employed to denote an infrastructure within knowing, and its significance resides in a contrast between this infrastructure and a suprastructure.

I shall illustrate this from empirical science, from clinical psychology, and from the psychology of peak experiences.

To take a first illustration, any scientist will distinguish sharply between his hypothesis and the data to which he appeals. To the data the hypothesis adds a suprastructure of context, problems, discovery, formulation. But the data, as appealed to, are not yet the infrastructure. As appealed to, the data are named. That naming supposes a scientific suprastructure of technical language and of the scientific knowledge needed to employ the technical language accurately. In turn, the technical language and the scientific knowledge presuppose an earlier ordinary language and the commonsense style of knowing that were employed in learning the science in the first place. Only when one goes behind ordinary language and commonsense knowing does one come to the infrastructure in its pure form. It is pure experience, the experience underpinning and distinct from every suprastructure. As outer experience it is sensation as distinct from perception. As inner experience it is consciousness as distinct not only from self-knowledge but also from any introspective process that goes from the data of consciousness and moves towards the acquisition of self-knowledge.

No doubt, a distinction between consciousness and self-knowledge may seem paradoxical. But I think a brief excursion into cognitional theory will take one from the paradox to the simple fact. We are all conscious of our sensing and our feeling, our inquiring and our understanding, our deliberating and deciding. None of these activities occurs when one is in a coma or in a dreamless sleep. In that basic sense they are conscious. Still, they are not yet properly known. They are just an infrastructure, a component within knowing that in large part remains merely potential. It is only when we heighten consciousness by adverting not only to objects but also to activities, when we begin to sort out the activities, to assign them their distinctive names, to distinguish and to relate, only then that we begin to move from the mere infrastructure that is consciousness to the compound of infrastructure and suprastructure that is man's knowledge of his own cognitional process.

What I have illustrated from cognitional theory also may be illustrated from psychiatry. There is Carl Rogers' client-centered therapy. It aims to provide the patient with an ambiance in which he feels at ease, permits his feelings to emerge, comes to distinguish them from other inner events, to compare different feelings with one another, to add recognition to their recurrence, to bestow names upon them, to manage gradually to encapsulate within a suprastructure of language and knowledge, of confidence and assurance, an infrastructure of feelings that by themselves had been an occasion for turmoil, disorientation, dismay, disorganization.

Again, but from a different viewpoint, a student of Carl Jung's [Hostie] has remarked that, for Jung, consciousness means reflective consciousness. Jung, he claims, refuses to name the contents of inner activities conscious unless the subject relates them explicitly and consciously to his own ego.

In contrast to Jung, Karen Horney writes: '... there is no strict alternative between conscious and unconscious, but ... there are... several levels of consciousness. Not only is the

repressed impulse still effective – one of the basic discoveries of Freud – but also in a deeper level of consciousness the individual knows about its presence.’ After making this point, Karen Horney proceeded to pin it down with a technical term: she would use the word ‘register’ when she meant that we know what is going on within us without our being aware of it. What’s the difference between knowing about it and being aware of it? It’s the difference between an infrastructure and a suprastructure.

In similar vein Wilhelm Stekel wrote: ‘Our thinking is a polyphony. There are always several thoughts working simultaneously, one of which is the bearer of the leading voice. The other thoughts represent the medium and low voices ... In this framework the whole material with which we deal in psychoanalysis is capable of becoming conscious. It is to be found predominately in the lower voices ... To quote Klages, the thing in question (the matter repressed) is not so much a thing that is not thought as one that is not recognized.’

We meet with a similar testimony when we turn from the clinical psychologists concerned with people who are unwell to the so-called ‘third force’ concerned with people who are conspicuously healthy. The late Abraham Maslow, onetime president of the American Psychological Association, set about investigating peak experiences. At first he supposed that such experiences occurred only rarely and then in exceptional individuals. But, as his investigation advanced, he discovered that peak experiences really were common, that most people had them, but that few were aware of the fact. In other words, like other experiences, peak experiences as such pertain to the infrastructure. It is one thing to have a peak experience. It is something else again to advert to it, to compare it with other experiences, to note its singularity, to draw up a scale of higher and lower, to assign this type of experience to the topmost rank, and to label it a peak experience. The thing can occur without the label. All such advertising, comparing, evaluating, labeling pertain to a suprastructure. Without them one can very well have peak experiences but then one will not be explicitly aware of having them.

So in another area we have a parallel to Wilhelm Stekel’s polyphony and Karen Horney’s many levels of consciousness. But in matters psychological what really clinches the issue is one’s own personal experience. Of course, you must not expect me to tell you what your own personal experience has been. All I can do is suggest lines of inquiry. For instance, are you aware of having made free choices? What was going forward when the question of choosing arose? Was it merely that some people were urging you to this and others urging you to that? Was it ever that within you there was a polyphony of higher and medium and lower voices, that they were not in harmony but discordant, that for your own inner peace you had to make up your mind and decide once and for all in favor of this or that alternative? Or again, to take a different example that some may find more familiar, have you ever been to a lecture, followed it attentively for a while, and then discovered that your mind was wandering off on some other topic? Have you been reading a book and found yourself thinking of some quite different matter? Or to become a bit theological, have you been to church and found yourself distracted in your prayer?

2 The Cultivation of Religious Experience

Because man is a symbolic animal, his development is only partly a matter of his genes. All its higher reaches depend upon his historical milieu with its techniques of socialization, acculturation, education. Where the kitten or puppy is born with built-in instincts and skills, the human infant is born with a helplessness that leaves room for indefinite plasticity. Its capacities

can be shaped along any of the lines that have been devised or may be devised by systems of symbols. Since such systems admit all but endless diversification and refinement, excellence in any walk of life is ever a matter of effort, training, education, encouragement, support.

What is true of the rest of human living, also is true of religious living. The sower, we read, went out to sow his seed, and some fell by the wayside, some among thorns, some on stony ground, but some on good soil where it brought forth fruit now thirty-, now sixty-, now a hundred-fold. The seed, we are told, is the word, for the word is the tool of the symbolic animal. The ground is human consciousness in the polyphony of its many levels. But consciousness does not heed when absorbed in outer cares, or distracted by pleasures, or hardened in waywardness. Even when it is fruitful, its fruitfulness will vary with the cultivation it has received.

In time there emerge professional cultivators: ascetics and mystics, or seers and prophets, or priests and ministers. There is sought the transformation of consciousness that makes possible a human life that is a life of prayer, a life in which religious experience has the upper voice. There is found the inspiration that speaks to the heart of a tribe or clan, a nation or people. There is worked out a stable organization that diffuses the transformation of consciousness of the ascetic or mystic and that radiates the inspiration of the prophet or seer. There is fostered the piety of a people that fears God. Religion becomes an institution, a distinct and palpable reality. It is a region of human culture, an integral part of the social order, an explicitly acknowledged part in a tribal or national tradition.

Religious studies take us back behind the institutionalization of religion to a prior age. Mircea Eliade has discerned archaic techniques of ecstasy in the shamanism of the central Asian plateau. He has described man's being-in-the-world when religion had not yet become a thing apart but rather penetrated the whole of living. Then places and ways formed an intelligible unity, not through road maps and street signs, but through their relations to a sacred place that was their center. Then the intervals of time were marked off, not by calendars and clocks, but by daily rituals and periodic festivals. Then the symbolic ordering that is the major constituent of human living was communicated, not through systems of public education, but through the traditional myths that told of the beginning of the world, of human destiny, of laudable deeds and abominable ways.

I have been contrasting major stages in the cultivation of religious experience: the sacralization of the universe and of the whole of human living in preliterate times; the emergence of religion as a distinct institution with its schools of ascetics, its prophetic traditions, its priesthoods; the contemporary phase in which such institutional religion appears to be in decline, the universe has been desacralized, and human living secularized.

It would be a mistake, I think, to concentrate on such differences to the neglect of what is more fundamental. For in the main such differences represent no more than the ongoing process in which man's symbols become ever more differentiated and specialized. What is fundamental is human authenticity, and it is twofold. There is the minor authenticity of the human subject with respect to the tradition that nourishes him. There is the major authenticity that justifies or condemns the tradition itself. The former leads to a human judgment on subjects. The latter invites the judgment of history upon traditions. Let me dwell briefly on both these forms.

As Kierkegaard asked whether he was really a Christian, so divers men can ask themselves whether or not they are genuine Catholics or Protestants, Moslems or Buddhists, Platonists or Aristotelians, Kantians or Hegelians, artists or scientists. They may answer that they are, and their answers may be correct. But it also can happen that they answer affirmatively and nonetheless are mistaken. In that case there will be a series of points in which what they are

coincides with what the ideals of the tradition demand. But there also will be another series marked by a greater or less divergence. These points of divergence tend to be overlooked. Whether from a selective inattention, or a failure to understand, or an undetected rationalization, the divergence exists. What I am is one thing, what a genuine Christian is is another, and I am unaware of the difference. My unawareness is unexpressed. I have no language to express what I really am, so I use the language of the tradition I unauthentically appropriate, and thereby I devalue, distort, water down, corrupt that language.

Such devaluation, distortion, corruption may occur only in scattered individuals, and then there occurs unauthenticity in its minor form. But it may also occur on a more massive scale, and then the words are repeated but the meaning is gone. The chair is still the chair of Moses, but it is occupied by scribes and Pharisees. The theology is still Scholastic, but the Scholasticism is decadent. The religious order still reads out the rules and studies the constitutions, but one may doubt whether the home fires are still burning. The sacred name of science is still invoked, but one can ask with Edmund Husserl whether any significant scientific ideal remains, whether in certain highly specialized areas the ideal has not been replaced by the conventions of a clique. Then the unauthenticity of individuals generates the unauthenticity of traditions. Then if one takes the tradition as it currently exists for one's standard, one can do no more than authentically realize unauthenticity. Such is unauthenticity in its tragic form, for then the best of intentions combines with a hidden decay.

So it is that commonly men have to pay a double price for their personal attainment of authenticity. Not only have they to undo their own lapses from righteousness but more grievously they have to discover what is wrong in the tradition they have inherited and they have to struggle against the massive undertow it sets up. Such resentment against the human condition offers some explanation, perhaps, of the attraction exercised by Rousseau's picture of the noble savage or, again, of the ever recurrent hopes that an earthly paradise would be ushered in by the revolutionary obliteration of the human past. But really the problem is not tradition but unauthenticity in the formation and transmission of tradition. The cure is not the undoing of tradition but the undoing of its unauthenticity.

The cure is not the undoing of tradition, for that is beyond our power. It is only through socialization, acculturation, education, that we come to know that there is such a thing as tradition, that it has its defects, its dangers, its seductions, that there are evils to be remedied. To learn as much is already to be a product of the tradition, to share its biases, to be marked in a manner that we can change only in the light of what we have learnt and in the directions that such learning opens up. However much we may react, criticize, endeavor to bring about change, the change itself will always be just another stage of the tradition, at most a new era, but one whose motives and whose goals – for all their novelty – will bear the imprint of their past. The issue is not tradition, for as long as men survive, there will be tradition, rich or impoverished, good or evil. The issue is the struggle of authenticity against unauthenticity, and that struggle is part and parcel of the human condition, of our being animals yet equipped to live not just by instinct but principally by the symbols by which we express our self-understanding (What are we?) and our commitments (What do we propose to do?).

3 The Immanent Context of Religious Experience

What is the infrastructure, by itself? Whether it refers to something beyond itself is another question.

In a public lecture at the University of Toronto in January 1968, Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith began by remarking that much fruitful energy had been devoted to exploring man's many religious traditions and to reconstructing the history of the overt data on man's religious living. Both in detail and in wide compass the observable forms have been observed and the observations have been recorded. But Professor Smith went on to claim that a further, a more important, and a more difficult question must be raised. To live religiously is not merely to live in the presence of certain symbols but, he urged, it is to be involved with them or through them in a quite special way – a way that may lead far beyond the symbols, that may demand the totality of a person's response, that may affect his relation not only to the symbols but to everything else, to himself, to his neighbor, to the stars.

Now just what is to be understood by man's relationship to the stars is a question for theology rather than religious studies. But we have been led rather naturally from a consideration of religious experience to the various ways in various cultures that men seek to promote religious experience and, no less naturally, we have been led from such group activity and its historical prolongations to the question of human authenticity. Now, while authenticity is not a topic alien to any aspect of human living, still it does attain special prominence in religious texts and monuments. Feelings of guilt, a sense of one's uncleanness, denunciations of unfaithfulness, all express failures to be authentic. Rituals of repentance, confessions of sinfulness, prayers for deliverance, testify to the desire for a reestablished authenticity. The posture and, above all, the features of the statue of the Buddha at prayer radiate a serenity that reveals what might be meant by authenticity attained. In brief, it has seemed to me that the notion of authenticity possesses a twofold relevance: it is relevant to the interpretation of recurrent elements in the observable phenomena collected and catalogued by students of religion; but it also is relevant to the inner commitment to which Professor Smith has invited our attention.

What, then, is commitment? Negatively, one might perhaps say that it is absent in the man or woman that just drifts through life, content to do what everyone else is doing, to say what everyone else is saying, to think what everyone else is thinking, where the 'everyone else' in question is just drifting too. Out of the company of drifters one steps when one faces the problem of personal existence, that is, when one finds out for oneself that one has to decide for oneself what one is to do with oneself, with one's life, with one's five talents or two or lonely one.

Commonly such a discovery, such a decision, such a program of self-actualization becomes effective and irrevocable when one falls in love. Then one's being becomes being-in-love. Such being-in-love is not without its antecedents, its causes, its conditions, its occasions. But once it has blossomed forth and as long as it lasts, it takes over. It becomes the immanent and effective first principle. From it flow one's desires and fears, one's joys and sorrows, one's discernment of values, one's day-to-day decisions and deeds.

Being-in-love is most conspicuous in the home: in the love of husband wife, of parents and children. Love gave rise to the marriage. Love gave rise to the offspring. Love keeps the family an ongoing, joyful affair. Nor is love unconnected with authenticity. A love that is not genuine is not the 'true love' that provides the recurrent theme in our older novels and poems and songs. Again, if today the institution of marriage is assailed, still authenticity can be invoked both to bolster and to repel the attack: to bolster it on the ground that the traditional institution has become unauthentic; to repel it on the ground that the innovators are lacking in the simpler authenticity of an earlier time. And in any case, they are finding fault, not with marriage but with unauthenticity.

Besides love in the home there is love of country. Here too our thinking has taken on the complexity of modern life. One is apt to brush aside as jingoism any old-style allegiance to one's country right or wrong. But in the measure that one does so, not only is one questioning the authenticity of once unquestioned loyalties, but also there is commonly to be found not an abolition but only a displacement of loyalty. It is no longer one's country that is given a blank check but a better social order within the country or better relations with other countries abroad. In brief, the exigence of authenticity leads to a reformulation but not an abolition of our allegiances where abuses have crept in or newer insights been gained.

Besides the love of home and the love of country there is a third love. To it there testifies a great religious tradition that proclaims: 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is the only Lord; love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength' (Mark 12.29-30). Of such love St Paul spoke as God's love flooding our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit he has given us (Romans 5.5). To the power of that love the same apostle bore witness with the words: '... there is nothing in death or life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is and the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths – nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8.38-39).

We have been asking about religious conviction, and we spoke first of mere drifting, then of its efficacious opposite, a being-in-love that becomes the first and **[tape transfer here, filled in from *A Third Collection*, to the end of the paragraph]** dominant principle in one's living, finally of the different modes of being-in-love, the love of intimacy that animates the family, the love of one's neighbor that animates a people, and the love of God which seems to be characteristic of authentic religious conviction in a great religious tradition of the Middle East and the West.

Whether such love pertains to religious conviction in other religious traditions is a large and intricate question. For the present we must pass it by, not only because of its diversity and complexity, but more fundamentally because to me it seems a mistaken method to seek generalization before one has tried to understand the particular. Accordingly, I propose to stick to the topic of this section, namely, the immanent context of religious experience, and so go on to ask in what manner God's love flooding our hearts is a human experience and just how it fits into human consciousness.

First, then, it is an experience, not in the broad sense that refers to the coming together and compounding of many conscious elements, but rather in the technical sense that refers to a single element and so constitutes not a structure but an infrastructure.

Secondly, consciousness is like a polyphony, or like a concerto that blends many themes in endless ways. So too religious experience within consciousness may be a leading voice or a middle one or a low one; it may be dominant and ever recurrent; it may be intermittently audible; it may be weak and low and barely noticeable. Again, religious experience may fit in perfect harmony with the rest of consciousness; it may be a recurrent dissonance that in time increases or fades away; it may vanish altogether, or, at the opposite extreme, it may clash violently with the rest of experience to threaten disruption and breakdown. As the metaphor from music offers an enormous variety of suggestions, so too the lives of men and women present every degree and shade in the intensity of religious experience, in the frequency of its recurrence, in the harmony or dissonance of its conjunction with the rest of consciousness.

Thirdly, as religious experience is found to vary when one compares one individual with another, so too it may be found to develop in the lifetime of this or that individual. Hence there

was long repeated the traditional distinction of three stages in the inner life. Beginners were said to be in the purgative way, for theirs was the initial task of reducing and, as far as possible, eliminating the conflict between their religious commitment and the other themes recurrent in their consciousness. Next came the illuminative way in which the significance and implications of religious commitment were ever more fully apprehended and understood. Finally, there was listed a unitive way in which potential conflicts were under control, the full significance of religious commitment was understood and accepted, and in mortal beings there could be verified the harvest of the Spirit catalogued by St Paul: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control' (Galatians 5.22).

Lastly, there are the somewhat intricate relationships between religious development and cognitive development in man. In its spontaneous unfolding cognitive development may be characterized as from below upwards: it proceeds from the data of experience through the unifications and relational networks spun by understanding towards a process of verification that ends with a verdict of acceptance or rejection. Moreover, there is a certain necessity to this order of development: without the unifications and relational networks spun by understanding there is nothing for a process of verification to test; and without the data of experience there is nothing for understanding to unify or relate. It remains, however, that these operations occur within a context and that this context is all the more complex and extensive the richer the culture and the more nuanced the social arrangements one has inherited. Nor is this context just some inert datum that attains influence only in the measure that it is noted, understood, verified, evaluated. Rather it exerts a major influence on the interest that motivates our attention, on the language that selects what we can name and study, on the preunderstanding that underpins our further advance, on the opinions that have to be revised before anything novel or new can be entertained or accepted.

So it is that besides development from below upwards there also is development, if not from above downwards, at least from within an encompassing, enveloping worldview or horizon or blik. Clearly enough this fact is particularly embarrassing in religious studies. For in the measure that the student is committed religiously, he can be expected to be predisposed in favor of religion. In the measure he is uncommitted, he can be feared to lack the resources needed for adequate interpretation.

The dilemma is real enough. What has to be observed is that it turns upon two quite distinct issues. Insofar as doubt is cast on the authenticity of the person that has become religiously convinced and committed, I must ask you to await the outcome of tomorrow's consideration of the validity of religious knowledge. But insofar as you ask how religious commitment arises, perhaps you will find some beginnings towards an answer in the three topics we have considered this evening.

They were, first, the ambiguity of experience: it can be taken to mean the whole of knowledge; but it can also mean an element within a larger compound, an infrastructure that easily is unnoticed until it is rounded off in combination with a manifold of further elements.

Secondly, there was the cultivation of religious experience. We are self-completing animals: at birth we are alive and perhaps kicking; but we become normal human beings only by mastering vast systems of symbols and adapting our muscles, our nerves, our cerebral cortex, to respond to them accurately and precisely. The cultivation of religious experience is its entry into harmony with the rest of one's symbolic system, and as symbolic systems vary with the culture and the civilization, so too does the cultivation of religious experience.

Finally, we took our clue to the nature of religious commitment from the Hebraic and Christian tradition. We found it to be a type of love, distinct from the love of intimacy, distinct from loyalty to one's fellows, for it grounds both domestic and civil devotion by reconciling us, by committing us, to the obscure purposes of our universe, to what Christians name the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Questions

Question: I wonder if I was following you properly in making a connection between so much that you said about unauthenticity, the apparent drift toward unauthenticity personally and in traditions, with your first point about suprastructure and infrastructure. If you have something which is almost totally suprastructure, in which presumably it could be a question of labels or perhaps of sheer dogma having a content, would that be an example of what you mean by one form on authenticity?

Lonergan: The good is unique. Its failure is as manifold as the ways in which parts can be missing or poorly arranged, and so on.

Question: This is surely something that has been a historical tendency in all creeds and religions to become frozen in their externals.

Question: You mentioned that religious studies to all intents and purposes leave to theology the concern for that which is beyond man. I'm wondering if it's a vast oversimplification of what you're saying to say something like that religious studies concerns itself with that which comes from within while theology deals with that which comes from beyond. Am I understanding you correctly or misunderstanding the distinction between the provinces of religious studies and theology?

Lonergan: Well, the distinction I have in mind is a distinction of methods. Modern science has been the development of empirical methods, in which you start from data, you seek the immanent intelligibility of the data, you relate the data to one another, or you discern a unity, a structure, in the data, and that is empirical science. And that can consider not only all that man experiences but also the data of consciousness. And as long as you stay within that type of method, that type of inquiry, you don't get outside this world. In other words, in the whole question of the proofs of God's existence the fundamental objection is, Well, what do you mean by causality? Well now, give us an example of the way the scientists use that notion of causality. And there won't be, because of the method. Anything that's specialized is also restricted. When you are using something that is specialized as a type of knowledge, you're not going to get outside the restriction imposed by that specialization. That will be a theme in our third lecture, the succession of methods that have developed. Experimental method was a reaction against Aristotle. And the German *Geisteswissenschaften* of the nineteenth century were stepping beyond the study of nature to a study of meanings and values. And they found themselves involved in philosophical and ethical and religious issues. And a man like Ernst Troeltsch went into a terrific relativism over this. And how do you get beyond that? Well, it's a question of dialectic. In other words, it's a question of this – it's not on any immediate level that you're going to bring about a unification of religious studies. Insofar as a science is determined by its method, and that's the way sciences are at the present time, the old Aristotelian division of the

sciences in terms of material and formal objects was really based upon the properties of the demonstrative syllogism. And it would be fine if we put everything and could prove everything in syllogistic form. But we don't. Modern sciences are things on the move. And when a method develops, well, the content of the science changes. You get a revolution, as Thomas Kuhn notes.

Question: On the question of the relation between religious development and (question hard to decipher).

Lonergan: Well, without going into theology of liberation and the validity of Marxism, and so on, the issue is authenticity/unauthenticity. Possibilities are endless. Anyone who undertakes to prove that anything is impossible is arguing from concepts. To prove something is possible you need facts. If you have the facts, it's possible. Does the fact prove that something's authentic? No. What would precisely be authenticity – we will have more to say tomorrow. In other words, there can be conflicts, there can be advance in knowledge, and all the rest of it. There's no doubt about that.

Question: I'm not sure ...

Lonergan: That's a comparison of structures, the way they operate. The linguistic analysts arrived at the point where they acknowledged the blik. It's what the phenomenologists call a horizon. It's what comes up in mathematics as the coherence of your postulates. Can you prove the coherence of your postulates? Well, in some cases yes. A lot of mathematicians say the foundations of mathematics are not a mathematical problem. In other words, there is this whole questions of presuppositions. And if you take a Cartesian viewpoint, you're going to doubt everything and start from that. So you have a lot of experience against you. And the alternative tack is that you'd be better off if you believed everything because you'd have something to go by to get rid of the mistakes. If you doubt everything, you have nothing left to go by. However, those are fundamental issues in the structure of a philosophy.

Question: I would like to pursue your statement about the difference between the methods. Are you suggesting that theology is doing something like what Karl Barth does in speaking of revelation rather than experience of actual data?

Lonergan: Well, you can't just say it's revealed, eh? That is called fideism. Now, there's an element of truth to it. But I would put it in God's gift of his love. Karl Barth probably would put it in faith. But when you say God's gift of his love it's easy to pin down. Are you believing anything? What is faith? There are a whole lot more questions. There's a certain simplicity ...